

**WORK, NONWORK, AND NETWORK: THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LIVES
OF WOMEN CHIEF STUDENT AFFAIRS OFFICERS**

A Dissertation

by

REBECCA LYNN SPURLOCK

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2009

Major Subject: Educational Administration

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee, Yvonna Lincoln
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ABSTRACT

Work, Nonwork, and Network: The Public and Private Lives
of Women Chief Student Affairs Officers. (August 2009)

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Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Yvonna Lincoln

Women make up a majority of those employed in higher education, yet they are still a minority in leadership positions. Completing a doctoral degree, relocating for career advancement, and working in demanding, high time commitment roles are typically required to achieve the chief student affairs officer (CSAO) position, as well as contributors to burnout and attrition in the field. This study sought to gain a deeper understanding of the intersection of career progression (work), balance (nonwork) and relationships (network) of women chief student affairs officers, specifically, how gender is an influence, understanding life roles and whether there is a cost of achievement in the field. The literature in the field suggests the achievement and constant maintenance of balance, which is viewed through a male construct, is the norm. It is evident that the need to understand the particular phenomenon of work and nonwork intersections of women, particularly in the chief role, gives voice to an issue for women that have been rarely heard in the field.

This study utilized the naturalistic inquiry paradigm of research. The author conducted in-depth interviews of nine women CSAOs at colleges and universities across

the United States. Data were analyzed using a constant comparative method which allowed the findings to emerge.

The results show that women CSAOs felt that gender had a clear impact on their career both in their choices and how they were treated by others. The impact of gender has been felt at all stages in their careers including in their roles as CSAOs on issues of discrimination, leadership style, spousal expectations, and choices regarding if and when – or whether – to have children. Respondents also articulated the different domains of their life in terms of roles, but did not seem them as distinctly separate in the manner in which they manage their lives. Additionally, all of the respondents felt their public and private lives intersected and that keeping them in separate domains was not only impossible, but unnecessary. Lastly, there were significant and ongoing costs of achievement in the field, mostly notably lack of friends and short and/or long term health problems.

My husband Jeff and our two children, Madeline and Miles.

You made this project both possible and unnecessary at the same time.

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When I started in the Ph.D. program in Educational Administration, I never doubted that I would finish the program. With great surety, I thought it was a done deal. Ten years, two job changes and two children later, I now know that finishing is a great gift that was given to me by those around me.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	iii
DEDICATION.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	ix
LIST OF TABLES.....	xi
 CHAPTER	
I INTRODUCTION.....	1
Women Chief Student Affairs Officers Research	2
Problem Statement, Purpose, and Significance of the Study	6
Research Questions.....	7
Operational Definitions.....	8
Organization of the Dissertation.....	9
II LITERATURE REVIEW	10
Overview	10
History of the Chief Student Affairs Officer.....	11
Characteristics of the Chief Student Affairs Officer	23
Issues Related to Career Progression.....	27
Role Definition	36
Summary of Findings.....	40
III METHODOLOGY	42
Purpose of the Study	42
Paradigm and Method	43
Population and Sample.....	44
Research Design	45
Procedures	46
Trustworthiness	49

CHAPTER	Page
IV DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS	52
Organization of the Chapter	53
The Respondents.....	53
Conclusion.....	68
Research Question 1	68
Research Question 2	78
Research Question 3	84
Research Question 4	92
Summary of Findings.....	99
V SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	104
Purpose of the Study	104
Summary of Findings	105
Conclusions	108
Implications for Policy and Practice	114
Recommendations for Future Research	122
REFERENCES	124
APPENDIX A	130
APPENDIX B.....	131
APPENDIX C.....	132
APPENDIX D	134
APPENDIX E.....	136
VITA	138

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1 Demographics of Respondents.....	69
Table 2 Respondents with Children	76

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Women make up a majority of those employed in higher education today, yet they are still a minority in the top leadership positions. In 1989, only about a third of women held a doctoral degree compared with over half of their male counterparts (Tinsley, 1985; Kaplan & Tinsley, 1989). Women are more likely to be assistants, associates, or assistants to, than they are to be directors, deans, vice presidents, provosts, or presidents. They are more likely to do work within the higher education environment that society views as acceptable for a woman. That is, they may serve as academic deans, but they are more likely to do so only in areas that traditionally have a large female enrollment like nursing or education. Women also are more likely to run programs that benefit other women such as reentry programs and women's centers. Even within the division of student affairs – a largely female profession for the last 30 years – there are still proportionately fewer women in the chief student affairs role. In many instances, this is attributed to two factors: the leadership style of women, which is perceived differently from that of men, and the perception that women are often viewed as counselors and helpers, as more nurturing. The role of the chief student affairs officer is demanding, requiring a time commitment outside of the normal workday; the role usually requires an advanced degree, and there is a lack of mentoring for women in the profession. Additionally, because advancement is typically achieved via change in

This dissertation follows the style of *The Journal of Educational Research*.

institution rather than promotion from within, many women are less likely to be promoted as they tend to be more reluctant to relocate for their careers. Given the barriers to advancement for women, even those that do become chief student affairs officers are still a minority in their institutions. In a field where there are expectations to be in the helper role, evening work commitments are common. These extended hours, combined with the possibility of living in campus housing, can blur the lines between public and private lives. As a result, how does the intersection of the public/work and private/nonwork life affect women chief student affairs officers?

Women Chief Student Affairs Officers Research

Recent research shows that a growing number of women are entering the field of student affairs (Jones and Komives, 2001; Twale and Jelinek, 1996). Additionally, Twale's (1995) study of gender comparisons of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) membership indicates increases in the number of women entering graduate programs in student affairs. Women, however, tend to be clustered at the director level, failing to achieve equity beyond this point. According to Twale, "More women remain in staff positions that maintain direct contact with students" (p. 294). Anne Blackhurst (2000) found that women still are underrepresented at the highest levels of the student affairs profession, even though the growth of women in entry- and mid-level management areas has increased (p. 574). In 1996-97, only about one-third of all chief student affairs officers were women, even though women are still a majority in the profession (Jones and Komives, 2001). While the number of

women in the chief student affairs role has grown, the number is not proportional to the number of women entering the field (Twale, 1995).

Women became involved in the field of student affairs first as deans of women, beginning in the late 1800's. As the number of women grew on campuses, many university presidents saw the need for this population to be chaperoned or supervised. As wars erupted in the first half of the 1900's, women's enrollment in colleges and universities climbed to about 47% of undergraduate enrollment. In the post-war era, as men returned to campus in large numbers, changing the demographics of student bodies, the dean of women position was largely eliminated. Instead, a new, all-encompassing position of dean was created and occupied usually by the previously-named dean of men (Schwartz, 1997).

By 1970, student affairs as a field began to assume more importance on college campuses. Consumerism, coupled with retention issues, meant that out-of-class experiences were held in new regard by parents and students alike. Increasing litigation also raised the profile and role of student affairs, particularly the dean of students position (Drum, 1993). In addition, the 1970s brought substantial changes in law, most notably Title IX, which eliminated male-only programs and opened the doors for women. Affirmative action movements created educational and career opportunities for women, including in the field of student affairs (Jones & Komives, 2001).

A clear shift towards greater proportions of women in student affairs has been documented through perceptions of student affairs professionals (McEwen, Engstrom, & Williams, 1990). Others have identified the "feminization" of student affairs (Hamrick

& Carlisle, 1990; Hughes, 1989; McEwen, Williams, & Engstrom, 1991) as an important issue facing the profession. These issues and perceptions of women in student affairs have influenced the career development of women in the field. Respondents to a study by McEwen, Williams and McEngstrom (1991) indicated a concern about how student affairs may be seen by others, both within and outside the institution, especially with increasing numbers of women. Twale & Jelinek (1996) point out in their study of the mentoring experiences of women student affairs professionals that, “Women are regarded as knowledgeable, supportive, and caring, while men are viewed as visionary, guiding and competent” (p. 214). Specific concerns included whether the feminization of the profession could diminish the credibility of the profession and whether student affairs professionals are discriminated against in salary levels (McEwen, Williams & Engstrom, 1991). According to the National Association of College Student Personnel Administrators, female pay is less than male pay for the same chief student affairs roles (1995). Moreover, in the literature, articles were published as late as 1974 in the *NASPA Journal* with titles like, “The chief student personnel administrator and *his* staff” (emphasis added). The literature, pay differentials and perceptions of those in the field can be seen as barriers to top leadership positions for women.

There is also a greater stress for women in the field. Jones and Komives (2001) observe, “Women in senior student affairs positions appear to be held to a different standard with differing expectations for style and success” (p. 241). Jones and Komives cite a study by Clement and Rickard, which found that, “women were expected to be more nurturing, more collaborative and less hierarchical, and more forgiving than their

male counterparts.” (p. 241). Jones and Komives add that, “The demands of the senior student affairs position are great and seem to exact a greater toll for women who are balancing multiple commitments” (p. 241). Nancy Scott (1992) found that women were significantly more stressed than their male counterparts both in the work setting and outside of it. In fact, for all 18 items measured in her study, women reported higher levels of stress, six of which were related to work, nine to their personal lives, and three items describing the intersection of work and personal life.

Blackhurst (2000), in her study of the career satisfaction and perceptions of sex discrimination among women student affairs professionals, asked what factor would be the most likely to influence their decision to leave student affairs. Fourteen percent (14%) indicated a desire to spend more time with family, and approximately 8% indicated that evening and weekend work would be the most likely factor to influence their decision. Overall, 27% of the women in her study reported being asked to work more or longer hours than men, 33% reported being given less support than men and being assigned less rewarding or less visible tasks, and 26% reported being given less autonomy (p. 409). In another study by Blackhurst, Brandt, and Kalinowski (1998a) the authors point out that, “Absent from the literature is research examining the influence of work-related variables on the life satisfaction of women student affairs administrators. Research has, however, generally supported the connection between work and nonwork life for employed women in general and women in academia more specifically” (p. 88). In another Blackhurst, Brandt, and Kalinowski study in the same year (1998b), they point out that few researchers have examined this connection for women in student

affairs. “Thus, little is known about how women at various levels of the student affairs profession perceive the quality of their nonwork lives” (p. 20). They conclude “that there is a relationship between dissatisfaction at work and the quality of nonwork life for women student affairs administrators and that...further research investigating the personal, institutional, and job-related variables influencing work and life satisfaction for women in student affairs is suggested” (p. 31-32).

Problem Statement, Purpose, and Significance of the Study

The field of student affairs has become increasingly dominated by females in every career level except the chief student affairs officer position (Twale, 1995). Also, females are more likely to enter graduate programs studying student affairs or higher education, accept entry level positions in the field, and be clustered at the assistant, associate, and director level positions (Jones & Komives, 2001). Despite this, males continue to be in the majority of leadership positions within the field. The field has been “feminized” which historically devalues or declines the status of the profession (McEwen, Williams & Engstrom, 1991; Hughes, 1989). Regardless of the gains of women in our society and in the field of higher education, women are still paid less than their male counterparts (*NASPA Salary Survey* 1995-96), feel more stress (Scott, 1992), have less job satisfaction (Anderson, Guido-DiBrito & Morrell, 2000), and tend to leave the field in greater numbers (Burns, 1982; Holmes, Verrier & Chisholm, 1983). Much of the literature until very recently focused on the male experience in the chief role. Only recently have stories and research emerged to begin more fully to tell the tale of

women serving in these roles. It is necessary to add to the research so that as a profession, we can add voice to the female perspective, leadership style, and experience.

The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the intersection of career progression (work), balance (nonwork), and relationships (network) of women chief student affairs officers through a naturalistic inquiry process.

This study may influence the way women talk about the position of chief student affairs officer. By adding to the language and understanding of the issues, this study may assist in the development of a female standard for the position – moving away from the sole use of the male standard. Additionally, more women may be attracted to the profession and ideally, this will change the experiences of women chief women student affairs officers. The constructivist design of this research will also add voice to the women participants of the study. It will add weight to these women's experiences in affecting the perception of women leaders and the issues surrounding work and nonwork, public, and private life issues.

Research Questions

I bring a hypothesis to the formation of these research questions. Given the information in the literature and my own personal experience, I believe that the work, nonwork, and network of the private and public lives of women chief student affairs officers intersects and that the result is a high cost for achievement. This intersection produces conflict and challenges for women which do not exist for their male counterparts. Additionally, my research will address the following questions:

- How does gender influence your role as a chief student affairs officer?

- Do you categorize the work, network, and nonwork domains of your life as separate and if so, how do you determine what is part of the distinct categories?
- To what extent does your public and private life intersect and what is the effect on both as a result?
- Does achievement have a cost in this field? If so, what is that cost from your perspective?

Operational Definitions

The following operational definitions come directly from me, as influenced by the literature review:

Chief Student Affairs Officer. Typically the highest ranking officer in the division of student affairs; often titled Vice President although sometimes Dean of Students, particularly on smaller campuses.

Nonwork. The portion of life not related to work, also could be referred to as personal or family life.

Network. The web of relationships that supports the work and nonwork life of an individual.

Student Affairs. The organizational structure or division on a campus responsible for the out-of-class services and education that enhance student growth and development. Student Services and student personnel are sometimes used interchangeably with student affairs, although student personnel is not considered outdated.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into five chapters, followed by references and appendices. Chapter I describes the reason for and significance of the study, the problem, the research questions, and operational definitions. Chapter II outlines the literature review of research related to women chief student affairs officers and is divided into the following sections: history of the chief student affairs officer; characteristics of the chief student affairs officer; issues related to career progression; role definition; and a summary of findings. Chapter III will discuss the methodology used for this research project. Chapter IV will detail the life stories of each of the research participants and provides an in-depth analysis of the research findings. Chapter V will outline conclusions and recommendations for policy and practice as well as future research directions.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews relevant literature concerning women chief student affairs officers. The chapter is organized into six sections: overview, history of the chief student affairs officer, characteristics of the chief student affairs officer, issues related to career progression, role definition, and a summary of findings.

Overview

Women have been outnumbering men in college enrollment since 1979. Despite more women in the pipeline, women still lack leadership power in major corporations, in top federal, state and local policy making roles, and in educational administration. Women are more likely to serve as assistant or associate directors than deans, provosts, or vice presidents. They certainly are more likely to do work within the higher education environment that is seen as acceptable for a woman. That is, they will serve as academic deans, but likely only in an area that has a large female enrollment such as nursing or education. If there is a woman at the senior executive level at a university, she is most likely to be the chief student affairs officer (CSAO): a role seen as acceptable for a woman because of its nurturer and helper role to students. If not in the chief officer role, then a woman is likely to run programs that benefit other women such as reentry programs and women's centers. Even within the division of student affairs, which has been largely a female profession for the last 30 years, there are still proportionately fewer women in the chief student affairs role. Despite the intended

effects of historic legislation like the 1969 update to the 1964 Civil Rights Act and Title IX of the Education Amendments, many doors are still closed to women.

There is a growing body of research on women in the field, but it still pales in comparison to that which is offered from the male point of view. Despite women gaining a majority in graduate school programs and in positions in the field as early as the late 1970's, only in the last few years has the research begun to grow. Even then, the research has not lent voice to the experiences of women in a significant and meaningful way. What follows will outline relevant research for women in the field, particularly at the CSAO level.

History of the Chief Student Affairs Officer

The Chief Student Affairs Officer (CSAO), usually called the Vice President for Student Affairs, provides leadership to a division of staff that oversees student services and programs (Sandeem, 1991). This position has evolved largely in the last 100 years and has become a more formalized and professional member of the executive and leadership team in the last thirty years. The roots of the CSAO role began primarily as dean of men and dean of women positions in the late 1800's (Drum, 1993). As the lives of students outside of the classroom changed and developed, so did the dean's position. *In loco parentis*, a legal framework for working with students, was the established manner of doing business for many years. Having a dean's role on campus that effectively managed the disciplinary role as well as the desire to improve students' lives cultivated the development of the student affairs field (Drum, 1993). Student affairs is typically associated with housing, activities and student conduct, but can also include a

large array of additional programs and services including admissions, health services, child care, orientation, financial aid, athletics and recreation, and campus security (Sandeem, 1991). As campuses became more complex places and issues of retention, in particular, became an increasingly important issue for colleges and universities, the dean of students was typically reclassified as a vice president, which became the most commonly used term for the CSAO (Drum, 1993; NASPA, 1992).

The first dean of students with general responsibility for student issues is thought to be a man, LeBarron Briggs, who became Dean of the College at Harvard in 1890. Later that same year, Elizabeth Powell Bond was appointed as Dean of Women at Swarthmore. During this time, only about 21% of undergraduate students in the country were women. By 1930 most institutions that admitted both men and women had the two positions of Dean of Men and Dean of Women. By then, women made up about 47% of undergraduate enrollment. With this growth of women attending college, there was need for someone to provide oversight for this new population (Schwartz, 1997). The development of these positions signaled the beginning of a new administrative structure to oversee student concerns and life beyond the classroom. This era was marked by less oversight and management of the students by faculty, something that had long been the purview of the faculty. Other changes in American higher education were afoot as well. Only 15 colleges for women existed in 1860, but by 1930, the number had grown to 78. Many states founded public institutions in the period following the Civil War. The need for more teachers led to the creation of normal schools across the United States. Additionally, the cost of maintaining separate facilities for men and women began to be

too prohibitive, ultimately leading to coeducational environments on college and university campuses (Drum, 1993; Schwartz, 1997).

The predecessors to deans of women were often female faculty who bore titles such as lady principal, matron, or head and who carried responsibility for the protection and supervision of female students. Because women students were taken less seriously than their male counterparts, very often the same was true for the dean of women. Largely women students in this era were seen as future wives and mothers rather than future professionals or leaders. Just as today, many women in the role of dean were unmarried and, “suffered a particular kind of ridicule” (Drum, 1993, p. 4). This ridicule centered on the idea that these unmarried spinsters had nothing better to do than to intercede in the lives of their female students, to deny them the pleasures that she could not enjoy. Easy to satirize, this characterization of the dean of women, “failed to recognize the serious problems she dealt with, and the high goals she may well have had for her students, who were not being taken seriously in any other quarter. The deans were neither sexually prurient, nor repressed; rather, they showed genuine concern for young women, for whom the consequences of misconduct, particularly sexual misconduct, could be grave” (Drum, 1993, p. 5). These early pioneers in the field were often seen as chaperones although their goals for students are not that different from those we have for students today – to grow and mature as a result of their collegiate experience (Drum, 1993; Schwartz, 1997). Many of these deans of women were researching, writing, and publishing. Many held faculty rank and held graduate degrees including a doctorate (Schwartz, 1997).

As colleges and universities became increasingly complex in the early 20th century, many faculty gave up their work with students outside the classroom. Administrative services increased to fill the gap that was created from this shift. During this time deans became less focused on chaperoning and discipline and more interested in the development of student activities (Drum, 1993).

In 1916, Teachers College of Columbia University created a graduate program to train deans of women. The National Association of Deans of Women (NADW) was established in 1917 as a branch of the National Education Association. Men followed with their own meeting organized by Scott Goodnight in 1919 under the auspices of The National Association of Deans of Men. In 1951, the National Association of Deans of Men changed its name to the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). The National Association of Deans of Women became the National Association of Women Deans, Administrators and Counselors (NAWDAC) in the 1960s in an attempt to bolster its membership by broadening their appeal and membership (Schwartz, 1997). Only NASPA still exists today. NAWDAC became the National Association of Women in Education in 1991 and was dissolved in 2000 because of declining membership resulting from reports from their members that it was too difficult to maintain multiple memberships in professional associations both financially and in terms of time commitment (Weisman, 2002).

The *Student Personnel Point of View* was originally published by the American Council on Education in 1937 and later updated in 1949. The ideas in this document, including the creation of new personnel directors, began to take root throughout the

1940's and into the 1950's. It further established the personnel movement that ultimately changed the structure and approach of student affairs and resulted in the demise of the dean of women and dean of men positions. The Serviceman's Readjustment Act, commonly called the GI Bill, soon followed and created an avalanche of men returning to college campuses (Schwartz, 1997). The previous decades had produced a depression and a war, both of which stole attention away from higher education as a priority. The desire of the country to, "reward the men for the war effort" (Schwartz, 1997, p. 9) changed the experience of women on college campuses. At a high of 47% of enrollment leading up to the 1930's, by the mid 1950's, women only represented 21% of enrollment although the raw numbers of women continued to rise. Schwartz (1997) reports that, "the culture of the campus became increasingly indifferent and even hostile towards women" (p. 9). It was that hostility towards women that was part of the demise of the dean of women position on many campuses. Conversely, the dean of men position was often expanded to become the dean for student personnel, dean of students, or vice president for student personnel services. Schwartz suggests that the men that assumed these roles, "were simply advancing the ideology of the women who had preceded them in earlier decades" (p. 10).

When the dean of women position was first instituted on campuses, the position usually reported directly to the president, and the job duties were not rigidly defined. Over time, not only did the position change in terms of scope of responsibility, but also in terms of reporting structure. With increasing frequency, these positions began to report to the dean of men (sometimes called the dean of students) or the CSAO rather

than the president. Coinciding with the field becoming a more organized and recognized profession, women were moved from their positions of influence and power to lesser roles as the dean of students position became more commonplace. Beginning in 1950, institutions were appointing one dean to oversee all student services (Sandeen, 1991). By the early 1970's, most campuses were done phasing out the dean of women position. Typically, the women serving in these positions were not promoted into the dean of students or the vice president for student affairs position. More than likely, they were assigned to the women's center or given generalist duties. Often, the men that were promoted during this restructuring had little to no formal training in student personnel (Whitney, 1971).

In 1972, a major piece of legislation was passed; Title IX of the Education Amendments was designed to extend efforts from the 1969 expansion of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which mandated standards of equal employment and opportunity. The 1969 addition of sex to the list of prescribed, non-discrimination categories prompted many discrimination suits and necessitated the creation of affirmative action programs for women as well as minority groups. These two pieces of legislation affected universities in terms of their student enrollment as well as in their own hiring practices (Astin, 1991). In theory, most barriers to women's participation in higher education should have been dismantled with these two pieces of legislation and the legal precedent established. However, women in student affairs as well as other arenas, still did not increase in proportion to their overall representation.

As the CSAO role became more commonplace by 1970, student affairs as a field began to assume more importance on college campuses. Consumerism, coupled with retention issues, meant that out of class experiences were held in new regard by parents and students alike. Increasing litigation also raised the profile and role of student affairs, particularly the dean of students position (Drum, 1993). About this same time, student affairs was classified as an emergent profession as professional organizations began to set standards for graduate preparation programs as well as to develop ethical and professional statements (Carpenter, Miller, Winston, 1980). Originally, each professional organization drafted individual statements regarding ethical and professional behavior. A notable moment for the profession occurred in 1997 when NASPA and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), two of the largest associations, joined together and adopted the *Principles of Good Practice in Student Affairs*.

In the 1980s and 1990s the profession largely was concerned with its image, preparation of graduates to enter the profession, and the advancement of women and people of color as well as establishing itself as a profession in its own right. Rickard (1985b) points out, “Achieving equity in employment will require continuous monitoring throughout the 1980s to ensure equal opportunity for White females and racial minorities to attain top leadership positions in student affairs” (pg. 5). Jones (1986) makes the argument that since more women are now in the college pipeline, it is the educational system’s obligation to place more women into the highest levels of administration. Coupled with the issues of gender and racial advancement were other

issues affecting higher education including continuing deficits in the federal budget and social problems such as addiction, poverty, and crime. Universities were beginning to rely on outside monies to sustain programs. As the 50th anniversary of the *Student Personnel Point of View* arrived, NASPA established a committee to review the historic document. The result was a report called *A Perspective on Student Affairs* (1987) that established the academic mission of the institution as preeminent and suggested that student affairs should support rather than compete with this mission (Evans & Reason, 2001).

The Council for the Advancement of Standards published the *CAS Standards and Guidelines for Student Services/Development Programs* in 1986 and included increasing evidence of some commonalities of educational background and employment experience for CSAOs, a major step in professionalizing the field (Earwood-Smith, Jordan-Cox, Hudson & Smith, 1990). The 1990s brought major technological explosions, demographic changes, and more government regulation. There was also an increased need to legitimize the role of student affairs. The *Student Learning Imperative (SLI)* published by the American College Personnel Association in 1996 suggests that student learning should be the goal for everyone in higher education, including student affairs professionals and that university goals should be reprioritized to reflect the emphasis on student learning. Many consider the SLI as important in moving the student affairs field in a new direction (Evans & Reason, 2001).

Early into the 21st century, the country has been faced with changes to national security due to the 9-11 terrorist attacks. Campuses have dealt with increased issues

related to the mental health of its students. CSAOs have had to become experts in crisis management. Although the economy initially rebounded after 9-11, the economy has continued to be unstable, recently resulting in a recession affecting many institutions of higher education. The continued rise of the cost of higher education and national attention on education from the federal government coupled with the unstable economy has created an increased sense of accountability regarding the benefits and results of receiving a college diploma. As such, assessment of student learning has become a central focus for many universities, particularly for professionals in student affairs who must justify, via assessment, the value of their programs and services.

The field has continued to place emphasis on student learning and the development of meaningful partnerships with academic colleagues. Another major seminal work was published in 2004 when NASPA and ACPA jointly published *Learning Reconsidered: a Campus-Wide Focus on Student Learning*. With its focus on the transformative educational experience for undergraduates, this document is highly usable and has gained attention by both those in student affairs as well as their academic affairs colleagues. As written, it provides useable learning outcomes for the undergraduate experience which can be translated and supported by assessment on a campus. This document, when compared with the *Student Personnel Point of View*, provides an important backdrop for where the field of the student affairs has gone since the publication of the SPPV in 1937.

Feminization of the Field

A clear shift towards greater proportions of women in student affairs has been documented through perceptions of student affairs professionals (McEwen, Engstrom, & Williams, 1990). Others have identified the “feminization” of student affairs (Hamrick & Carlisle, 1990; Hughes, 1989; McEwen, Engstrom, & Williams 1991) as an important issue facing the profession. These issues and perceptions of women in student affairs have influenced the career development of women in the field. The feminization of a profession has historically devalued the profession in terms of both salary and status.

Respondents to a study by McEwen, Williams, and McEngstrom indicated a concern about how student affairs may be seen by others, both within and outside the institution, especially with increasing numbers of women entering the field (1991). In their study, Twale & Jelinek (1996) describe the mentoring experiences of women student affairs professionals where, “Women are regarded as knowledgeable, supportive, and caring, while men are viewed as visionary, guiding and competent” (pg. 214). Specific concerns included whether the feminization of the profession could diminish the credibility of the profession and whether student affairs professionals are discriminated against in salary levels (McEwen, Williams & Engstrom, 1991). Moreover, in the literature, articles were published as late as 1974 in the *NASPA Journal* with titles like, “The chief student personnel administrator and *his* staff” (emphasis added). A study of women executives in higher education published in the *Journal of NAWDAC* in 1981 concludes, “Although [women administrators] are efficient, they still must make sacrifices or delay involvement in some activities; these sacrifices include lowering their

housekeeping standards, delaying writing for publication, neglecting the development and maintenance of good friendships, and eliminating vacations from their schedules” (pg. 25). The authors goes on to suggest that, “some strategies for dealing with home and career conflicts have been identified so institutions should move forward in the utilization of the multiple talents of women managers” implying that only with these strategies is it now acceptable to promote women into positions of power (Villadsen and Tack, 1981). The literature, pay differentials, and perceptions of those in the field can be seen as barriers to top leadership positions for women.

McEwen, Williams, and Engstrom (1991) built on the work of Hughes (1989), Carpenter (2003), and Hamrick & Carlisle (1990) in discussing the feminine nature of the work of student affairs. While many identify the work as being feminine in voice from the beginning, only in the last 30 years has the profession been seen as feminized. Hughes (1989) shows the values more closely aligned to the feminine voice in student affairs include: supporting, nurturing, providing service, promoting advocacy, ensuring justice and equity, and encouraging affiliative behaviors. She goes on to point out that, “women, and the affective values ascribed to them, have historically been undervalued or negatively valued in our society” (pg. 21). Hamrick and Carlisle (1990) add that, “student affairs personnel tend to be perceived by different campus constituencies as helpers and counselors” (p. 310). McEwen, Engstrom, and Williams (1990) support this finding as well, noting that women are more likely employed in greater numbers in the areas of the profession that require an ability to provide nurturance, support, and care.

As noted earlier, the feminization of a profession has historically devalued the profession in terms of salary. One of the indicators of this continues to be that women with comparable jobs to men are paid less. According to a report written by Daniel Weinberg for the U.S. Census Bureau (2004), a woman makes 75.5 cents for every dollar a man makes. The 1995-1996 *NASPA Salary Survey* results indicate that the mean salary for a male CSAO is still higher than that of a female CSAO.

Several studies point to salary inequalities as issue in the field. In their intergenerational qualitative research of women in higher education administration, Kuk and Donovan (2004) identified five emergent themes which included perceptions of the current climate for women on college campuses. Within this theme, the issue of salary inequity for women compared to men and the under-representation of women in senior positions was identified. Blackhurst (2000) cites the continued perceptions of salary inequity and disproportional representation as issues for women becoming CSAOs. A recent study by the American Association of University Professors (2002) supports previous work in the field that indicates women across the board earn significantly less than men within a university environment.

At least two other studies have found that salaries are more equitable, although both authors cite under-representation of women as a limitation of their studies. In a 2002 study of salary for CSAOs at public institutions Reason, Walker, and Robinson found that gender was not a salary determinant. However, he is quick to note that although salaries appear to be equitable, women are not represented proportionally to men at the senior levels. Reason concludes that the pathway and arrival of women to the

role of CSAO are different and less likely than their male counterparts, but once there, their salaries were likely to be equitable. A study by Engstrom, McIntosh, Ridzi and Krueger (2006) looked at how ascribed, achieved, and institutional characteristics affect salaries of CSAOs. Initial results for ascribed characteristics indicate CSAOs of race other than Black or White earn more; men earn more than women; and those over 55 years old are earning more than other ages. In addition, those with a doctorate degree earn more than those with only a degree at the master's level. However, when controlling for individual and institutional factors, women and non-Whites are paid equitably. Again, the authors of both these studies note that these two groups continue to be underrepresented in the field.

Characteristics of the Chief Student Affairs Officer

In a study of gender comparisons of NASPA membership completed by Darla Twale and published in 1995, she references the historical numbers of women in the profession and states that in the 1960s, women made up somewhere between 7% and 26% of CSAOs. In the 1970s, 9% of vice presidents and 14% of deans were women, or about 23% total. By the 1980s, one third of the CSAOs at large public universities were women as were about 29% of vice presidents at all types of institutions. Twale's study showed that in a study of the six year period between 1986 and 1992, men were significantly more likely to hold the CSAO positions at research and doctoral institutions while women held the same positions at the comprehensive, liberal arts and 2-year colleges. Women did increase their representation in the CSAO role, but disproportionately to their overall increase in numbers in the field. Women continue to

be more represented from private institutions, an environment more receptive to hiring and promoting women. Outside the CSAO role, women are more likely to serve in “nurturing areas and in the trenches positions” (Twale 1995, p. 299). As early as 1990, women occupied a majority membership in NASPA yet fewer than 25% of the voting delegates (typically the CSAO) were women (Earwood-Smith, Jordan-Cox, Hudson & Smith, 1990). In 1993, NASPA reported that 29% of CSAOs were women, although by then more than half of undergraduates were women (Drum, 1993). In 1996, men represented approximately 63% of the top administrative positions, according to NASPA (Guido-DiBrito, Notebloom, Nathan & Fenty, 1996). Anne Blackhurst (2000) found that women are still underrepresented at the highest levels of the student affairs profession even though the growth of women in entry and mid-level management areas has increased (pg. 574). While the number of women in the chief student affairs role has grown, the number is not proportional to the number of women entering the field (Twale, 1995).

NASPA survey data from 2008 shows the general membership of NASPA to be still slightly more male (53%) than female (47%). Of those who identify as the CSAO, it is nearly split evenly at 51% male to 49% female. The large majority of CSAOs continue to be Caucasian at 79% with African American/Black the next largest category at 13%. Hispanic/Latino(a) follows at 4% with Asian/Pacific Islander/South Asian next at 2%. The remaining categories are negligible (Zaneeta Daver, NASPA, personal communication, 11/25/08).

When women do achieve the CSAO role, they tend to be appointed at a younger age, have attained less education, and have fewer years of full-time experience in the field (Rickard, 1985a; Hamrick & Carlisle, 1990; Earwood-Smith et al., 1990). In addition, these women usually have been chosen individually or been promoted rather than selected via a traditional competitive process (Rickard, 1985b). Randall, Daugherty, and Globetti (1995) found that the typical female CSAO is usually a white, middle-aged married woman with more than ten years experience. Regionally, the northeast has the highest proportion of women CSAOs; this proportion is likely a function of the number of institutions, especially private liberal arts institutions in this area. The proportion of single female CSAOs who never marry is significantly higher than the general female college graduate population that remains single (Randall et al., 1995). Jones (1986) previously found that only 7.4% of men in higher education administration have never been married or were divorced, while 41.5% of women reported the same. In their study, Randall, Daugherty and Globetti (1995) found that women in the CSAO role are more likely to hold the position title of dean, rather than vice president. Nearly 54% of these female CSAOs hold a doctorate degree. Additional studies by Nancy Evans and George Kuh in 1983, Scott Rickard in 1985, and Nancy Scott in 1992 found similar results. Appointment at a younger age and with less professional experience have been suggested professional disadvantages for female CSAO's who have had fewer opportunities to build their portfolio of experiences and projects that would add to their knowledge base (Hamrick & Carlisle, 1990).

Clement and Rickard (1992) found that female CSAOs were expected to be more nurturing, less hierarchical, more collaborative, and more forgiving than their male counterparts. Jones and Komives (2001) detail hidden workloads identified by women senior student affairs administrators as an issue in their gendered roles. Women report being placed in advisory roles or on committees to move them out of the perceived inner circle thereby increasing their work loads.

In a study conducted by Street and Kimmel (1999), they found that when surveyed, female university administrators identified for their sex-type role preferences for their ideal woman and man as mostly androgynous. Men administrators' preferences were more like to be sex-typed, with a preference for intellect and power as traits most commonly identified. This study underscores the continued notion that women are most accepted when seen as compassionate and expressive while men are most rewarded for being seen as intellectual and powerful. In a similar study conducted in 1997 by Daugherty, Randall, and Globetti on psychological types based on the Myers-Briggs typology among women CSAOs, they found the predominant types were ENTJ and INTJ, which is typical of executives in other fields. Note that women in the general population are more often F than T; feeling versus thinking. In this study, as in others, the NTJ combination is most often heavily male, reinforcing the idea that certain characteristics or traits are seen as more male and thus, more acceptable traits for a leadership role. The TJ (thinking, judging) combination results in a person willing to ask difficult questions, set goals, share vision, and make decisions decisively. The majority of CSAOs in this study had the NTJ (intuition, thinking, judging) type which is

strongly male in the general population. The authors raise the question of whether those with the NT preference naturally pursue executive positions or whether their personalities are simply preferred by those doing the hiring.

Issues Related to Career Progression

Women remain in lower and mid-level student affairs leadership positions and in areas deemed more feminine. For those who do achieve senior level status, support systems and available mentors are nearly non-existent. This situation is only worse for women of color.

Sagaria (1988) found that changing positions is the primary means for advancing women into leadership positions. These changes can occur within or between institutions. However, women were more likely to be promoted from within their own institutions. Tinsley (1985) states in an address to the membership of NAWDAC, "For the most part, women still have to choose in a way men do not have to between family and career" (p. 8). She goes on later to add, "It is important to say in public that a woman's decision to seek a senior position is made in the context of personal values and obligations as well as in the context of professional goals and ambitions, and that the personal cost is often very high" (p. 9).

A study by Marshall and Jones (1990) sought to understand if there was an impact on the career development of women administrators in higher education and childbearing sequence. Of those sampled, approximately half of the respondents had children and the other half did not, with the mean age of respondents being nearly 45 years old. Sixty three percent (63%) of the respondents who had children believed that

childbearing actually had a negative effect on their career although they felt their own personal satisfaction outweighed any negative effect on their career. This problem is exacerbated by the need for advanced degrees which increases the time required for career preparation and further complicates the child bearing sequence (Bird, 1984; Marshall & Jones, 1990). In short, the qualitative analysis showed that women administrators with children pay a high personal price in maintaining their careers including problems with professional advancement, delayed entry into careers, limited career options, and limited mobility.

Blackhurst, in her study of the career satisfaction and perceptions of sex discrimination among women student affairs professionals found that overall, 27% of the women in her study reported being asked to work more or longer hours than men, 33% reported being given less support than men and being assigned less rewarding or less visible tasks, and 26% reported being given less autonomy (2000). In a 1999 study, Ting and Watt found that all the professionals at the assistant or associate level in their study did not aspire to the CSAO role because they did not want to relocate, or because of their interests in their work, spouses, families, or lifestyles. An earned doctorate is cited as a frequent prerequisite for senior university positions (Sandeen 1991; Earwood-Smith et al., 1990) in addition to the willingness to make geographic moves for professional opportunities (Sandeen 1991). Both earning the doctorate and relocation are frequently cited as issues for women in the field, largely because the former requires time away from nonwork life interests and the latter because of family or life commitments. Kuk and Donovan (2004) reported in their intergenerational study of

women in higher education that promotion may not be desirable because of the stereotypes women face about their competencies and management styles that are not placed upon their male counterparts – the struggle for balance and the perception that the more senior level positions are not worth the personal costs.

In another study by Blackhurst, Brandt, & Kalinowski (1998a) the authors point out that, “Absent from the literature is research examining the influence of work-related variables on the life satisfaction of women student affairs administrators. Research has, however, generally supported the connection between work and nonwork life for employed women in general and women in academics more specifically” (p. 88). In another Blackhurst, Brandt, and Kalinowski study in the same year (1998b), they point out that few researchers have examined this connection for women in student affairs. “Thus, little is known about how women at various levels of the student affairs profession perceive the quality of their nonwork lives” (p. 20). They conclude, “that there is a relationship between dissatisfaction at work and the quality of nonwork life for women student affairs administrators and that...further research investigating the personal, institutional, and job-related variables influencing work and life satisfaction for women in student affairs is suggested” (p. 31-32).

Attrition

Attrition in the field is an issue and has been for a long time. Multiple studies from the early 1980s identify this as an issue. There are clusters of studies completed between 1977 and 1985, likely timed to reflect the changes in the field happening in the

early to mid-1970s, including measuring the effects of Title IX. The literature on this issue is relatively limited until recently.

In her review of literature on this issue, Nancy Evans (1988) demonstrates that early studies show over and over again women leave the field at a higher rate than men. Perhaps the most often cited study shows that ninety percent (90%) of women left the student affairs profession within seven years of completion of their master's degrees, compared with 60% of men (Holmes, Verrier and Chisholm, 1983). Burns (1982) cites in her study that of those who left the field, geographic location, potential for advancement, and salary were the primary considerations for accepting new positions. Reisser and Zurfluh (1987) note as reasons for women leaving the field: small numbers of women heighten their visibility; social etiquette is often inappropriately interjected into the professional setting; women's abilities are more likely to be questioned, downgraded or trivialized; difficulties with collegiality result in feelings of isolation; women are more likely to be judged by appearance than achievement; and women's communication patterns are interpreted as less powerful. These reasons serve to undermine the self-esteem, morale, advancement, and full participation of women in higher education.

Blackhurst, in her study of the career satisfaction and perceptions of sex discrimination among women student affairs professionals, asked what factor would be the most likely to influence their decision to leave student affairs. Fourteen percent (14%) indicated a desire to spend more time with family and approximately 8% indicated that evening and weekend work would be the most likely factor to influence

their decision (2000). Blackhurst, Brandt and Kalinowski (1998b) point to lack of mentoring, little opportunity for advancement, incompatibility with supervisors, and high levels of role ambiguity as reasons cited by most for leaving the field. Evans notes that the need for a terminal degree, the general requirement to relocate for promotion, and the relatively short career ladder are all contributing factors in the decision to leave the field (1988).

In a recent update of this research, Marshall, Hughes, and Lowery (2006) found that most common reasons a professional leaves the student affairs field in order of findings are stress, salary, an attractive career alternative, evening/weekend responsibilities, more time with family, limited advancement opportunities, or need to relocate. Yet most of the respondents (59%) who had all already left the field indicated they intended to stay in student affairs for their entire careers and 63% thought the field was a great career opportunity.

Job Satisfaction

Perhaps the biggest area of dissatisfaction in the field as it relates to the CSAO role is that of time demands. The position is often one that requires constant attention, every day of the week. This can lead to burnout as well as leaving no time for other pursuits or interests. It can also lead to isolation. Sometimes this is amplified because there are so few women at the top levels that these CSAOs can confide in or socialize with (Hersi, 1993; Randall, Daugherty, & Globetti, 1995).

In general society, being married increases life satisfaction. Bird (1984) found that women administrations in higher education are more likely to be single or divorced,

which may have implications for their general life satisfaction. Gender and age also play a role with male CSAOs significantly more satisfied with their lives than female CSAOs. Older CSAOs are more satisfied than their younger counterparts as were those who are married compared with those who never married (Anderson, 1998). Anderson, Guido-DiBrito, and Morrell (2000) address the job satisfaction and life satisfaction relationship noting that there is little separation between the two in the general population, although within the student affairs literature it has been mostly untouched. Loscocco and Roschelle (1991) found that the connection between work and nonwork domains creates inter-role conflict. Anderson (1998) determined that female CSAOs report significantly higher levels of inter-role conflict than their male counterparts. The women reported conflict from sacrificing personal relationships, failing relationships because of time spent on the job, and regrets associated with the choice to put their careers first.

Stress is also related to job satisfaction. Berwick (1992) found that the more satisfied an administrator is on the job, the less stress he or she experiences. The study also concludes that, “the lack of time available for family, leisure, and research activities may be contributing to individuals’ job dissatisfaction” (p. 17).

The research on job satisfaction within student affairs has been very limited. Nobbe and Manning (1997) state, “the work culture in many student affairs organizations is one that demands long hours of hard work for levels of compensation that are not competitive with the private sector” (p. 108). One of the first studies was conducted by Bender in 1980. That study noted that 66% of the sample was satisfied with their jobs, 16% undecided, and 18% unsatisfied. Nearly 20 years later, Anderson

(1998) in an unpublished doctoral dissertation, conducted a national study of male and female CSAOs and revealed that age, marital status, and gender determined job satisfaction. Specifically, male CSAOs were more satisfied with their jobs than female CSAOs. The same was true with older versus younger and married versus unmarried CSAOs. Germane to this review in particular were the findings that women administrators at the associate or assistant CSAO role had the lowest levels of job satisfaction. Female CSAOs at community colleges were less satisfied than their counterparts at research institutions. Studies by Hersi (1993) and Johnsrud and Heck (1994) confirm that women serving in some traditional student affairs roles like admissions, women's centers, and financial aid hold low status at many institutions. Further, their positions are considered peripheral to the primary mission of the university. This low status can contribute to a feeling of low self-worth and frustration, which can produce job-related stress. Women in these roles also tend to have hidden workloads and spend their time in activities less valued by top administrators or seen as less central to the mission of the university (Hersi, 1993). Moreover, positions previously occupied by a female are the most likely to be filled subsequently by other women, resulting in positions that become earmarked for women. These positions are typically in the lower ranks and are lower-paid positions (Johnsrud & Heck, 1994). Connections between job satisfaction and life satisfaction are natural extensions of this field of research, as is inter-role conflict. Only in Anderson's study (1998) was the interaction between life and job satisfaction explored for CSAOs, indicating a positive directional relationship between these two dynamics.

Burnout and Stress

There is also a greater stress for women in the field (Howard-Hamilton, Palmer, Johnson, & Kicklighter, 1998). Howard-Hamilton and others (1998) found women suffered more from burnout than their male counterparts due to factors such as lower salaries, more difficult area(s) of responsibility, and a lower number of staff members available to assist them in their day. The female CSAO is often confronted with skepticism over her professional and personal life balance. This criticism is rarely applied to her male peers:

A female chief [student affairs officer] who is able to successfully manage a demanding senior position and equally demanding family responsibilities is dubiously labeled a ‘superwoman’, who must be sacrificing something important in her personal life or who is on a collision course with reality – she’ll burn out soon.

(Jordan-Cox in Clement and Rickard, 1992, p. 193)

Jones and Komives (2001) observe, “Women in senior student affairs positions appear to be held to a different standard with differing expectations for style and success” (p. 241). Jones and Komives cite a study by Clement & Rickard (1992), which found that, “women were expected to be more nurturing, more collaborative and less hierarchical, and more forgiving than their male counterparts.” (p.241). Jones and Komives add that, “The demands of the senior student affairs position are great and seem to exact a greater toll for women who are balancing multiple commitments” (p. 241). Nancy Scott (1992) found that women were significantly more stressed than their male counterparts both in the work setting and outside of it. In fact, for all 18 items measured in her study, women reported higher levels of stress, six of which were related to work, nine to their personal lives, and three items describing the intersection of work

and personal life. In a similar study, Berwick (1992) found stress levels were predicted by certain personal characteristics and organizational variables including job satisfaction, dual relationship status, number of years in the field, size of the institution and commitment to the organization.

Randall et al. (1995) reports that 96.3% of the women CSAOs surveyed indicated they are very or moderately satisfied with their position. However, these CSAO's also indicate dissatisfaction with the time demands of the position and mention they feel isolated since there are often few women at the top level with whom they connect. In a 1992 study by Nancy Scott, she found that women CSAOs were statistically more stressed than their male counterparts both at work and away from work. The most common stressors for women CSAOs include death or serious illness of a family member or friend, too much work/too little time, serious or repeated illness, change in relationship, and new supervisor. For male CSAOs, the top stressors were new supervisor, relocation, unresolved conflict with supervisor, serious or repeated illness, and change in position. In reporting environmental changes used to reduce stress, males reported involvement with a hobby as their primary method while women listed arranging quiet space at home. An interesting note in this study was that nearly 100% of the males were married while fewer than half of the women were, perhaps pointing to the lack of a support system used to deal with stress. Additionally, research by Gilligan (1982) notes that women often second guess themselves and have a desire to use compromise to make everyone happy. These characteristics could be a subtle creator of stress (Scott 1992). Anderson, Guido-DiBrito, and Morrell (2000) report that some

studies on stress among student affairs administrators display similar results (Berwick, 1992; Scott, 1992) that stress for both genders, “tends to result from discrepancies between individual and institutional priorities or role conflict” (p. 105). Stress is also related to job satisfaction. Berwick (1992) reveals in her study that “the lack of time available for family, leisure, and research activities may be contributing to individuals’ job dissatisfaction” (p. 17).

Role Definition

Life in the 21st century seems more complex than ever, as adults cope with the demands of multiple roles, the stresses of a fluid workplace, and the pressures of child and elder care. Individuals feel compelled to update their work-related knowledge and skills and to keep up with the proliferation of information. Family resource management is increasingly complex, with expanded choices and decisions that must be made about utilities, banking, investments, retirement planning, etc. The Internet has simultaneously made it easier to access information, yet more complicated to apply critical judgment to what one finds. Many of us feel, as Kegan (1994) put it, ‘in over our heads’ as we strive to ‘balance’ our life domains.

Sandra Kerka, *The Balancing Act of Life*, *ERIC Digest* 2001

The literature on balance is often filled with discussions of role as it pertains to work and nonwork, specifically, which roles are allocated in a life and how to balance the competing demands of those roles. Anderson, Guido-DiBrito, and Morrell (2000) identify inter-role conflict as an issue between work and nonwork domains. Their review of literature suggests that work and nonwork compete for time and energy with limited resources which leads to the conflict or tension. These role definitions can manifest themselves particularly as it pertains to marriage and children. Bird (1984) found that women reported significantly more time conflicts than men in professional activities. In this same study, 55% of the men were married to women who either did

not work or worked part-time. As such, these men reported that their family structure allowed for more flexibility for their professional role, lessening the inter-role conflict. Anderson (1998) found that female CSAO's reported significantly higher levels of inter-role conflict than their male counterparts. In the related qualitative data in this same study, women wrote about, "sacrificing personal relationships, the failure of relationships because of time spent on the job, and regrets associated with some of their choices to put their career first (p. 104).

Balance

The literature on balance is overwhelming, and by the sheer volume of the work alone, one could consider it vastly important to today's busy professional either in or outside of student affairs. Popular literature is rife with articles, titles, and personal improvement workshops on the topic. Within the field, the literature is still thick with articles, books, and conference sessions, most pointing to a responsibility of student affairs professionals to achieve personal and professional balance not only for their students, but for themselves (Reisser, 2002).

Kofodimos (1993) defined balance as, "a satisfying, healthy, and productive life that includes work, play, and love; that integrates a range of life activities with attention to self and to personal and spiritual development; and that expresses a person's unique wishes, interests and values" (p. xiii). This definition is preferable to the standard dictionary definition offered by Merriam-Webster (Balance, 2009) as, "equality between the totals of the two sides of an account." Art Sandeen (1991) and Stan Carpenter (2003) both have written extensively about the student affairs leader and

professionalism, and both point to the demanding nature of the CSAO role, as well as the desire of the universities for professionals with high talent and energy. Combined, this mandate to achieve balance with the demanding and high energy requirement for the job creates a natural tension. More recent literature has moved away from standard strategies to achieve balance towards a more personalized approach. Kerka (2001) emphasizes, “defining what [balance] means is highly individual” (p. 2). Berwick (1992) offers a similar concept of personalization when she states that each individual, “needs to determine which stressors are most problematic for him or her as an individual and which coping strategies are most effective” (p. 18).

A new study that illustrates a change in the literature was authored by Guthrie, Woods, Custer, and Gregory (2005) and offers a model of balance with four primary keys: self-knowledge, intentionality, commitment to self care, and reflection. An important concept offered by these authors includes differentiating that balance is not static, as is sometimes implied by the definition. “It became clear through our interviews that these participants experienced balance not as a static concept, but as a developmental process with a changing meaning over different phases in life and the profession” (p. 119). Rather than offering strategies for balance, the study results point to four primary keys to balance that, “form a foundation for attaining and maintaining a sense of personal and professional balance. It is in these four areas that growth and development of a professional’s sense of balance also occurs” (p. 121). First, self-knowledge is an awareness of what is important to a person specifically. Next, intentionality points to making deliberate choices rather than simply responding to

demands. Commitment to self-care reflects the need for each individual to find what is renewing to him/her and to employ a self-care strategy. Lastly, reflection allows for planned time to review and connect to the strategies, particularly allowing for readjustment as needed.

In Paula Caproni's (2004) published article on work/life balance, she states, "I contend the well-intentioned discourse of work/life balance in the popular and scholarly press actually may undermine women's and men's attempts to live fulfilling lives" (p. 208). Applying a critical perspective to this topic, she notes that the current literature, "is built on a language and logic that are based in traditional models of bureaucratic organizations, and thus the discourse is likely to perpetuate – and perhaps further entrench – many of the problems it promises to alleviate" (p. 209). Caproni's critical view on the literature reveals the underlying premise of work/life balance stems from a systematic, goal-oriented approach to life that, by its very definition, may not be applicable to many individuals. Specifically, she points out that this model assumes choice and control, regardless of the fact that most individual's lives are filled with unpredictability. She argues that this model sets individuals up to achieve the unachievable and to live with constant frustration because of our inability to achieve what is beyond our reach. She notes that the language frequently associated with work by managers these days include the language of intimacy and spirituality. Examples include asking managers to, "feel passionate about their work and lead with soul" (p. 215). This concept can create a minimization of increasing work hours and responsibility with no compensation fiscally or in vacation time. Caproni closes her

critical analysis proposing that we, “not settle for a balanced life” (p. 216). Rather, she suggests that we judge success by how we feel, by living a full life defined by the individual.

Summary of Findings

In spite of many years in the field and the many meaningful contributions women have made, women continue to be underrepresented in top leadership positions. Women are less valued than men, substantiated by the difference in pay and failure to achieve equity in the field. Even the research from the field still does not allow for the full expression of women’s voices and issues, despite their majority in the profession.

The CSAO role is seen as demanding, typically requiring a doctorate and at least ten years of experience. The most common entry point to the CSAO role is a director position, a position in the field that is still more male than female. Additionally, in order to achieve advancement in the field, it generally is assumed that professionals will relocate. Among the top reasons individuals leave the field include burnout, lack of mentoring, frustration with salary, the need to relocate, and the evening and weekend responsibilities associated with working in the field. Women continue to leave the field at a rate higher than their male colleagues. Women in particular cite isolation, high levels of inter-role conflict from sacrificing personal relationships, failing relationships because of time spent on the job, and regrets associated with the choice to put their careers first. More women at the CSAO level remain unmarried or are divorced compared to their male counterparts. The same is true for children; more women than men remain childless.

Within the field, women's communication styles are not as valued, in favor of the male model of leadership and communication. Lastly, there are overwhelming and consistent messages about achieving balance, typically implied to be a static concept. Nearly every professional development conference will have at least one session on achieving and maintaining balance. Yet the subtle and overt messages of how to achieve success at the top level is to work long hours, to commit to completing additional education, and to relocate as necessary for one's career. All of these messages are in opposition to the advice offered for achieving balance and reducing inter-role conflict.

This study seeks to build on the current literature and to gain a deeper understanding of the intersection of career progression (work), balance (nonwork), and relationships (network) of women chief student affairs officers through a naturalistic inquiry process. This study contributes to the literature by adding to the language and understanding of the issues. Further, it may assist in the development of a female standard for the position – moving away from the sole use of the male standard. The constructivist design of this research also will add voice to the women participants of the study. It will add weight to these women's experiences in affecting the perception of women leaders and the issues surrounding work and nonwork, public, and private life issues.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter will address the purpose of the study, paradigm and method as well as population and sample. It will further describe and detail the research design employed, and the procedures followed that produced data that are trustworthy, dependable, and confirmable.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the intersection of career progression (work), balance (nonwork), and relationships (networks) of women chief student affairs officers. Women make up a majority of those employed in higher education today. However, they are still a minority in the top leadership positions within the organization. Women are more likely to be assistants to, assistants, or associates than they are to be directors, deans, vice presidents, provosts or presidents. Even within the division of student affairs, which has been largely a female profession in the last 30 years, there are still proportionately fewer women in the chief student affairs role. The role of the chief student affairs officer is demanding, requiring a time commitment outside of the normal workday. The role usually requires an advanced degree, and there is a lack of mentoring for women in the profession. Given the barriers to advancement for women, even those that do become chief student affairs officers are still a minority in their institutions. In a field where there are expectations to be in the helper role, evening work commitments are common, combined with the possibility of living in campus

housing, the lines between public and private lives can become blurred. As a result, how does the intersection of the public/work and private/nonwork life affect women chief student affairs officers?

Paradigm and Method

I chose a naturalistic paradigm and qualitative design because it provided an in-depth view and understanding of the complexities of the topic. Because values and beliefs cannot be empirically proven true or false, this design allows for themes and voices to emerge from the research and be heard. Additionally, this type of inquiry allowed me to recognize and acquaint the audience with the multiple realities that exist for different people and groups (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), specifically those rarely represented. This paradigm is characterized by a researcher-respondent relationship that is subjective, interactive, and interdependent. Reality is multiple, complex and not easily quantifiable. The values of the researcher, respondents, research site, and underlying theory cannot help but undergird all aspects of the research and the research product is context specific (Broido & Manning, 2002).

In this study, the human-as-instrument design was critical, since it allowed me to be responsive, adaptable, and have an emphasis on holistic data collection as well as expand my base of knowledge which had already been informed by the literature and my 10+ years in the field. Perhaps even more important was the opportunity to process the information immediately, clarify and summarize with the participants, and explore any atypical responses, as necessary. Moreover, this paradigm seeks to understand, rather

than predict, which was critically important given the dearth of research on this topic from a woman's point of view (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Population and Sample

The population for this study was nine women serving in the chief student affairs officer role. Using purposive sampling as outlined in the naturalistic inquiry paradigm both maximum variation sampling and convenience sampling were employed. This is because I was seeking to gather as much information as possible to best understand the lives and “..to detail the many specifics that give the context its unique flavor” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 201). To gain entrée to women who would be willing to disclose in-depth about their lives, I utilized two prominent contacts in the field to identify potential participants within the geographic locations that I could visit. Initially, I contacted each participant by e-mail (see Appendix A) and followed up with a phone call to schedule the appointment. Interviews began in the summer of 2006. A professional development trip took me first out of state and created an opportunity to conduct two interviews with women from different parts of the country than my home state. I later scheduled five more interviews with participants that were within driving distance of my home. Another conference in November of the same year allowed me to conduct one additional interview and my final interview came during a campus visit of regional CSAOs from a consortium for an annual meeting.

Of the nine interviews, all were usable. All the interviews were digitally recorded and I took field notes. All nine women served in the chief student affairs role, although their specific titles varied from Dean to Vice President, with varying areas of

responsibility. Seven of the women had obtained a Ph.D. Eight of the women were Caucasian, and one was African-American. The ages of the women ranged from late 30's to late 50's, with the majority of them in their fifties. Eight were currently married, and one had never married. Seven had children and two did not. Most have been in the field for about 30 years and in their current position for 6.5 years with a median of 8. Six of the women worked for public institutions and the remaining three for private institutions. Of the nine women interviewed, I had previous interaction with two of them during my employment history, one when she was not yet in the CSAO role and another when she was the CSAO of my division.

Research Design

Lincoln & Guba (1985) state that the naturalistic paradigm provides a structure for inquiry that utilizes a natural setting, the human as instrument, use of tacit as well as propositional knowledge, and qualitative methods. Use of purposive sampling, inductive data analysis, grounded theory, and emergent design are critical to understanding the depth of a particular phenomenon, in this case, the intersection of work and nonwork. Case reports as a model for providing thick description, tentative application of the findings, focus-determined boundaries that focus the study, and establishing trustworthiness of the study are all hallmarks of naturalistic inquiry and useful in the development of this study and the results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Because this method of inquiry is suited to deep understanding rather than predicting and because the population of this study has not been historically represented in the literature, the use of this method of inquiry is an important choice. After a few

years in the field observing males in the chief role and later, after reading and attending so many sessions on work-life balance that seemed to imply a static standard of achievement, it became evident to me that the need to understand the particular phenomenon of work and nonwork intersections of women, particularly in the chief role, was an opportunity. Women continue to represent the majority of those entering the field, yet the chief position is still primarily occupied by men. Much of the work addressing balance has been presented by men and resembles a checklist of techniques to employ in order to establish the elusive concept of balance.

I employed a semi-structured interview format for data collection. Each individual was interviewed once, alone in a private location to ensure confidentiality and openness. The interview protocol was developed by the researcher with influence and assistance from my peer debriefer. The dissertation committee approved the questions. The questions began broadly, seeking to understand how each participant saw herself in her work role, establishing information on her career path and mentors before asking questions which provoke information regarding life outside of work and life integration. Data were analyzed using a constant comparative method as outlined in Lincoln & Guba's *Naturalistic Inquiry* (1985).

Procedures

The procedures utilized in this study come from the naturalistic inquiry method and includes, “purposive sampling, inductive analysis of the data obtained from the sample, development of grounded theory based on the inductive analysis and projection of next steps in a constantly emergent design” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 187).

To begin, I asked two prominent contacts in the field for a list of names of women who they thought would be suitable participants for my study, especially within the geographic areas I was traveling to over the next few months. Initially, I sent an e-mail communication to each potential participant (see Appendix A). Later, I followed up with a phone call to each person in order to make the final arrangements. At the conclusion of each interview, I asked each participant for recommendations of additional women in the CSAO role that they thought I should contact. Each woman I contacted agreed to participate.

Interviews were determined based on the availability and preference of the participant, in a location of her choice. Most occurred in their offices, although a few took place in a hotel room associated with a professional conference. No monetary incentive was offered for participating in the interview, although I offered all the participants a beverage since our interviews were lengthy. On average, the interviews lasted two hours.

As stated earlier, the interviews were semi-structured and followed an interview protocol (See Appendix B). The questions began more broadly, seeking to first establish rapport and trust before asking more pointed questions that could have elicited more private or personal information. After the first six interviews, an additional question emerged and was used in the final three interviews. At the beginning of the interview, I shared the Informed Consent (see Appendix C), and both the participant and I signed the form. I provided a brief introduction to my research before beginning unless the

participant asked to see the interview protocol in advance, as two participants did. The informed consents are kept in a locked storage cabinet in my home.

The data were collected via two methods. First, a digital audio recording of the interview was made. Concurrently, I took field notes during and after the interview. The audio recordings were transcribed, noting paralinguistic cues, pauses and turning points as appropriate. During the interviews, I completed member checking by asking clarifying questions and checking for meaning. After transcription of the recordings was complete, I sent each transcription in its original state, as well as an edited version that removed any personal markers for their review. Each participant approved the transcription, although most corrected minor details of names or locations. After completion of all nine interviews and member checking of the transcriptions, I read through all the transcriptions in one sitting. The result was documentation of five emergent themes. I e-mailed each of the participants individually to thank them for participating and in doing so, identified these five emergent themes, asking for feedback. Each participant wrote back and each one identified with the themes and thought they aptly described her personal story.

The edited transcriptions were unitized and printed on four-by-six index cards. Each card was coded and printed sequentially utilizing a system developed first by Elsa Gonzalez y Gonzalez in 2007 and shared with me by Rosalind V. Alderman in 2008. The codes included some demographic information about each participant interviewed. For example, #3CPU86 was interview #3, Caucasian, working at a public university,

card number 86. All cards are stored in boxes which are kept in a locked storage cabinet in my home.

I analyzed the cards using the constant comparative method presented by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as cited by Lincoln & Guba (1985, p. 339). I analyzed each card and compared it to the previous card. Cards that held similar pieces of information were kept together in a pile and new piles were created as new information or data emerged that were not related to the previous categories established. Once the initial sort was complete, I analyzed each category again and re-categorized as needed. Although some changes did occur within categories, the initial themes that emerged remained intact.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is the term used to measure the four conventional formulations used by researchers outside of the naturalistic paradigm. At the core of the issue are basic questions of truth and context of the findings, applicability in other contexts, consistency of results in a replicated study, and the degree that the findings represent the characteristics of the respondents and context, rather than the bias of the researcher. Guba in Lincoln & Guba (1985) suggests four new terms for addressing these questions of trustworthiness. They are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

I established credibility by using prolonged engagement. I have worked in student affairs in a university setting for more than 12 years and the last seven have been in a senior role where I have worked directly with a woman chief student affairs officer.

In addition, I have completed a doctoral internship working with the CSAO at another institution. I have read many books addressing the specific challenges, needs, and environmental issues of serving in the chief student affairs role. All of the above establish credibility through prolonged engagement.

In addition, I utilized my former supervisor, a woman CSAO, as a peer debriefer during this process. This peer debriefer has a Ph.D. and has worked in the field of student affairs for more than 25 years. A well known leader in the field throughout the state and nationally, she is well respected for her work which includes both professional presentations on the national level as well as published articles and chapters in books. The peer debriefer assisted in question development for the interview protocol as well as provided guidance and feedback on the emergent themes.

Lastly, I routinely employed member checking both during and after interviews with participants per the Lincoln & Guba (1985) suggestion since, “member checking is both informal and formal, and it occurs continuously” (p. 314). During the interview process I asked follow-up questions and frequently checked for understanding by restating what I understood the participant to be saying. In later interviews, I shared themes and ideas from previous interviews when appropriate and always received confirmation from the participant.

Transferability

Since transferability is best demonstrated by, “providing the data base that makes transferability judgments possible on the part of potential appliers” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316), thick description is the method most often used to achieve transferability.

Presenting as much of the data as possible will allow a future reader to ascertain how the data were collected and how corresponding conclusions emerged. In this study, the interviews were in-depth, lasting for several hours in length. Transcriptions of the interviews included paralinguistic cues, pauses, and turning points. A reflexive journal was kept by the researcher to allow for critical reflection on the process of the research.

Dependability and Confirmability

Establishing dependability independently is difficult since it is tied directly to credibility. Earlier I outlined the ways in which I have established credibility in this research study. The use of an auditor, as suggested by Guba, “is to examine the product – the data, findings, interpretations, and recommendations – and attests that it is supported by data and is internally coherent so that the ‘bottom line’ may be accepted” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 318). Guba further suggests that the audit can also serve to establish the confirmability in addition to the dependability. As a result, I asked a colleague to serve as an inquiry auditor regarding my research to further establish dependability and confirmability. Utilizing the Halpern audit trail categories outlined in Lincoln & Guba (1985), the auditor will review whether the findings are grounded in data, determine whether the inferences made are logical, review the analytic techniques used, approve the appropriateness of category labels, review the quality of interpretations, and address inquirer bias.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the intersection of career progression (work), balance (nonwork), and relationships (networks) of women chief student affairs officers. Nine women currently employed as the Chief Student Affairs Officer (CSAO) of their institutions were interviewed for this study. A naturalistic paradigm and qualitative design was employed because it provided an in-depth view and understanding of the complexities of the topic. Because values and beliefs cannot be empirically proven true or false, this design allowed for themes and voices to emerge from the research and be heard. Additionally, this type of inquiry allowed me to recognize and acquaint the audience with the multiple realities that exist for different people and groups, specifically those rarely represented (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The results in this section were derived from a descriptive analysis including content coding and data sorting using comparative analysis.

This study sought to answer the following four research questions for women serving in the chief student affairs officer position: (1) how does gender influence your role as a chief student affairs officer; (2) do you categorize the work, network, and nonwork domains of your life as separate, and if so, how do you determine what is part of the distinct categories; (3) to what extent does your public and private life intersect, and what is the effect on both as a result, and; (4) does achievement have a cost in the field, and if so, what is that cost from your perspective? The literature in the field

suggests the achievement and constant maintenance of balance, which is viewed through a male construct, is the norm. It is evident that the need to understand the particular phenomenon of work and nonwork intersections of women, particularly in the chief role, is an opportunity to give voice to an issue for women that rarely has been heard in the field.

Organization of the Chapter

The organization of this chapter includes life histories of each of the women interviewed in this study followed by sections organized around each of the research questions. Within these sections, the salient themes which emerged through the coding and sorting process are discussed. Each of the emergent themes will be addressed in relationship to findings in the literature and the chapter will end with a section on findings related to the original research questions.

The Respondents

The women in this study readily shared their career journeys and information about their personal lives. Their individual accounts detailing their experiences were powerful, and as such, I offer brief life histories of each of the women interviewed. In doing so, I seek to relate the struggles and meaning of their lives as well as highlight their commonalities. Understanding more about each of these women will establish an important context for the emergent themes presented later in this chapter.

Colleen

Colleen is a Vice President for Student Affairs at a large, comprehensive public university in the southwest. She reports directly to the president. She has been in the

field for 30 years and in her current position for six years. Her total time in the CSAO role at this campus and others is 15 years. She has completed her PhD. Colleen is a white woman in her 50's. She has never been married and has no children.

Originally, counseling work brought Colleen into the field of higher education after a friend recommended her for a counseling position at a community college. Her parents were not college educated, and her interest in social work and the community led her to pursue a master's degree in counseling. Initially, she did not intend even to go to college because her parents lacked the means and she lacked the ambition. She developed an unexpected relationship with a mentor late in her high school career, a mentor who was diagnosed with terminal cancer. Her mentor pushed her to attend college, which she did as a result of their relationship. After completion of her bachelor's degree, the economy was rocky and rather than trying the employment market, Colleen decided to pursue a graduate degree. She eventually landed a position in community college counseling area. After finishing her graduate studies, she continued to work for about five years and realized that if she wanted to be a director or do something different that she would need a doctorate. So she moved and began a Ph.D. program while working graduate assistantships initially but later assumed a full-time position in housing. After completing her Ph.D. she continued working at the same institution for another few years until she was recruited away for a Dean of Students position. Until now, her experience had been in all public settings, but with this move, she tried the private school environment in a one-year interim position. Deciding she preferred the public setting, she left after a year and was promoted into an Assistant VP

position, eventually serving as Interim VP and then Vice President for Student Affairs. Later, she accepted another VPSA position where she continues to serve. She was very young when she began serving in the chief role, well before she was 40 years old. During her career working she also has served as interim president of a university. She has been the only female on the executive council for most of the years she has served as the chief student affairs officer. Although in recent years another woman has also served, more years than not, she has been the only one.

Colleen identified several mentors who were critical to her career and personal growth, which she identifies as interconnected. Two mentors were in her field, one outside and one that crossed over both private and professional domains. She considers her life to be a blend of work, personal life and relationships. As a young woman, she did not expect to never marry or have children but has no regrets about the life circumstances at play in her life. She does not feel that work choices totally dictated marriage and children choices, but once she felt that marriage and children might not be in her life, she dedicated herself to her work. Colleen regularly volunteers in the community in areas unrelated to her work duties and has many friends and interests.

Betty

Betty is a Vice President for student affairs at a large, comprehensive public university in the west. Betty reports directly to the president, has been in her position eight years and has completed a PhD. She is married and has one biological child and one step-child. Both are grown. Betty has been in the field 31 years, 18 of those in the CSAO position. She is a white woman in her 50's.

Betty has always worked at public institutions and considers access to education an important component in what she does. She believes her job is to help students be successful. Betty began her career in student affairs when, during her undergraduate years as a student leader, a mentor suggested to her that she should work in the field. Despite her initial plans to pursue a career in the fashion industry, she took her mentor's advice. Both of Betty's parents were educators and had college educations. She pursued a graduate degree in counseling immediately upon completing her bachelor's degree. She notes that when she began in the field, it was primarily men. Her first position was in Greek affairs, but she quickly moved out of that into student leader advising. She stayed at the institution where she held her first job for 13 years, serving in four different positions. During this time she met and married her husband, became a stepparent, and birthed their only biological child. Betty began her doctoral program just a few weeks after giving birth, and took seven years to finish her degree. Shortly after completion, she was recruited away to another public institution to become the chief officer in student affairs. Betty was in this position for 10+ years, weighing not only her professional choices but also family choices when deciding to leave. Ultimately, her commitment to allowing her child to complete school in one location dictated the length of her time on the job.

Next, she accepted another chief role at a larger, more prominent public university in the southwest area of the United States. During the move to this institution, she negotiated for spousal employment. The president that hired her left, and she received an offer to leave as well, although ultimately she decided to stay.

Betty has spent many of her years as a CSAO serving on boards both in and outside the higher education field. Her commitment to service is something she sees as key to her work on campus. She considers herself to have had a few mentors along the way, all in the professional realm.

Melanie

Melanie is a Vice President for Student Life at a small, regional public university in the southwest. Melanie reports directly to the president and has completed her PhD. She has been in her current position for 15 years. Melanie is married and has three children, all grown. She has been in the field for 31 years. Melanie is a white woman in her 50's.

Melanie pursued an undergraduate degree in French, primarily because she alone was paying the cost of attendance, and she placed out of 14 hours of French. Neither of Melanie's parents went to college. A happenchance meeting with an advisor who had a connection to her high school alma mater led her to pursue a degree. That advisor became a significant mentor in her life. Ultimately, she completed her undergraduate degree in just two and a half years. She met her husband during her undergraduate years, and they married just after completing their bachelor degrees. She taught one year in the public school system. Her husband had accepted a job as a dorm director during that time, and she had the opportunity to pursue a graduate degree in counseling. They both worked in housing as a means to support their graduate work. She also worked in Orientation. After three years, they both completed their degrees. Melanie accepted her first full-time position in the field at a new branch campus of another university in the

area of student activities. She stayed for more than 15 years at that campus and was promoted multiple times until she became the Dean of Students. While in this position, she and her husband had three children. She began one graduate program right after the birth of her third child and decided she did not like the program. With three children under the age of 5, she began another program out of state that required commuting. She finished her program in three years.

She left that position after the political landscape changed, her mentor left, and she realized she was not being compensated fairly. In addition to changes at work, her personal life pointed to cues it was time for the family to relocate as well. Melanie accepted the CSAO role at another institution in the same state after interviewing for two positions and being offered both of them. She is the only female ever to have served on the executive council for this university. Melanie identified multiple mentors, mostly within the field, who have supported and provided her guidance in navigating her career.

Ellen

Ellen is a Vice President for Student Affairs at a large, comprehensive public university in the southwest. Ellen reports directly to the president and has completed her PhD. She has been in her current position for eight years and in the field for 35 years. Ellen is a white woman in her 50's. She is married and has three children, all grown.

The daughter of teachers, she was her high school valedictorian and considered college a natural path. However, she considered her career choices mostly through a traditional lens of what accepted roles for women were. She pursued an undergraduate degree in Spanish, partly to obtain language skills for a career as a stewardess, although

she identified her passion as math. Married to her high school sweetheart, she completed her undergraduate degree before he did, and while waiting for him to finish, she decided to enroll in a graduate program in counseling. As she began her program, a teaching job opened in the area suddenly, so she began to teach and attend graduate school at the same time. After a few years teaching, an opportunity to step into counseling came along, and she pursued counseling in the middle school setting. Following her husband through two job moves, she found herself back in a college town looking for work. She thought she could be successful transferring her public school counseling skills into the college counseling setting but quickly learned that while she liked the higher education environment, personal counseling was not a career she wanted to pursue. Transferring to housing, she worked for a number of years and was promoted several times. After a few years of working, Ellen recognized the need for a doctorate and began in a program many states away before she was asked to provide leadership at the director level. She transferred to a program closer to home and continued working and studying. After completing her Ph.D., Ellen conducted a national search and accepted a Dean of Students job across the country where she eventually was promoted into the CSAO role. After 10+ years in that role and as one of her children graduated high school, Ellen conducted another national search and accepted another chief role at a major public university in her home state. Along the way, Ellen and her husband had three children, including birthing one child while in her doctoral program and working full-time. Very often in her career, Ellen has been the first woman to serve in many of the roles, including the only woman dean, the only woman CSAO twice, and so on.

During her last job search she asked for, and received, faculty status in addition to her staff position and later received tenure. All of her identified mentors have been male and connected to her career progression.

Christine

Christine is a Vice President for Student Affairs at a large, comprehensive public university in the southwest. She reports directly to the president and has been in her position for 3 years. She has completed her PhD and been in the field for 35 years.

Christine is an African-American woman in her 50's. She is married and has no children.

A first-generation college student, Christine began her undergraduate career with plans to become a teacher. A mentoring relationship with a couple from a local church led her to relocate from the north to the Midwest after she completed her undergraduate degree. She planned to begin a graduate program in school counseling after teaching for a year. During the move, she began looking for a job to establish residency and found she was recruited into working as an assistant dean whose job responsibilities included minority counseling and the learning skills center, all with only an undergraduate degree. While working in her first student affairs job at a private university, Christine pursued a master's degree in counseling and student personnel, altering her original plans to pursue school counseling. She worked full-time and commuted to a nearby state university for her graduate work. Also during this time, she was given more responsibility and the opportunity to job share. As a result, she gained experience in orientation, housing, and career services.

Christine became a foster parent to one teenage girl, and then after that girl graduated high school, she temporarily assumed custody of another teenage girl. Shortly thereafter, she decided it was time to pursue a doctorate degree. She planned to leave her position and move, but her supervisor offered her the opportunity to take a sabbatical. This offer allowed her to commute and complete her coursework and then complete her dissertation on campus while she resumed her job duties. Because of this arrangement, she was able to finish her Ph.D. in three years. While she was in her graduate program, she met her husband, and they married a few years later, shortly after she finished her Ph.D. Her husband received a job offer in another state and that prompted a move for Christine as well. She accepted a mid-level job in housing at a major state university.

After a few years, her husband was interested in pursuing a new job, so they began to search together for a potential new location. A job search saw her promoted again in the area of housing and working in a new state at another public school. Very quickly she was promoted into the director job and then again into a more senior role. After a few years, she was again internally promoted to the CSAO role. It is notable that at the director level, she was only the second woman in the whole university at that level. Christine also notes that in most of the environments where she worked, she was either the only, or one of a handful, of Black professionals. She identifies mentors both in and outside the field of student affairs.

Sherri

Sherri is Vice President for Student Development at a small, private, religiously-affiliated university in the southwest. She reports directly to the president, has been in the field for 26 years and in her current position for 8 years. Her highest degree completed is a master's degree. She is married and has five children, two are still living at home and the rest are in college or grown. Sherri is a white woman in her 40's.

Sherri attended a small private school and received her degree in psychology with a minor in business. College was expected of Sherri, and so she thought little about going to college, although she was career-oriented. She met her husband in college, and they married right after they both graduated. A very active student leader, she was recruited to her first job as a hall director by the student affairs professionals of her alma mater. During this time, she had her first child. Her husband decided to pursue a law degree which forced them to relocate to another state. Sherri was able to find work at the institution in career services. Both her husband's admission to law school and her job were the result of networking relationships from their previous institutions. While working in her second job, she decided to pursue a graduate degree in counseling. After she completed her graduate degree, she had two more children, just a few years apart, while working in jobs associated with grants at the university. Once the grants ran out, she was appointed to a permanent position at the director level, although the position was in academic affairs. Later, after another child was born, she negotiated a transfer to student affairs, although she remained at the director level. Sherri transitioned back into

full-time work in student affairs after her last child was born and a few years old. Throughout these years, Sherri taught classes in addition to her normal workload.

A few years later, the vice president for student affairs position opened, and she pursued the position as an internal candidate. She was appointed into the role and continues to serve. When she initially was appointed, she was the only woman on the executive council. Now there are two other women that also serve. Interestingly, her oldest child was a student at the university when she was an internal candidate for the CSAO role. Her husband is also an executive of a large public company. With five children and two parents working in demanding executive positions, Sherri indicates that having live-in help has been a key to managing her multiple roles.

Sheryl

Sheryl is a Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services at a small, private university in the southwest. She reports directly to the president. Sheryl has been in the field for 30 years and in her current position for 7 years. Her highest degree is a master's degree. She is married and has one biological child and one step-child. They are both grown. Sheryl is a white woman in her 50's.

A first generation college student, she attended the local state university to study sociology and pursue a career as a teacher. During her time as a student-teacher, she decided that she did not want to teach after all, and through some connections landed a position as a social worker in a hospital. She decided fairly quickly that this also was not the right career path for her, so she left and joined her husband in the family business of real estate. Married since her sophomore year of college, she and her husband had

been involved in real estate for several years at this point. Shortly after she left the hospital, a former supervisor from the housing office where she worked as an undergraduate student called her to say that the university had a resident director position open. They offered her the position and a tuition stipend. Sheryl took the opportunity to pursue a graduate degree. Most of her courses were in the new student personnel and guidance program, so she joined that program. Because the program was new, it lacked enough full time faculty to support the program fully, so Sherri switched programs and eventually received her degree in history. After finishing her program she was promoted to an area coordinator position. A pending divorce created the opportunity for Sherri to consider a new adventure: Semester at Sea.

A relationship from the Semester at Sea program led her to move to the northwest United States where she accepted a position in academic advising with the community college system. Her next position was at the director level in housing, but this time at a small, private, religiously affiliated university back in her home state. During this time she met a man; they married and relocated to another state for his career. Shortly thereafter she became pregnant and had her only biological child. For a few years, the family relocated a few times, and Sherri did not work. A change in her husband's industry meant jobs were scarce, so they decided that Sherri would go back to work. A national search landed her a mid-level position in a small, private liberal arts school in the south. A year later she was promoted to director.

After many years in this position, Sherri was recruited away to work in the privatized housing industry. She was very successful in this position. Being offered a

promotion made her realize that she was not interested in the additional travel or move that the new position would require. At the same time, a chief student affairs officer position had opened at a small college about an hour away. She applied for the position and eventually accepted the job. She is the only female on the executive team at her university. Sherri did not identify as having many mentors, although she felt that many colleagues had been influential.

Karen

Karen is a Vice President for Student Affairs at a small, public university in the south. She reports directly to the president. Karen is a white woman in her 50's and has completed her PhD. She has been in her current position for 13 years and in the field for 29 years. All but three years of her career have been in the CSAO role. She is married and has two children, one grown and one in high school.

Karen pursued an undergraduate degree in business and during her time at the university, she was involved in student activities and hall governance. By the time she was a senior, she realized that she would like to work in a college or university but received negative feedback from her business professors when she shared her career plan. As a result, when she graduated, she conducted a job search in marketing. She did not find anything appealing, and her roommate happened to have entered the counselor education program at the university. Her roommate encouraged her to join her in the program. Deciding to attend, she made the necessary arrangements for late admission and began the program. She completed it in one year and then conducted a national job search. Her first position took her to the Midwest as a generalist at the assistant director

level in a student services area that had only two staff members. The campus was a small, public school with mostly a commuter population.

A few years later, Karen had the opportunity to become a director at another one of the campuses in the system. She met and married her husband, who was also affiliated with the campus. Within a year or two, Karen decided to pursue a PhD and began a nearby program while working full time. While she was completing her coursework, she had her first child. She took a year off from her program while continuing to work full-time. As she and her husband planned for a second baby, Karen got very motivated to finish the dissertation, eventually defending when she was 8-months pregnant with her second child. Two years after she finished her PhD, she began a job search that led her to her current position as the chief student affairs officer. The executive council that she is part of is about half women, half men although she is the first female to serve in the CSAO role on that campus. Her campus is part of a 12-school athletic conference and chief officers get together a few times a year to confer. When Karen started in her current position, she was the only female and about 20 years younger than her counterparts. Now, about a third of the group is female. Karen can point to supervisors that have assisted and coached her but does not really identify with having any mentors.

Ellisha

Ellisha is a Vice President for Student Affairs at a small, private liberal arts university in the south. She reports directly to the president. Ellisha has completed her PhD and has been in her current position for four years and in the field for 17. She is married and has one child in elementary school. Ellisha is a white woman in her 30's.

Ellisha pursued an undergraduate degree in English with a secondary education concentration; initially her intention was to teach. Late in her college career she decided that teaching was not for her. Her parents had made it very clear that immediately following graduation she would be financially independent from them. Ellisha married right out of college and began a job search that led to a position as a live in residential life member at another college. This position piqued her interest in continuing in the field so she began a master's program at nearby college, first taking a few classes at a time before quitting her position to go full time. Once she graduated, a job search led her to a small, private college in the south. Her first position was in adult education, a position she accepted primarily because she was interested in working for the college. When, a short while later, a position came open in a more traditional student affairs role at the director level Ellisha was promoted to the position. Because the student affairs staff was lean, Ellisha accepted a lot of extra responsibility for new areas which allowed her to grow her portfolio of experience quickly.

Ellisha began to pursue a PhD because she knew she wanted as many options as possible in the field. A few years into her program she became pregnant with her first child and that process required her to be on bed rest for eight weeks, followed by another ten weeks of maternity leave. During her time away from campus, she was promoted from director to associate dean. Upon her return to work, she was juggling a newborn, a promotion, and the completion of her doctoral program in organizational development. After completing her program, she applied for several positions, eventually accepting a position as a dean of freshman at a small, private school back in her home state. When

the chief officer retired a year later, Ellisha applied for the position and received it. She became the first woman ever to hold the chief role and is the only senior manager in that institution who is female, although there is another woman on the executive council that serves in an advisory capacity. She also lives in a campus residence, further blurring the lines between her private and personal life.

Conclusion

The nine women CSAO that participated in this study are representative of the current demographics in the field in some ways, such as ethnicity, and not in other ways, like years in the field. While this study did not seek a representative sample, it is important to understand the demographics of the respondents. Table 1 below provides descriptive information.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked: How does gender influence your role as a chief student affairs officer? Respondents were asked questions related to their career paths and choices, as well as their lives as a chief student affairs officer. Responses clustered around four themes: women in the field, leadership style, career paths, and children.

TABLE 1. Demographics of Respondents

Ethnicity			
	White	8	
	African-American	1	
Level of education			
	PhD	7	
	Masters	2	
Age			
	50 years old or older	7	
	40 to 49 years old	1	
	30 to 39 years old	1	
Type of institution			
	Private	3	
	Public	6	
		Large Public	4
		Small/Regional Public	2
Years in the field			
	30-35	6	
	25-29	2	
	20-24	0	
	15-19	1	
Years as CSAO			
	26-30	1	
	20-25	0	
	15-19	4	
	10-14	0	
	5-9	4	

Women in the Field

When describing their experiences in student affairs, the respondents talked about several issues related to women. The issues they raised directly reflect the literature on women in the field of student affairs. All of the respondents talked about the lack of women in the field in general, and especially in senior roles. Of the nine respondents, they all reported to male presidents. The majority of the respondents were the only woman serving at the cabinet level.

I got a master's degree in counseling, which was sort of then one of the entryways that you could get into this area of students affairs. When I got in, it was mostly men. Now it's mostly women. But when I got into the field 31 years ago, the office that I was in was only one other woman beside me. And there were not as many women leaders. There was some. The president of NASPA was a female in my second year in the business. But not as many women. [#2CPU7]

I've actually answered similar questions [about getting into the field] on other studies because there aren't that many women as chief student affairs officers. There aren't enough women as chief student affairs officers. [#1CPU2]

I mean, yeah, when you think about it, in terms of being a female director, you know, amongst mostly males. I was the only female there. When I became a director here, I was maybe one out of five other women in the region. It was all male. I mean, you know, housing was all about males. And women had a really hard time. [#5 AAPU70]

I am the only woman vice president this university has ever had and I am still the only woman on the executive team. Fourteen years next month. [#3CPU29]

When I first came here as the CSAO and participated in our Athletic Conference, I was the only woman. You know, out of 23 schools, I was the only woman. And I was probably 20 years younger than most of them too. [#8CPU41]

I think partly because I'm the only female upper administrator, I kind of get pulled into things that if I were a male, I might not get pulled into. You know, it's just that they want a woman's perspective or they think it's about issues that they feel like I would have a little insight on. [#6CPR63]

Respondents identified the importance of affirmative action related to the promotion of women and whether they had experienced discrimination. Many were reticent, initially, to say gender was an issue, but throughout the course of interviews, they told stories that illustrated examples of discrimination or gender-related issues, eventually acknowledging gender had been or was an issue. These women, particularly those in their 40's and 50's, were a product of the 1970's and 1980's changes related to affirmative action and Title IX. While they valued affirmative action and believed it was necessary, they did not want to be seen as filling a quota or somehow as less capable than their male colleagues. Of those who brought up salary as an issue, all of them were making less than their male counterparts, as is consistent with the literature.

There's one thing I would say since you're talking about females in this role. Until I got into the CSAO role, I thought all that stuff about it being harder for women in this role was garbage. But I have learned since that there is much more merit to that. Because I always thought you just go out, you do the job, you know, and in positions I'd been in I really hadn't run into that. But I think there's a certain point, you know, and they used to call it the glass ceiling, but it's not even being promoted above that, it's there's still another – we get into an environment where one, it's predominately male and you are being called upon to make a lot of decisions and to take a lot of actions and you're back in that old trap that everybody always talks about, if you do it in one manner, you're being seen as being too soft, if you do it in another manner, sometimes you're being seen as being just a bitch, you know. And people are quicker to label women executives than they are men executives. And there is less leeway given to women executives in that realm. I have seen male executives be the biggest jerks in the world and people are just like, 'Ah, it's just the way he is, isn't it?' And if a woman had done it, people would be talking about it forever, 'can you believe?' You know? And I never believed it, I thought it was garbage. I'd just never believed it, never seen it. And I think, you know, I really admire women presidents because they even, phew, that's a whole other... [#6CPR98]

And so, you'll love this. We're moving in. We're moving into this house and these two girls, two of the girls from the college were there cleaning it as we came to see it the night before we moved in and they were walking around. It's a nice house, walking around and they turned to my husband and say, "We

understand you're the – are you Dr. X? We understand you're the new vice president," because all they'd been told was the new vice president was moving in. And they made the assumption, of course, that it was my husband. He said, 'No, it's her.' [#3CPU61]

I've never been that focused on gender issues or glass ceilings. I never read those books. I really don't give a shit about any of that. But I did in one position because I was victimized by it. And I do to some degree in this job because I know they've hired two people that have much smaller stats, a lesser budget, less responsibility and are making twice my salary starting. And it's wrong. But that's the way it is. And do I love my job because of my paycheck or do I love my job because I love my job? And that again is not the same thing as before. Before it was much more. But it's still there, and it's real. But man, if I think about that every day, 'I wonder what he's making?' I wonder – you know, it will make me nuts. And I just can't do that. [#1CPU63]

[Discrimination] can be so blatant and it's just you can go and look for it, it's something I try to tell students, you know sometimes you've got to learn to let things roll off your back. Yeah, it's amusing sometimes. And I'm pretty good at, at knowing when to – there are times when one of the VP's will say something and you go, man, I'm glad that's not in the newspaper, but it's just...I do a lot of it through humor. [#4CPU 62]

They would not have considered me here, frankly, had they not needed a woman. [#3CPU29]

During a bid for an Assistant Vice Chancellor position, one respondent was told she would not be promoted from her current position because, "the Chancellor doesn't like women in upper level positions so I can't promote you because you're a woman."

[#4CPU60]

Women talked about the differences in male and female styles and leadership as it relates to the topic of women in the field and in the CSAO role. Specifically, they felt that to be successful, they have to learn the business side of higher education, becoming especially skilled at understanding and managing construction projects. They have to exercise decisive authority so that decisions are not made without them and establish

themselves as the authoritative leader for their division in a way they felt their male counterparts did not have to do.

You know, I'm a very strong believer in situational leadership, so and I think it – not only in leadership, but how you handle stuff, it depends on – you have to look at the situation and say, you know, 'Do I need to be stronger, more like..' not more male, but in some ways, 'more of a male construct in this situation versus more a female in this situation?' You may have to do more – much more – almost aggressive, and then this time, but very assertive, very caring than over here. So I think that's the piece you have to negotiate and learn. [#5AAPU120]

Leadership Style

Clement and Rickard (1992) found that female CSAOS were expected to be more nurturing, less hierarchical and more collaborative, and more forgiving than their male counterparts. Street and Kimmel's (1999) study underscored the continued notion that women are most accepted when seen as compassionate and expressive, while men are most rewarded for being seen as intellectual and powerful. Women CSAOs in this study reported their behaviors consistently with the literature. That is, they reported using a collaborative leadership style focused on developing and nurturing relationships with both their colleagues at the VP level, their presidents, as well as those within and outside of their division. This style proved successful for the respondents, and they regarded it as a contributing factor to their success. Some examples of their typical behaviors include setting up consulting teams, regularly communicating non-essential information to key constituents in an effort to maintain relationships, and negotiating for staff salaries or promotions when negotiating their own. Some examples of a non-confrontational style come from Sheryl and Betty:

The other day I went to the president to vent. But I don't do that very often. I really don't. I save those for, you know, and I've always told my staff, 'you

know, anger's a tool you only pull out every once in a while because if you use it a lot, it's just not gonna work for you.' And unfortunately a lot of these college kids coming up right now, all they've seen are these models of confrontation. You know, 'I'm going to get in your face and I'm gonna tell you exactly how it's gonna be.' Well, a whole lot of your work life is not going to be made up of that. You're not going to burst into a room and give everybody the answer and be the hero of the day. You're going to put one foot in front of the other, you know, and survive something sometimes. [#6CPR86]

I was with a group of my colleagues last week, a group of CSAOs from the region. And one of [us] was getting ready to retire. And she said, you know, the last week that I work, I'm going to, anybody that comes into my office, I'm going to tell them exactly what I think. Exactly what I think. I said, well, why only do it for a week? Why don't you do it for a year? No, no, no, I couldn't do that, she said. Well, you could, I'm not sure you want to. But because we [women] are just more, you know, we're more sensitive than that and more tactful than that. But some of my colleagues have – they just say exactly what comes to their mind. I think we've learned a little bit better than that. [#2CPU81]

The leadership style of women in the field extends beyond just their interactions and includes a particular sensitivity to their office environment including their location on campus.

You know, I don't want an office environment where students feel, you know, uncomfortable or overwhelmed. And so a lot of the warmth of the pictures and space is designed around having people feel comfortable. And having me feel comfortable. Because I'm not a stuffy kind of you know, tight-knit kind of person. I'm kind of a little more laid back. A little more relaxed. And that's how I want people to be around me. I don't want them to be – not that we don't get some students in here who are pretty damned uncomfortable. [#2CPU80]

Well the president and two of other VPs are over in the administration building and the VP for development is in another building. But actually that's part of what I like about this setup. I really, matter of fact they've asked me several times if I want to move and I really, really don't. I like to be with my team. [#6CPR93]

Career Paths

All but one of the women in this study had undergraduate majors more strongly associated with women. Two studied psychology, one received a degree in home

economics, four pursued teaching, and one studied English. The one respondent in a non-traditional field of study was in business, although she directly went into a counselor education program at the master's level upon graduation because of little career opportunity in the field of business. The majority of women in this study were in college during the late 1960s and early 1970s, a time right at or before Title IX and affirmative action programs influenced the market. Nearly all of them began in the field unexpectedly, typically because they were invited to apply for a position by someone they knew in their undergraduate days. After awhile, they each realized this could be something and made a decision to pursue additional degrees, either at the master's or doctoral level. At this point, they each became more serious about deliberately pursuing a career in student affairs. Two of the nine women assertively pursued positions, particularly at the highest level. Two of the current CSAOs indicated a desire to become a university president; another one has served as a university president on an interim basis and is not interested in becoming a president on a permanent basis. Two of the nine were promoted to the chief role from within their universities, and the rest were hired from outside. Women are more likely to be promoted from within their institutions, according to the literature, although the trend overall is to hire from the outside. The average number of institutions these women worked at over the course of their careers was 3 with a range of 1 to 5.

Children

Table 2 provides information on the respondents and related information regarding those that have children.

Have children	7	
No children	2	
	Married	1
	Never married	1
Number of children, including step-children		
	One	1
	Two	3
	Three	2
	Four	0
	Five	1
Age of youngest child upon assumption of CSAO role		
	Less than five years old	2
	5-12	2
	13-18	3

The subject of children was fascinating in this thematic area. The decision of whether and when to have children was a major part of everyone's story, deeply interwoven with career choices and the culmination or ending of relationships.

My husband already had a child. He wasn't wild about more children but he wanted me to be a mom. So we made a conscious decision to have one.
[#2CPU56]

Some of the women commented that the choice they made to become a parent changed what they could accomplish in the field.

I look at Peggy Barr, who was one of our more prolific writers, as you know, and I've sort of said well, you know, I could have been that. I could have written had I not done, and that sounds like a cop out but I do think, I know in two or three cases, where I made the conscious choice that I would rather do this than that. I made the conscious choices to be in this role and to have children, to be married to take probably the less ambitious path in terms of where I could go in my vice presidency. [#3CPU101]

The president wanted to send me to the Harvard Program and I couldn't go because I was going to have a baby. It was a really interesting time because I kind of let go of the Dean of Students thing then. [#7CPR51]

Several women talk about their career path, how they often waited until their children reached a particular age or grade until they conducted a job search or had to return immediately to their jobs and/or schoolwork after giving birth.

I was hanging on until my daughter graduated high school. [#4CPU22a]

My son was born during my last course of my doctorate. I remember missing one class and then going back. [#8CPU8]

Two of the women in the study either stopped working or worked part-time in the field while their children were small. The rest of the respondents with children worked and/or went to school while parenting. Two of the women specifically mentioned that at least one of their children was unplanned and a result of their distraction and exhaustion of working and going to school simultaneously.

I think I took two weeks off when I had my son, maybe three, but I think it was two. It was by choice, he was a surprise for us and I was in the middle of running this new department. [#4CPU9]

One of the respondents who did not have children felt that there was a cost of

achievement and the choice to have children was part of that cost.

I think people are going to have to choose. I really am impressed with people that can raise children and be in student affairs, and I try to have a real sensitivity for my young professionals that have kids. [#1CPU117]

In summary, women CSAO's felt that gender had a clear impact on their career both in the choices they had to make as well as how they were treated by others. The impact of gender has been felt at all stages in their careers, including in their roles as chief student affairs officers. The lack of women in the field, particularly in senior roles within student affairs and executive positions in higher education in general, were cited as influential environmental factors in the careers of these women. The choice of if and when to have children, choices regarding trade-offs of achievements, willingness to relocate, and experiencing gender discrimination were all ways that gender influenced them. Their leadership styles were influenced by their gender although by and large respondents saw this as a positive contribution to their career success. As it is difficult to parse out gendered experiences from life experiences, additional themes more closely related to other research questions also relate to this question.

Research Question 2

The second research question addresses whether women CSAOs categorize the different domains of their life, as well as how they make meaning of those domains. Respondents were asked questions about their lives outside of work, how they move from one activity to the next, as well as whether they viewed life as an integrated activity. By the time we got to these questions in the protocol, the women had already established their approach to their work and nonwork lives. The responses to the life

outside of work question were often peppered with guilty feelings, statements of things they *should* do rather than their *actual* actions and some resignation, primarily in response to the standards set in the literature. Ultimately, responses clustered around three areas: life outside of work, life roles, and how I spend my time.

Life Outside of Work

The literature in the field stresses the achievement and constant maintenance of balance, which is viewed through a male construct. Professional conferences are filled with sessions on how to achieve work/life balance most of which focus on having a life outside of work. A quick review of books for new professionals in the field almost always includes a chapter on balance which focuses on finding separation between work and home. Major institutes such as the New Professionals Institute and the Mid Managers Institute, which both major student affairs professional associations sponsor, spend considerable time on this topic during their intensive week of learning. The literature also talks extensively about burnout and stress in student affairs, with primary causes for both being related to hours worked on the job. The CSAO role is often one that requires constant attention every day of the week. This can lead to burnout as well as leaving no time for other pursuits or interests. Some studies have found that when women CSAOs indicate dissatisfaction with their jobs, it is primarily because of the time demands of the position.

The women in this study each felt that she had a life outside of work that was fulfilling and meaningful to her. Most expressed that others saw them as workaholics and lacking balance as described in the literature, often noting that women needed more

in their life besides work. Despite this outside pressure resulting from an external standard, these women reported few regrets. They were involved with their churches, sororities, and non-profit organizations. Many of them had vacation homes they routinely retreated to with family or friends or regularly traveled for fun and relaxation. One woman played a competitive game with her friends in the neighborhood most evenings.

Life outside of work is wonderful! You know, it's been interesting, and I think it's just part of the, 'you don't tell all your secrets to everybody' kind of thing. People always say about me, 'You're a workaholic, you work too hard,' whatever. And but you know, I'm private about my private life in a way. I mean you know, I got it – I'm in a choir, I play bells, I'm in my sorority, and I do a lot of work with them, go to church, interact with my family. So I very much have a balance. [#5AAPU96]

Life outside of work is at the cabin. [#9CPR39]

I love going to thrift stores, okay, and finding little bargains. Okay, I occasionally will buy a piece of clothing, but you know, mostly it's you know, little things. And I don't think my husband understands it. I really read somewhere that somebody called it thrifting therapy or thrift therapy, something like that, and I'm like, that's exactly what it is. [#8CPU65]

Travel is a very high value for my family. I don't have a lot of hobbies, but one new passion that I have is golf. And so I have taken up golf with a vengeance in the last two years. Sporting events. The only activities I do are walking and playing golf. But my husband and I are sports fanatics. [#2CPU74]

Even after talking extensively about their life outside of work as fulfilling, routinely the women would come back to an external view of their life and offer comments on standards that were not the ones they set for themselves.

I kind of don't have a life in some ways. I do, but I don't. From my world-view when you buy on to be a Vice President for Student Affairs at a major, big 12 public institution, you're buying more than an 8:00 to 5:00 job. [#1CPU81]

Well I'm not real good about taking vacation. I'm finally at the point this year where I have to take time or I lose it. [#4CPU52]

I mean, I don't take all of the time that I should to just leave. But in this role I feel like I have to be the role model for people, so they can take care of themselves. So I made the conscious decision that I'm going to travel abroad, you know. And I go to my family reunions. So, I'm trying too - and I'm trying to be conscious about modeling, 'you gotta take care of yourself too.'
[#5AAPU98]

Life Roles

Women CSAOs talked about life outside of work in relationship to their life roles as well. Universally, these women saw no distinction between how they behave in their various life roles, whether they were related to work or not. While they recognized that they had many life roles, they saw them as pieces of a whole, rather than segments that need their attention.

There is no real distinction for me. [#2CPU61] There is no big line of demarcation for me, particularly now that technology is the way it is, because when I'm at home, I'm on my Trio to a fault. My family is going to divorce me, I think. When I travel, even on vacation, I'm doing some work. You know, and when I'm here I'm fully engaged in work but I'm also, I give myself permission to think about family things or to do personal things. I don't divide my life up in work and non-work. It's all kind of connected for me. [#2CPU76]

I'm the same person whether I'm on the lake with my neighborhood and my buddies as I am with students or I am with staff. The words may change a bit but being authentic prevents this stupid literature, psycho-babble about balance and stuff. The balance is here (points to heart), not here (points to head).
[#1CPUS97]

The blur between work and home is just that, a blur. It's not either/or.
[#9CPR32]

Because of the busy nature of these CSAOs' lives, others often question their choices and the level they are working at. As stated in the literature review, women often are

subject to more scrutiny about their work and family choices and are seen as more likely to burn out than their male colleagues.

People frequently say to me, I mean like all the time, weekly, ‘I don’t know how you do it.’ I’m just present to whatever I’m doing, and so that person or that activity or that child or that spouse or – they really do feel like they’re getting me when I’m there. So I don’t have all these resentful people in my world, which I could, I really could. [#7CPR4]

People say to me ‘you’re a workaholic,’ and I say, ‘no.’ My definition of a workaholic is a person who has work they have to get done, and irregardless of how they feel, they feel compelled to do it. They will do it at the expense of everything else. That ain’t me! [#5AAPU101]

All of the women in the study articulated the different domains of her life in terms of roles but none saw them as distinctly separate in the manner in which she managed her life. While many of the women in this study acknowledged balance as a topic of importance as defined by others, they universally created individual standards for themselves. The respondents exhibited an overall sense of happiness and peacefulness with her choices. Only when they felt they had to acknowledge others’ perceptions or standards did they share frustration or regret.

I say I have three fulltime jobs, I say that a lot. I work in higher ed, which is you know, a 50 or 60 hour a week job, and I’m a mom, which is a fulltime very busy job and I have a spouse whose job has demands of me that I have to manage. [#7CPR2]

Life outside of here is very demanding, because I am compulsive about doing a good job at things. So I want to be the absolute very best mom. I want to be the absolute and very best wife and I want to be the absolute and very best vice president. [#3CPU58]

They all want to fit my life into some mold and my life is my life and it’s unique and it’s bizarre and some people would say, just tragic and you know just you know. On the other – I’m happy, my life is weird and I love it. You know I mean there are things I’d like to change but overall, I have a very, very good life. [#1CPU145]

Respondents expressed some physical changes that they go through when transitioning between work and nonwork activities. However, they all expressed that these changes were not tightly tied to managing the transition between roles as much as just a different expression of self.

As soon as I get home, I'm definitely out of the earrings, out the stockings, put some shorts on. My creative work honestly happens at home. [#5AAPU108]

As soon as I'm off duty from the big job, whenever that happens, I go home, feed my cat, take a shower and put on jeans. That's how you know I'm off, off the clock, that's the telling thing. [#1CPU113]

How I Spend My Time

Time is the method by which women CSAOs view their lives, although not the same construct of time that the popular literature on time management would espouse. The respondents understood and expected that their jobs would take up a lot of time. Time on task within their positions did not alone dictate how they viewed their different domains of their life. Rather, they took their cues from their values or own assessments of what was needed of or for themselves.

I guess I did learn about student affairs, you know, my work in general, particularly in a college, it's never done. And so, I mean, you almost have to adopt that mentality to survive. Because if you're the type of person who thinks I have got to get this project done, every project done, and this prescribed and on time, I don't care. [#5AAPU112]

I'm always in here early, I'm an early person anyway, a morning person, and so I'm always in here by 7:30. I don't spend as much time in the evening as I used to here because I've got good staff in place now. The first few years I had to be here a lot. I don't have to be at everything anymore. [#6CPR74]

I've kind of been doing this double time thing because I've got like 14 direct reports, and some of those like my director of admissions has got another 12 or

13 under her. Anyway, so you know I just feel like I haven't given enough time to anybody when I'm in these situations. [#6CPR67]

I work 8, 10, twelve hours, whatever it takes so I'm mindful of that, even when things are tough at home. In my role, or the one I've helped to create I would guess, is that you've got to be able to go from thing to thing that are so very, I'll meet with architects one hour, the next hour distraught parents, the next hour I'm down at the president's office and we're working on a policy and the next...I am used to sort of, which is what I like about this job, by the way, where you just go from role to role in the definition of just this one role. [#3CPU93]

How their time in different roles affects their lives is more thoroughly explored in Research Question 3 below.

Overall, the respondents articulated the different domains of their lives in terms of roles, but none of them saw them as distinctly separate in the manner in which they manage their lives. They used language that reinforced their roles, referring to themselves as VP's, mothers, wives, and friends. They felt that despite working many hours on the job, they all had lives outside of work that were fulfilling and meaningful to them, although all expressed that others offered a critical view of dissatisfaction about their life roles. Only when criticized by others did CSAOs express doubt about their choices related to life roles, but ultimately, they expressed a positive view of their life roles.

Research Question 3

Exploring the extent of the intersection between the public and private lives of my subjects, particularly the effect on both as a result of any intersection, is the focus of my third research question. I asked respondents questions about where they go when they need to vent as well as whether or not they viewed life as an integrated activity. I asked whether they flowed from one activity to the next, regardless of whether it was

related to work or not. There are four themes that emerged: spouses, raising children in student affairs, supporting relationships, and community living.

Spouses

Eight of the nine respondents in this study were married and only one was single (never married). Only one of the eight who are married had been divorced and is remarried. While this study certainly does not constitute a representative sample, more women were married than not, and a higher percentage of the total respondents were married. This differs from the literature, which points to only about forty percent of the women in the field being divorced or never having married. I found it interesting that each married woman spoke about her spouse's career and his role in her career. While all of their spouses worked, only one of the eight had a career that was as ambitious and demanding as the CSAO role, and they had live-in help to manage their lives. In all the other situations, the spouses' career was generally considered secondary to the career path and position of the woman respondents. The women reported that this was a necessary design to make their lives work.

Growing up, I always assumed I would work, but I never assumed that I would be the primary breadwinner. Until at some point, you start having to make choices. And we weren't at the point where some dual career people are where you make one move for one person and you make another move for another person. That's not the way these careers go. I mean, you get in it; you need to stay in it. [#2CPU29]

I knew I had a husband who was willing to – you know, he's always the one who – you know; we don't have gender roles, unless they're reversed in our household. You know our kids laugh about it, because you know, my husband's the one who does the laundry, and he's the one who does the grocery sopping, even now, you know, and so it's like we have not had those traditional gender roles, other than the fact that he's the technologically savvy one, and you know he's handier than I am in terms of fixing things and I sew and that kind of stuff.

But other than that, you know, I knew that he would do what was necessary. He was very supportive of me. [#8CPU22]

By then I had live-in help, and at that point I was willing to kind of sit down with the family and say, ‘things are going to change around here. I’m not going to be around this much, this isn’t a job it’s a lifestyle.’ [#7CPR60]

If I had been married to somebody who – who had to achieve in his job and had to – you know what I mean. It’s kind of like, uhm...this wouldn’t have worked as well. [#8CPU73]

My husband left his world’s most perfect job to come here because it was right for our family and I will be always grateful to him for that and he had to take a lesser than job for awhile. [#3CPU44]

My husband is not career focused in the same way I am. He has a job. He does his job very well and he’s proud of how he does his job but he does have a pretty clear line between job and home. We both manage having a child. He works more than I do at it. [#9CPR57]

In addition to the choice of their spouse’s careers as a factor in their public and private lives intersecting, women reported what role their spouse had to play in their careers, specifically in their roles as CSAOs. The respondents reported that their husbands often were put in awkward positions as the spouse since they were typically the only male in the executive spouses’ group. Essentially, both the women CSAO and their spouses served in non-traditional roles; the woman as the executive and the man as her companion.

It’s still funny, when we go to the president’s house every year, he has a Christmas party for the vice-presidents and I naturally know how to relate to women and I know how to relate to men, but it’s a lot harder for him. It’s a lot harder for him, and the president gets us a gift, for example. Well, he’s got these male vice presidents and me, and then he’s got their wives and my husband, you know, so it’s always a little awkward. I mean, my husband is not interested in coming to the graduation luncheon, while their wives often come because it is a social thing for them. I’ve learned that it doesn’t bother me. There are times when he needs to, and I need him to, and there are times that I want him to, and he will. [#3CPU78]

I'm not saying that introverts can't be successful in student affairs, but it's just easier if you're a bit of an extrovert. And it's easier if your spouse is a bit of an extrovert. And one of the hang-ups that I see is some of my female colleagues and counterparts who have extremely introverted husbands, and it's just harder for them to feel comfortable in social settings and to serve the institutional role that you have to serve as a VP for student affairs. I mean, as a younger professional, even as a director, you can avoid some of that, but when you get to this level, the expectation is that you serve as an institutional officer. And therefore you are representing the university in a broader way or at least in a community like this. And in most communities. And I think different presidents have different views of how much spouses should be there -- both male and female spouses. [#2CPU64]

Raising Children in Student Affairs

Most of the women in the study, both those with and without children, felt that raising children while working in student affairs provided a fantastic opportunity for their children. They were content with their choice to work and have children.

When I was home sick, that's when I would bake. And so my daughter would come home from elementary school when I was -- if I was home sick. She said it's just like having a real mom. Yeah right. She's had a great life because of what I do. And she knows it. She's had a -- growing up in a university environment is a great environment for a young child. [#2CPU49] I mean, growing up with a parent working in student affairs is a great way to grow up. [#2CPU50]

I knew a couple of days after my first child was born that I was not meant to be a stay-at-home mom. I think some people are made for that and some people are not, and I knew very clearly that I was not. I'm sure there were a few times in my life when I've felt guilty about that, but for the most part, I haven't. I think they've had good lives. The fact that they've been in daycare has allowed them to grow in different ways than sometimes kids can do when they're home in a more sheltered environment. [#8CPU32]

I don't feel a tremendous amount of guilt about what I've done to my daughter. I think that she has learned wonderful lessons about the value of work and the value of hard work and the role of women. [#9CPR50]

Related to the idea of raising children in student affairs, a sub-theme emerged about the public nature of being in student affairs and having children.

I dragged my daughter and my husband, I mean, my staff, my student staff knew them as well as they knew me. You know, the grad students I had over the years, they were part of our family. [#2CPU54]

Well, I guess I was just living my life but the kids came to a lot of the events at the university, so it was like they were part of it. You know one of my areas is athletics. Well they came to a whole lot of athletic events. There's a children's center on campus, which is where they were, so they were like right across the parking lot from me. And I didn't go, like some of our faculty and staff now who have kids over there, you know, run over there three or four times a day. I didn't do that. You know I didn't go over there even at lunch. Now if they had a little event or something, I would go over there. You know every once in a while, you know, they'd take all the kids on a little walk around campus, so you'd by chance see your kid out in the quad, you know. And being a small campus, you know, that is as you know, they were included. It's not like this was my work life, this was my family life and the two didn't mesh together. [#8CPU31]

When I was Dean of Students I had an Order of Omega meeting so I went to pick up my youngest son who was about four and I said, 'now, Mommy has a meeting, I'm going to give you some paper and I want you to draw me some pictures, and if you be really really quiet and let me have my meeting, I'll buy you something out of the vending machine.' He said, 'do they have a beer machine?' I'm bringing my child into this college environment and he's just picking up college cues. My kids started out in the lab school on campus and I could look out my window and see them, so it was all so very intertwined. [#4CPU49]

I'll go to dinner meetings, but I try to avoid it cause then I do family time. I'm very likely to drag my daughter to a 7 o'clock game or program or something like that, so another blurring. I have the very best baby sitters. You know, students are in our (on-campus) house all the time. We have a guest suite that's a part of the house and you know, for some reason or another, we always have a student in there. We always have people in the house so there's no distinction. I like that. I like that about how we do things. [#9CPR35]

Simultaneously, most expressed frustration around the time commitment of the position in particular and the field in general. The time commitment forced them to make daily choices about their lives. Activities and meaningful events for their children regularly

coincided with work commitments, forcing regular choices about managing their schedules.

I'm in a vice-presidents meeting, the three guys and me, and I know how to relate to guys. I do fine with them. The president says that we are going to meet at 7:30 tomorrow morning and I'm sitting there realizing it's the first day of school. I've got kids starting a new school and nobody says a word, because it didn't matter to them. It mattered to me. I didn't say anything and debated about what to do, because you don't want your kids, you know, what would be the reason? So, I finally went to the president and said, 'I would really like to be able to take my children to school. They're starting new schools.' And he moved the meeting but that is one of a zillion stories like this. [#3CPU66]

Lastly, the women talked about the choices they made in their careers because of their children. Many delayed or changed their career plans around taking a break or job searching because of an issue with their children. Most frequently it was because they wanted their children to be able to finish a particular grade or reach a certain age.

The university instituted a program where kids could go to other places in addition to my university (tuition exchange). So then it became, 'I'm not walking away from a job or a career,' it became, 'I'm walking away from an education that I could be confident of for my kids.' And so the sacrifices I made from that point on were really about, again this whole notion that I had that I couldn't stop and come back and retain the benefits and retain the ability to progress. [#7CPR47]

I've been asked to apply for other jobs a number of times but I also, my main – a lot of my consideration was where my children were. [#3CPU48] They're all in their 20s but when they were in high school I would never have done that. I would never have left my children and I wasn't so ambitious that I was ready to pluck them. [#3CPU49]

Supporting Relationships

One of the points of intersection in the public and private lives of the respondents manifested in supporting relationships. The literature talks about the isolation that women in the CSAO role can feel, often because they are the only female

at the cabinet level as is true for the majority of women in this study. The women identified the importance of having a person or people to vent to – to share frustrations or to process information, but they simultaneously reported a need to be cautious about finding a confidential or appropriate place to do so. Many women reported venting or discussing issues with their husbands, although they universally identified that their husbands were not always good listeners or that they wanted to jump in and fix things for their wives, which was not the outcome desired by the women. Others reported close family members such as sisters, mothers, or mothers-in-law serving in that role. Of those who also established supporting relationships with others, the most common approach was to find a trusted source on campus at a similar level, followed by the use of colleagues at other campuses.

My husband's very good and over the last few years, the financial vice president has become my sounding – we are each other's sounding board, and it helps to have somebody who's not in your family, who understands the situation, and you can completely trust, and I can completely trust him and he can completely trust me. Those are rare finds. And it took me ten years and he had to be in that job finally, and all, but it is very helpful. And my husband does that. Bless his heart. I don't use my staff, for all the reasons you might know. [#3CPU85]

I'm in a precarious position right here because there are no other females at my level, and I, you know, and sometimes I'll talk to the other VP's obviously, you know, if I have something I'm like, 'can you believe?' But you know. But if I'm looking for a female, and I very often am, everyone that I'd be talking to is someone that either reports to me or reports up. So I really have to kind of take it off campus and that's what I do. I do it with emails and I do it with phone calls with friends, you know? And most of them are in the profession. [#6CPR87]

You know, you gotta have at least one outside person. That understands...I mean I've always had that. One person that, you know, I can just kind of say, 'here is what is really going on.' Here's what, you know, and kind of have that down while in a very trusting way, knowing that you know that nothing's coming back anywhere. So that's important. [#5AAPU88]

Community Living

Women CSAOs live in communities that encompass both their work and nonwork environments. The intersection of their public and private lives can manifest itself in their trips to the grocery store, to a soccer game, or at church. They make conscious choices about everyday living decisions based on their role within the university community. Elisha goes to an early church service because she sees fewer of her employees then. Because she lives in a house provided for her on campus, she is intentional about inviting her daughter's friends over because they are not situated in a typical neighborhood. She says:

It is a very small town and I can't just be Elisha. I am Elisha, CSAO, and I mean everywhere I go. [#9CPR36]

Another respondent points to a recent conversation in Sunday school where someone stopped her to talk about the new president recently appointed at her university. A frequent consideration was around appearance and choice of clothing when not at work.

I won't go out to the store without my make-up or you know, my hair wet or anything like that because of the role I'm in. [#8CPU63]

Respondents felt they had to meet the expectations of others, and public and private lives intersected directly on this point. In the most poignant example, one of the respondents experienced a miscarriage just as new student orientation was beginning. With no time to recuperate physically or emotionally because of work commitments, she had to disclose her situation to those at work. She felt more vulnerable because her grieving process was public when she would have preferred it to be private.

In summary, the respondents believe that the college environment is a positive one in which to live out all the aspects of their lives, including nonwork. Women made choices based on their children, both on a daily basis and within the longer scope of their careers. There is a public aspect to their role as a parent that is often on display in their work environment. There are expectations that the spouse of a CSAO will participate in some university functions, including those that may be seen as purely social. The male spouse of an executive is still considered unusual. The career choices of the spouse as well as his/her willingness to relocate are important in the ability of the female spouse to be successful in the field. All of the respondents felt their public and private lives intersected and that keeping them in separate domains was not only impossible but unavoidable. They preferred to see their lives as one integrated activity rather than serving in any single role at one time. The effect of the intersection usually was increased stress and negative feelings, typically, guilt or worry. However, the majority reported negative feelings to be infrequent and in general, reported a sense of satisfaction about when their work and nonwork lives intersected.

Research Question 4

This question asks if achievement has a cost in the field of student affairs and if so, what is that cost? Despite the fact that more women are in the field of student affairs and in related graduate programs, women continue to be underrepresented in the highest positions in the field. The field has been “feminized” which historically devalues or declines the status of the profession (McEwen, Williams & Engstrom, 1991; Hughes, 1989). Regardless of the gains of women in our society and in the field of higher

education, women still are paid less than their male counterparts (NASPA Salary Survey 1995-96); feel more stress (Scott, 1992); have less job satisfaction (Anderson, Guido-DiBrito & Morrell, 2000); and tend to leave the field in greater numbers (Burns, 1982; Holmes, Verrier & Chisholm, 1983). All of the respondents in this study felt that there was a cost to their achievement. Six themes emerged including the doctorate, worries and concerns, relationships, health, life management, and attitude.

The Doctorate

In all of the interviews, the choice of whether to pursue a doctorate came up. The majority of the sample had a doctorate, 7 of the 9 women. For those who choose to get it, the most common reasons they cited were because it offered them credibility in the field, followed by the choices the doctorate would provide. The next most common reason was because it was an offered as an opportunity because of their job or geographic location.

What I've always taught – like I've always told my cousins and all that stuff - is that the degree gives you mobility. You have a choice. You have choices. So you can't go here, here and here and even start at the same place if you don't have the degree. So to me the degree is the credential to, I guess in some sense, a better life, I guess. And so my whole purpose is people have got to get those degrees. [#5AAPU63]

For the two women who chose not to pursue their advanced degrees, the reasons were first because of family obligations and second, because there was no program in their geographic area. Relocation was not an option because of their family obligations.

I didn't have an option here, it was a travel kind of thing, and I remember the outcome of the decision was, for me, was do I want to be a mom, and do I want to have more kids, or do I want a PhD? And I decided that I really wanted to be a mom more and that if the PhD thing really ended up being important, then I would enroll in school when I was 45 and get my PhD. I'd be free to do that, I'd

have the support to do that and it would be relevant. When I was in my early 40s I became a VP and I thought about whether I wanted to do it. I just couldn't see myself making the investment in the time or the money – not when I knew what they paid people after they finished, it just wasn't working - the math wasn't working. [#7CPR55]

Whether they chose to get the doctorate or not, all the women cited a cost to their choice. The most common cost was the stress that was placed on them to continue working, studying, and managing children. Most of the respondents were motivated to finish because of issues related to their children. All cited the support of family and friends as critical to the successful completion of their degrees. Lastly, the financial investment of a doctorate was cited a cost of achievement, although all felt they eventually recouped their investment.

Worries and Concerns

One of the costs of achievement cited by women in this study was the worries and concerns that they harbored. For some, it was the things that kept them up at night. For others, they internalized the issues less but could easily cite them upon request. Rather than focusing on the day-to-day matters, most cited major concerns or worries. The most prominent concerns were about feeling vulnerable around meeting expectations, followed by tension with their bosses, the inability to let things go whether a work or nonwork issue, health concerns for themselves or others and finally, their legacies. When they did worry about smaller things, they tended to be about issues with their staff, their workloads, institutional politics, or what they haven't done, such as professional reading, presenting, or publishing.

I woke up last night thinking about the chancellor who jumped to her death at UC Santa Cruz, wondering what her – and I literally laid in bed wondering what her

last moments were like. Because her memorial service was yesterday. In fact, I was listening to it this morning before you came in. I don't know this woman. I don't know anything about her. I just have tried to imagine the despair that she must have felt. [#2CPU83]

Oh, just the anxieties of the job. Some of it's rehashing things when I'm in a maniac mood, the planning – the I'm going to do this, or what do we do, you know just creating in my mind but yeah, it's hard to let it all go. The volume of the job and the politics of the job, the pressures. There's a lot always going on. [#4CPU34]

Relationships

The respondents cite relationships both with family, friends and co-workers as part of the cost of achievement. The most common sub-theme in this area was the lack of friends and difficulty in making and keeping friends as a result of their positions. Reasons it is difficult to make and/or keep friends include the prominence of their position on campus, as well as time spent on the job and lastly, regular relocation.

When I was promoted to this position it was a surprise for me because you know, I thought, did I change? And I think that they perceive that I did and that in many ways I probably did because I was now on president's council and people may feel less comfortable sharing things with me. I noticed we were invited to fewer things. I think people thought we were busy when often we weren't. [#9CPR42]

My friends were the parents of my kids' friends – you build a real network there. When I moved here it was really difficult. They hear you're the Vice President and there's a barrier there. [#4CPU25]

I don't have close acquaintances among the family, because they're out there in other buildings and I'm here in the administration building and I keep a little bit of distance with all my staff. I'm very good friends with many of them, especially after 14 years, but it was very lonely, and still can be lonely sometimes because to have the network of friends with people like me is tough. Socially has been the children, now we're so dominated by what you have to do for this place, the after hours things that you have to do as a vice president that we do some things with some friends that we've made but it's not nearly what it might be. I even abandoned church activities, the outside stuff and all that, because those things took it up, so that's a sacrifice you make. I didn't build a social life,

because if you're going to do all other things real well, there's not much time for you to go off with friends shopping and stuff. [#3CPU75]

I guess one cost of achievement is that there are times when I would like to just be one of the girls and hang out and talk crazy and all that, but I know I can't. [#5AAPU102]

When it came to family, the women felt they sacrificed time in this area. Frequently, when discussing family, the sacrifices were shared in relationship with the benefits. For example, one respondent says:

I feel like sometimes it's taken away from my family, but it's given a lot to them as well. [#6CPR80]

The most descriptive story on this subject came from Sherri who has the most children of any person in the study.

I remember people saying you know, 'how do you do it?' And my definition when my children were little was, 'I don't really think about it.' I don't even take time to think about it. I don't know any different lifestyle, you know. Since my youngest was two I've worked, so I don't really know any better, so for me this is normal. And for my children, this is normal. It wasn't until they began to compare themselves to other children that they might say something like, or like my youngest child's term for it was, 'I wish you were a stay around mom.' Not a stay at home mom, not a mom who didn't work, but a stay-around mom. I want my children to know that I want to be with them, too. [#7CPR9]

The last component related to relationships and the cost of achievement was about the necessary reliance on others to be successful. In particular, this included support teams at work.

You reach a point where your own involvement starts to take a toll on the people that work with you. No matter how supportive they are, no matter how much they love you, they're picking up the pieces which allow you to go do – you'll hear leaders of associations whenever they receive awards, that's a thing that almost always they thank the people around them who did the work so they could be gone. [#2CPU70]

Health

In terms of cost of achievement, the cost to the health of the respondents was a strong theme. In each interview, the subject of health was brought up in story after story about these women's lives. In all cases, the issue was having enough time to take adequate care of themselves. For the most part, the effects were fairly short-term although not in all. Severity of health issues ranged from chronic coughs to autoimmune disorders. Both physical and emotional exhaustion had effects on their health.

I had chronic fatigue syndrome and it was from burning the candle at both ends. [#4CPU32]

The cost of achievement for me personally is that it's probably advanced my serious illness. Because of the hours, stress, I think I'd probably live longer. If I quit work and did nothing, medically I'd be in better shape than I am now. [#1CPU118]

I had this cough that I couldn't get to go away and you know, my mom would call and she'd say, 'how are you doing?' and I'd say 'fine.' She's say, 'you still have that cough' and I'd say, 'yeah, but it's not big deal.' I was just so run down. [#9CPR9]

Because my family was my first and most important consideration and always has been, and so I had to do my doctoral program in a way that I didn't feel like my family suffered. Now, I had strep throat five times in three years. There were costs. There were costs. [#3CPU42]

Life Management

The last sub-theme that emerged in relationship to the cost of achievement in the field was issues related to general life management. Most respondents reported struggling with things related to juggling work and household, taking care of routine items or tasks related to their children's day. Feelings of disorganization and stress weighed on respondents because of these struggles.

It's the finishing things so that they're really gone. And I think the minute I relax and I'm asleep my brain starts working on a different level, it's like (whispers), 'Oh man, I forgot this,' or 'I didn't do this.' And I don't like that disorganized feeling. Yet that's how I function so it would be better for me if I just did, but I don't like it. I keep thinking I'm going to have a plan, and I'm not going to be like this anymore. But something new will come in and fill that gap whenever it shows itself. [#7CPR74]

In summary, there are costs to achievement. The majority of respondents believed that pursuing a doctorate was necessary for achieving credibility and having career choices. The choice to pursue a doctorate created enormous stress on the women in this study. Within their work environments, they felt stress because they sometimes felt vulnerable about meeting expectations, had tension with their bosses or could not let things go emotionally. The lack of friends and a social support outside of work was perhaps the biggest cost of achievement cited by respondents, followed by short and long term health problems. All felt disorganized and stressed out from the overwhelming nature of managing their lives as a whole. Despite all of these costs, the women respondents universally felt that they were happy with their lives and their choices. They were warm, kind, polite, and tough as nails. Resolved in their thoughts and feelings, they had no regrets.

Attitude

A surprising theme about the attitude, demeanor, and point of view of the respondents emerged fairly quickly once I began the interview process. Overwhelmingly, these women had exceptionally positive attitudes, were driven, ambitious, caring, and kind. I came to describe them in my field notes journal as "steel magnolias." In every case they were warm, kind, and polite, but each had a steeliness to

them that made it very clear to me they were not to be crossed or trod upon in any way. They were able to identify their strengths easily. Each had a sense of confidence without being arrogant. They were persistent, recognized the role of good luck, but also had tenacity.

I am good at bringing out the best in people. I think that's really where my strength is, not necessarily my breadth of experience but I think my main strength lies in recognizing good people. [#9CPR26]

It takes a lot to fluster me. [#9CPR68]

I'm definitely independent. [#6CPR42]

My drive is all internal, definitely. [#5AAPU37]

I think that's why I've been so happy everywhere I've ever been, because it's where I am. [#1CPU104]

During the interview process, I routinely brought up this observation of shared attitudes and resilience to the respondents. They identified strongly with the notion that women in this position were strong, but with a kind, warm side. I began to wonder if it was a cause or effect of their careers. In ongoing member checks, attitude was a point of discussion and follow-up. In the end, respondents confirmed that their attitudes were the framework with which they managed the costs of achievement that they faced during their careers.

Summary of Findings

Research Question 1: How Does Gender Influence Your Role as a Chief Student Affairs Officer?

1. Women CSAOs felt that gender had a clear impact on their career both in the choices they had to make, as well as how they were treated by others. The

impact of gender has been felt at all stages in their careers, including in their roles as chief student affairs officers.

2. The lack of women in the field, particularly in senior roles within student affairs and executive positions in higher education in general, were cited as influential environmental factors in the careers of these women.
3. The choice of if and when to have children, choices regarding trade-offs of achievements, willingness to relocate, and experiencing gender discrimination are all ways that gender influences women CSAOs.
4. Their leadership styles are influenced by their gender, although by and large respondents see this as a positive contribution to their career success.

Research Question 2: Do You Categorize the Work, Network, and Nonwork Domains of Your Life as Separate, and if So, How Do You Determine What Is Part of Those Distinct Categories?

1. Respondents did articulate the different domains of their life in terms of roles, but none of them see them as distinctly separate in the manner in which they manage their life.
2. Respondents felt that despite working many hours on the job, each one had a life outside of work that was fulfilling and meaningful to them.
3. All women CSAOs in this study expressed that others in the field offered a critical view of dissatisfaction about their life roles. Only when criticized by others did CSAOs express doubt about their choices related to life roles, but ultimately, they expressed a positive view of their life roles.

Research Question 3: To What Extent Does Your Public and Private Life Intersect and What Is the Effect on Both as a Result?

1. All of the respondents felt their public and private lives intersected and that keeping them in separate domains was not only impossible, but unnecessary. They preferred to see their lives as one integrated activity rather than serving in any single role at one time.
2. The respondents believe that the college environment is a positive one in which to live out all the aspects of their lives, including nonwork.
3. Women made choices based on their children, both on a daily basis and within the longer scope of their careers.
4. There is a public aspect to their role as a parent that is often on display in their work environment.
5. There are expectations that the spouse of a CSAO will participate in some university functions, including those that may be seen as purely social. The male spouse of an executive is still considered unusual. The career choices of the spouses as well as their willingness to relocate are important in the ability of their female spouses to be successful in the field.
6. The effect of the intersection between the public and private lives of women CSAOs was increased stress and negative feelings, typically guilt or worry. However, the majority report negative feelings to be infrequent, and in general, report a sense of satisfaction about when their work and nonwork lives intersect.

Research Question 4: Does Achievement Have a Cost in the Field? If So, What Is the Cost?

1. Pursuing a doctorate felt necessary for the majority of respondents in order to achieve credibility and to have career choices. The choice to pursue a doctorate created enormous stress on the women in this study.
2. Within their work environments, they felt stress because they sometimes felt vulnerable about meeting expectations, experienced tension with their bosses, or could not let things go emotionally.
3. The lack of friends inside and outside of work was perhaps the biggest cost of achievement cited by respondents.
4. All of the women in the study experienced short and/or long term health problems that they cited as a cost of achievement. Many felt this was related to stress.
5. The ongoing and crisis-oriented demands of the position left respondents feeling overwhelmed intermittently. All felt disorganized and stressed out from the task of managing their lives as a whole. This is despite the fact that some had live-in help.
6. Despite all of the above costs, the women respondents universally felt that they were happy with their lives and their choices. They were warm, kind, polite, and resilient. Resolved in their thoughts and feelings, they had no regrets.

Chapter V will provide a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations in relation to policy and practice. Additionally, I will address recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS FOR
POLICY AND PRACTICE, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE
RESEARCH

This chapter reviews the purpose of the study including the summary of findings. I will present conclusions based on the findings. Lastly, this chapter will provide a discussion of implications for policy and practice as well as recommendations for future research.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the intersection of career progression (work), balance (nonwork) and relationships (network) of women chief student affairs officers through a naturalistic inquiry process. The literature in the field suggests the achievement and constant maintenance of balance, which is viewed through a male construct, is the norm. It is evident that the need to understand the particular phenomenon of work and nonwork intersections of women, particularly in the chief role, is an opportunity to give voice to an issue for women that has been rarely heard in the field.

This study sought to answer the following four research questions for women serving in the chief student affairs officer position: (1) how does gender influence your role as a chief student affairs officer; (2) do you categorize the work, network and nonwork domains of your life as separate and if so, how do you determine what is part

of the distinct categories; (3) to what extent do your public and private lives intersect and what is the effect on both as a result, and; (4) does achievement have a cost in the field and if so, what is that cost from your perspective?

Summary of Findings

Research Question 1: How Does Gender Influence Your Role as a Chief Student Affairs Officer?

Respondents were asked questions related to their career paths and choices, as well as their lives as a chief student affairs officer. Responses clustered around four themes: women in the field; leadership style, career paths, and children. The results indicate that women CSAOs felt that gender had a clear impact on their career both in the choices they had to make as well as how they were treated by others. The impact of gender has been felt at all stages in their careers including in their roles as chief student affairs officers. The lack of women in the field, particularly in senior roles within student affairs and executive positions in higher education in general, and particularly early on in their careers, were cited as influential environmental factors in the careers of these women. The choice of if and when, -- or whether -- to have children, choices regarding trade-offs of achievements, the willingness to relocate, and experiencing gender discrimination are all ways that gender influences women CSAOs. Their leadership styles are also influenced by their gender, although by and large respondents see this as a positive contribution to their career success.

Research Question 2: Do You Categorize the Work, Network, and Nonwork Domains of Your Life as Separate, and if So, How Do You Determine What Is Part of Those Distinct Categories?

Responses to this research question clustered around three areas: life outside of work, life roles and how I spend my time. In summary, the respondents did articulate the different domains of their life in terms of roles, but none of them see them as distinctly separate in the manner in which they manage their life. They used language that reinforced their roles, referring to themselves as VP's, mothers, wives, and friends. They felt despite working many hours on the job, each one had a life outside of work that was fulfilling and meaningful to them. All women CSAOs in this study expressed that others in the field offered a critical view of dissatisfaction about their life roles. Only when criticized by others did CSAOs express doubt about their choices related to life roles but ultimately, they expressed a positive view of their life roles.

Research Question 3: To What Extent Does Your Public and Private Life Intersect and What Is the Effect on Both as a Result?

There were four themes that emerged: spouses; raising children in student affairs, supporting relationships and community living. All of the respondents felt their public and private lives intersected and that keeping them in separate domains was not only impossible, but unnecessary. They preferred to see their lives as one integrated activity rather than serving in any single role at one time or being pigeonholed in the various roles of their lives. The respondents believe that the college environment is a positive one in which to live out all the aspects of their lives, including nonwork. Women made

choices based on their children both on a daily basis and within the longer scope of their careers. There is a public aspect to their role as a parent that is often on display in their work environment. There are expectations that the spouse of a CSAO will participate in some university functions, including those that may be seen as purely social. The male spouse of an executive is still considered unusual. The career choices of the spouse as well as their willingness to relocate are important in the ability of their female spouses to be successful in the field. The effect of the intersection between the public and private lives of women CSAOs was increased stress and negative feelings, typically guilt or worry. However the majority report negative feelings to be infrequent and in general report a sense of satisfaction about when their work and nonwork lives intersect.

Research Question 4: Does Achievement Have a Cost in the Field? If So, What Is the Cost?

All of the respondents felt there was a cost to their achievement. Six themes emerged including the doctorate; worries and concerns; relationships; health, life management and attitude. Pursuing a doctorate was felt to be necessary for the majority of respondents in order to achieve credibility and to have career choices. The choice to pursue a doctorate created enormous stress on the women in this study. Within their work environments, they felt stress because they sometimes felt vulnerable about meeting expectations, had tension with their boss or could not let things go emotionally. The lack of friends was perhaps the biggest cost of achievement cited by respondents. All of the women in the study experienced short and/or long term health problems that they cited as a cost of achievement. The ongoing and crisis-oriented demands of the

position left respondents feeling overwhelmed intermittently. All felt disorganized and stressed out from the task of managing their lives as a whole. Despite all of the above costs, the women respondents universally felt that they were happy with their lives and their choices. They were warm, kind, polite and resilient. Resolved in their thoughts and feelings, they had no regrets.

Conclusions

This study has contributed to the body of knowledge related to women chief student affairs officers and their experiences. Specifically, it has given voice to the experiences of women in this role that have rarely been heard.

Research Question 1

When reviewing the way in which gender impacts the role of the chief student affairs officer, the answer emerged in both the ways in which the woman achieved the position as much as in their role presently. The literature tends to emphasize issues of gender related to career progression more than what happens once the CSAO role is achieved. Certainly this is because it is difficult to reach the role of CSAO if desired. More, many women cite they simply do not wish to achieve the role because of their perceptions of the costs of achievement to get there. However, the literature is relatively silent on the experiences of women once they achieve the role, implying that gender ceases to matter at this point. Nothing could be farther from the truth, and the women cited ongoing gender-related incidents throughout their careers.

This study reaffirmed the findings from the literature in many aspects. First, while women continue to outnumber men in the field and in graduate programs, men still

hold a majority of CSAO positions. Influential decision points for women related to their careers include the choice of if and when to have children, their interest or ability to relocate, and managing stress to avoid burn out and achieve job satisfaction. Again, all of these issues cited from the literature were findings related to this study. The last area of the literature reaffirmed by this study is about the leadership style of women. Women are expected to be more collaborative and less hierarchical. This was true of the women in my study although they all felt their style had helped them be successful in the field.

While reticent to label their experiences discrimination, the majority of the women shared stories and experiences during their career where they felt they had been treated unfairly in a promotion or salary situation because of their gender. Since achieving the position of CSAO, most felt their gender was an influence in relationship to the demands of family, the role of their spouse and the costs of achievement, all of which are discussed in the following research questions. Despite the changes in the law, new programs and increasing numbers of women in the field, gender is still very much an influencing factor on the experiences of women in student affairs, particularly on the career progression to the chief role.

Research Question 2

In understanding whether women CSAOs categorize their work, network and nonwork domains of life as separate, this study underscores the break from the literature that women do articulate the different domains of their life in terms of roles, but do not see them as distinctly separate in the manner in which they manage their lives. These

women were frustrated with the male standard of balance that is cited in the literature and which is ubiquitous in workshops and professional presentations.

The literature on balance almost always focuses on finding separation between work and home. There are many studies on burnout and stress in student affairs, with primary causes for both being related to hours worked on the job. The CSAO role is often one that requires constant attention, every day of the week. Time demands of the position is the reason most frequently cited in studies as the top contributor related to job satisfaction. All of these women worked long hours, but felt strongly they had a life outside of work that was fulfilling and meaningful to them.

The literature also states that women are often subject to more scrutiny surrounding their work and family choices and are often seen as more likely to burn out than their male colleagues. All the women CSAOs in this study expressed that others in the field offered a critical view of dissatisfaction about their life roles. Only when criticized by others did CSAOs express doubt about their choices related to life roles, but ultimately, they expressed a positive view of their life roles and choices.

These women did not want to be judged by others, either within or outside of the profession. They each set an internal standard of satisfaction for their lives based on their values and situations and despite others' criticism of their choices, they were happy with their lives and choices.

Research Question 3

All of the respondents felt their public and private lives intersected and that keeping them in separate domains was not only impossible, but unnecessary. They

preferred to see their lives as one integrated activity. Research questions 3 and 4 extend the findings from questions 1 and 2. It is in the intersection of their lives that the choices they had to make are illuminated. Overall, the women felt that the college environment is a positive one in which to live out the aspects of their lives, including nonwork. They are very aware of their roles on campus and at home. This is enhanced by their gender, meaning that very often they are the lone female senior executive on their campus. For those with children, they are hyper-aware of their jobs as mother. Achievement oriented, these women know that their public and private lives intersect and others are aware of that intersection as well. For example, there is a public aspect to their role as a parent that is often on display in their work environment.

The role of their spouse in relationship to the lives was a surprising and multi-layered theme. There are expectations of their spouses that they will participate in some university functions, including those seen as purely social. The male spouse of an executive is still considered unusual and particularly in social situations, that can be awkward for everyone involved. All but one of the married women in the study had husbands whose careers were secondary to their own. This secondary career role provided for flexibility in managing daily routines as well as helped women CSAOs relocate for their own careers more easily.

According to the literature, more men in the CSAO role than women are married and have children. The proportion of single female CSAOs who never marry is significantly higher than the general female college graduate population that remains single (Randall, Daugherty, and Globetti, 1995). However in this study, the majority of

the respondents are married and have children. They reported that they made choices based on their children's needs both on a daily basis and within the longer scope of their career.

Overall, the effect of the intersection between the public and private lives of women CSAOs was usually increased stress and negative feelings, typically guilt or worry. However, the majority report negative feelings to be infrequent. In general, women CSAOs reported a sense of satisfaction about when their work and nonwork lives intersecting.

Research Question 4

The costs of achievement in the field of student affairs were evident to me before I began this study. My 10+ years in the field at four different institutions has provided me plenty of examples of the issues for women in the field, including the costs of achievement. In my own experiences, I saw issue after issue unfold, from attrition in the field to salary inequities, the need to relocate, to costs of pursuing a doctorate. Women CSAOs reported deeply on the costs of achievement that they felt existed for them. In particular, the women in this study were clustered around 50 years of age or older. The majority of them came into the field around the time of Title IX and their careers followed the progression of women in the field. They were not the pioneers, but certainly their time in the field has reflected significant changes related to women in some ways, and in some ways things have changed very little. For example, the majority of women felt they needed to pursue a PhD to gain credibility and to have career choices. When they began in the field, a doctorate was not always necessary to

achieve senior positions as it is now, but they felt it would equalize the playing field for them. It would mean that nobody could say no to them on that basis. The choice to pursue a doctorate created enormous stress on the women in this study, particularly because the majority of them worked full time and had children while going to school.

As they achieved success in the field, culminating in their positions as CSAOs, they report lacking friends as the biggest cost of achievement. In the work setting, it was difficult to be friends because of their positions and outside of work, they either had relocated or reported being too busy to invest in personal relationships. They often felt lonely as a result. This kind of isolation is cited in the literature as a more common issue for women than men in senior roles in the field. Often this is because they lack other female colleagues at the senior level.

All of the women in this study experienced short and/or long term health problems that they also cite as a cost of achievement. These health problems range from stress-induced illnesses like Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, to persistent infections, to serious life threatening illnesses. In each case, the women felt the stress they experienced from their jobs was a direct contributor to their illness. The idea that stress is related to illness is not a new idea, but in this study, it was the life management issues that resulted from their multiple life roles that exacerbated their situations. For example, to achieve in their jobs, they felt they had to relocate or pursue a PhD but were unwilling to not pursue personal choices like having a family that were so important to them. They did not want to feel like they would have to make choices their male counterparts did not

have to so they forged ahead, burning the candle at both ends with the result being a negative impact on their health.

Despite the costs of achievement, the respondents had no regrets. I was not surprised that they had no regrets. These were accomplished women who had made the majority of their choices in years' past. For those with children, the children were now mostly grown or already off on their own. This was a very experienced group of women CSAOs by and large so they had adjusted to their roles some time ago and had chosen to stay in the role. My point is that they already achieved success, despite the costs. As the study was underway, I realized the results might look very different if I were interviewing women at the assistant/associate director or director level who had intentions of becoming a CSAO. At that point, they would be in the throes of those choices and may have different perspectives. Nonetheless, I think the women in this study did not underplay their struggles or choices in any manner. They had all already taken time to reflect on their lives prior to our interview so they were sharing their thoughts from a place of decision rather than evaluation.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The status of women in the field of student affairs has grown, diminished and is growing again. In particular, the last 35 years have been a time of some focused attention on the growth of women in the field. Since the implementation of Title IX, women have gained more access to graduate programs and increased their presence in the field. Many programs that support the development of women, such as NASPA's Alice Manicur Symposium for Women Aspiring to be Senior Student Affairs Officers,

have been implemented. Research on women and their progression in the field was growing during the 1980's and early 1990's but slowed down again until very recently. In the last 35 years, women have gone from only occupying about less than a quarter of CSAO positions to nearly reaching the 50% mark. It is still not enough to achieve equity in the field. Unless there are changes to the experiences of women in the field as they progress, we will not be able to promote women into the chief student affairs position. Put another way, we have to find ways to address the costs of achievement cited by women CSAOs as well as those perceived costs that prevent women from desiring to be promoted. Until women in senior roles in the university, including in student affairs, are more common, women will continue to feel some isolation and increased pressure to represent the views of all women. What follows are three recommendations that can be implemented to effect the experiences of women in the field of student affairs.

Support the Career Progression of Women

Women continue to strive to meet and follow the same career path that has been established by men in the field. Most of the studies that point to differences in experiences of women reiterate the fact that women's experiences are different and the very nature of trying to conform to a single (male) standard adds to the negative experiences of women. Chief student affairs officers, human resources professionals and presidents of colleges and universities should revisit their preconceived ideas about career progression in order to offer alternatives that will be more attractive to women in the field. For example, as the completion of a doctorate becomes a more desirable qualification for senior positions, programs that support working and attending school

should be implemented. These programs could be modeled after sabbaticals or could reflect a reduced load for a finite period of time while an employee is pursuing this credential. Related to this are programs that support the financial cost of pursuing a doctorate. In the end, institutions benefit from having a more educated workforce and are more likely to retain talented women employees by offering these types of incentives.

In terms of hiring, many search committees have singular ideas about what is and is not an appropriate career path to achieve promotion. I have experienced personally and heard many other women talking about the unwillingness of the higher education environment to accept or welcome women back to work after stopping out of the field for a period of time. Reinforcing the idea that to be successful, one must continuously work, does not account for the reality of many women who would like to stop out for a period of time for personal reasons, usually the choice to have a child. Related to this idea, more positions within the field could be redesigned at the half or three quarter time level to be more desirable for professionals pursuing a degree or for those who wish to return to work after having a child, but would rather not work full-time. Currently, positions less than full-time are rare in student affairs. Hiring committees can also do more to consider internal candidates. An accepted idea in the field is that in order to move up, you must move on. Willingness or ability to relocate is an issue for women in the field. As long as relocation is a requirement, some women will never be promoted or seek to achieve more senior positions.

Search committees, human resources professionals, CSAOs and presidents should do more to equalize pay for women in the field. Women in general continue to earn only about three quarters of what a man does for similar work. Within student affairs, the literature still points to salary inequities. Those in positions of power to make this change should do so. While many employee programs benefit members of both sexes, there are documented impediments to success for women. Most notably, these include affordable child care, spousal support during relocation, flexible work schedules and professional development opportunities.

Lastly, those who supervise women in student affairs should reevaluate whether they are creating hidden work loads for women in the field. Moreover, they should ensure that the women on their staffs do not routinely pick up the extra work such as taking notes in meetings. Ensure their committee assignments are on topics germane and important to the work of the institution. If women in the field have more significant experiences as they progress in their career, they will be more likely to be promoted into senior positions.

Student Affairs Is a Career, Not a Lifestyle Choice

A common theme I have heard working in the field is that working in student affairs is a lifestyle choice, not a career. This exact phrase was used by two of the nine women interviewed in this study. There are many assumptions and consequences that come with this statement. First, approaching a job or career in general as a lifestyle choice is unusual when compared with most other career paths. It implies a singular dedication to the job and all its quirky pieces. Juxtaposed with that concept is the

constant literature on the need to achieve balance while working in student affairs. The messages are mixed. Further, the idea that a job should have someone's singular dedication and become a lifestyle will influence more women to walk away from the field than to continue on. The research on attrition for women in the field supports this claim.

First, the field needs to reexamine the use of a male standard for the field and for the leadership of the division specifically. Recognize that most of the employees in the field are women who are not as likely to be married. Whether they are married or not, they may have children. For those married, their spouse likely works – unlike the majority of male CSAOs. Structure work time to be as flexible as possible, taking into account the multiple roles the employee is filling outside of just being an employee. Critiques of the choices women make should be eliminated. As cited in the literature review, women routinely undergo more criticism from others about the choices they make. This scrutiny affects their stress levels and their perceptions of acceptance.

Address the issue of the achievement and maintenance of balance as the standard. Reduce the incongruence between actions and words. Leaders and supervisors in the field should not routinely espouse the value for balance but make it difficult to take vacations during the academic year, expect employees to work 50+ hours a week as a norm and fail to offer flexible scheduling. Professional meetings, conferences and institutes should stop starting on a weekend and move to only include a normal work schedule, including travel time. What frequently happens now is that during the conference or meeting there will be a session on achieving work/life balance which will

recommend not regularly working more than 40 hours and taking time away from work. The conference will end on a work day and the employee will be expected to immediately return to work, resulting in working nearly two weeks straight if the event began on a weekend. The underlying message is the employee is simply too valuable to ever be away from campus, reinforcing behavior that ultimately leads to attrition.

Redefine Leadership

Helen Astin's qualitative study *Women of Influence, Women of Vision* (1991) sought to understand the professional experiences of female CSAOs by the era in which they entered the profession. She defined professional women as either "predecessors", "instigators", or "inheritors", depending on their point of entry into the work force. The predecessor was among the first women to join the professional work force and generally chose to remain single so as to enhance her career advancement. The predecessor was usually the only woman employed in her organization and had no professional cohort group. There were no role models for the predecessor except for powerful men and thus she adopted a male model of leadership. These women had to excel and be more exceptional than their male colleagues to receive even limited recognition.

Instigators were among the selected women in the 1960's and 1970's who "in spite of their personal pain, their belief in the goodness of people inspired and motivated them to provide leadership for change" (Astin, 1991, p.34). These women created new life patterns for themselves and others. They responded to the problems of institutional change and created the training and mentoring for the inheritors who would follow them.

Inheritors are probably most distinctively identified through their own recognition of the vital role that an instigator or instigators “played in shaping the inheritors’ feminist vision, their values, and their work” (Astin, 1991, p.36). These women are indebted to instigators as role models.

The majority of women in this study would be defined by Astin as Inheritors. Most of these CSAOs began their careers in the years just before or after the passage of Title IX. During their careers, they were often the only woman in the room, or around the table. While they were leading the way as women in the field, they were taking their cues from men and as such, adopted the behaviors and standards of many of their male colleagues. As a new generation of women CSAOs take over in the coming years, their experiences as women in the field will have been different. It is critically important that as the field changes leadership, that leadership becomes redefined. Women bring a leadership style to their work that tends to be collaborative, intuitive and more focused on coaching and mentoring. In addition, women view their lives as integrated activities and bring with them to their employment role their experiences beyond work. In order for these women to succeed and in an effort to remove obstacles, a new definition of leadership should be accepted – a female standard of leadership.

A standard of leadership that was viewed as female or gender neutral would have a positive impact on higher education. This style of leadership would be more collaborative and less hierarchical than the male standard accepted today. The way committees, divisions, and departments work may be restructured to be less hierarchical, and more based on collaboration and work product. Certainly women would do more to

acknowledge the intersection of work and nonwork in leading a division or area within student affairs. This has potential policy implications for higher education.

If a female standard were applied, there would be less scrutiny of women's leadership styles. For example, in a male standard, women are expected to be compassionate and often disliked if they are not. Often people do not listen as intently or take direction from women as comfortably as they do from men. If these situations changed because a female standard was more acceptable, the voice of women and particularly that of the division of student affairs may be heard more clearly and resoundingly at the executive level of the institution.

With more women at the helm, there would be less awareness of how rare it has been, leading the way to empower others. Some of the situations professional women find themselves in – being assigned as note takers in meetings, receiving less critical assignments and being relegated to departments seen as more acceptable places for female leadership – could be changed more easily. Established female leaders would endorse and legitimize women who seek or attain leadership roles, rather than seeing them as power hungry or odd. There would be less focus on the interpersonal characteristics of leaders, including their likeability, than their achievements and leadership abilities. Simply put, female leadership would be seen as normal and this would reshape the perceptions of others about what leadership means, as well as who could be leaders.

Recommendations for Future Research

The dearth of research on the experiences of women in the CSAO role makes it difficult to situate the findings from this study in a larger context. Future research should focus on the current experiences of women in the CSAO role as well as investigate their career progression. For the studies that do exist, they have focused on only one issue of identity, such as gender or ethnicity. Looking at the collusion of gender, sexual orientation and ethnicity as it relates to women in student affairs, particularly in the CSAO role, will yield richer or more meaningful data that reflect the experiences of women.

As women gain in number at the executive level in student affairs, more studies should undertake their experiences, particularly as the issues may change with generational shifts. Issues of stress, mentoring and achieving the doctorate are all likely areas to target in future research since the last thirty years has yielded environmental changes affecting each of these areas. For example, it is now becoming nearly required to acquire a doctorate in order to become the chief student affairs officer.

Issues of balance, particularly during the child bearing years, reach their fervor typically in the time before a professional achieves the chief role. This may change as more professional women delay child bearing later into their thirties. A related concept worth exploring is the differences that may exist for women with and without children in the field of student affairs at all levels.

Finally, more needs to be uncovered about the costs of achievement for women in the field. Simply put, the costs are too high and eventually, there will be changes in

patterns of women's achievement if the costs continue. As different models of families emerge, more women delay childbirth and/or men become more represented in doctoral programs, these issues should be studied including the barriers to women from achieving the CSAO role.

In conclusion, there is no question that women are integral to the field of student affairs. Trend data suggests they will continue to be represented as a higher percentage of those working in the field as well as those in graduate programs. If institutions are going to successfully tap into the talent of women in the field, they will have to make adjustments to their current practices. Colleges and universities would be wise to institute changes before the attrition of women becomes too high or worse, women never consider the career path because of the perceived costs of achievement.

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APPENDIX A**E-MAIL REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW**

Dr. xxx,

Greetings from San Antonio! I am a Ph.D. candidate at Texas A&M University working on my dissertation. Both my vice president, Gage Paine, and one of my mentors in my program, Stan Carpenter, recommended you as someone to contact regarding my research.

I'm writing to ask if you are willing to be participant in my dissertation research. I am engaging in a naturalistic/qualitative study to gain a deeper understanding of the intersection of career progression (work), balance (non-work) and mentoring relationships (network) of women chief student affairs officers. In my study, I will be interviewing between six and ten women who serve in the CSAO role. I am hoping to conduct the all the interviews this summer.

The interview will be in-depth, likely requiring 2-4 hours of your time over one or two sittings (your choice). I will ask questions of a personal nature and ask you to be reflective and willing to disclose in depth about your work and non-work life. I will tape record our sessions, and transcribe those tapes for data collection purposes, although you will have complete confidentiality throughout the process. I will assign a pseudonym to all people and institutions and no names will be revealed.

I can be flexible around your schedule. As for a location for the interview, you can choose a setting that is most comfortable for you. I can come to your office, or we can meet in a library, or in a private home – wherever you would be most comfortable.

This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University. I appreciate your consideration of my request and look forward to hearing from you.

-Becky

Becky Spurlock, Director
Campus & Community Involvement
Trinity University
210/999-7547

APPENDIX B
PROTOCOL

1. When people ask ‘what do you do,’ how do you answer?
2. Tell me about your career path.
3. Tell me about your mentors and their influence in your life.
4. What is your life outside of work like?
5. What is the cost of achievement?
6. What keeps you up at night?
7. Where do you go when you need to vent?
8. Describe any physical changes when you transition between work, nonwork and network.
9. Do you flow from one activity to the next (whether work or not)?
10. Do you view life as an integrated activity?

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I have been asked to participate in a research study exploring the work, nonwork and networks of women chief student affairs administrators. I was selected to be a possible participant because I am a woman and serve an institution of higher education in the chief student affairs administrator role. A total of 15 people have been asked to participate in this study. The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the intersection of career progression (work), balance (nonwork) and mentoring relationships (network) of women chief student affairs officers through a naturalistic inquiry process.

If I agree to be in this study, I will be asked to be part of at least one personal interview. This interview will be audio taped. This study will take a commitment of 3-6 hours, over the course of one or more meeting times. The risks and potential discomfort associated with this study are discomfort due to intensely personal and highly emotional topics that may be discussed. There are no benefits of participation. I will not receive any financial compensation for participation in this study.

This study is confidential. All participants will be assigned a pseudonym to be used in the written report. The records of this study will be stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home. No identifiers linking me to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only Becky Spurlock and Dr. Yvonna Lincoln will have access to the records. The audio tapes used in this study will be kept on file for 3 years and then will be destroyed. My decision whether or not to participate will not affect my current or future relations with Texas A&M University. If I decide to participate, I am free to refuse to answer any of the questions that may make me uncomfortable. I can withdraw at any time without my relations with the university, job, benefits, etc., being affected. I can contact Becky Spurlock at 210/481-5863 or Dr. Yvonna Lincoln at 979/845-2701 with any questions about this study.

This research study has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board – Human Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, I can contact the Institutional Review Board through Ms. Angelia Raines, Director of Research Compliance, Office of Vice President for Research at 979/847-9362 (araines@vprmail.tamu.edu).

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and received answers to my satisfaction. I have been given a copy of this consent documents for my records. By signing this document, I consent to participate in this study.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____

Date: _____

Contact Information:

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APPENDIX D
RESEARCH AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Research Questions

- How does gender influence your role as a chief student affairs officer?
- Do you categorize the work, network, and nonwork domains of your life as separate, and if so, how do you determine what is part of the distinct categories?
- To what extent does your public and private life intersect, and what is the effect on both as a result?
- Does achievement have a cost in the field, and if so, what is that cost from your perspective?

Interview Questions

11. When people ask ‘what do you do,’ how do you answer?
12. Tell me about your career path.
13. Tell me about your mentors and their influence in your life.
14. What is your life outside of work like?
15. What is the cost of achievement?
16. What keeps you up at night?
17. Where do you go when you need to vent?
18. Describe any physical changes when you transition between work, nonwork and network.
19. Do you flow from one activity to the next (whether work or not)?

20. Do you view life as an integrated activity?

APPENDIX E

Memorandum

To: Rebecca Spurlock, Researcher
 From: Rosalind V. Alderman, Ph.D., Auditor
 Date: April 4, 2009
 Re: Letter of Attestation for Spurlock Dissertation

On March 12, 2009, the researcher, Rebecca Spurlock, and I met to discuss the audit process. During that meeting, we reviewed the researcher's methods for obtaining and analyzing the data. I was also provided copies of Chapters 3, 4 and 5 to review.

Charge

The Auditor's charge is to determine dependability, confirmability and to review credibility measures.

Theoretical Basis for the Audit

Per the chapter, *Establishing Trustworthiness*, in Lincoln and Guba's *Naturalistic Inquiry* (1985), this audit is based on Edward S. Halpern's auditing concept as described in Appendices A & B. (pp. 382-392).

This audit was conducted by reviewing materials related to the research, including the interview protocol, transcripts (sorted into index cards), notes on themes found throughout the writing process and findings as shared in the dissertation itself.

Goals of the Audit

The goal of this audit was to establish trustworthiness of the researcher's work, determining dependability and confirmability and to review credibility measures.

Audit Procedures

Audit Trail

I found evidence that the Audit Trail Categories below were achieved successfully.

- 1) Raw Data: The researcher had organized and categorized the raw data appropriately. All index cards showed data that had been unitized and organized. There were four major categories with subcategories of each.
- 2) Data Reduction and Analysis Products: I was able to review the unitized data, and inspect the coding procedures the researcher used. All the data appeared to be well organized.
- 3) Data Reconstruction and Synthesis Products: After reading the transcripts the interviewees had checked, the researcher identified 5 emergent themes. She shared these themes with the women she interviewed and they all agreed the themes were congruent with their experiences.
- 4) Process Notes: The researcher discussed with me how she processed the data and arrived at her conclusions/findings. The researcher also explained how she worked with a peer debriefer. She had found it helpful to make use of a peer debriefer.

- 5) **Materials Relating to Intentions and Dispositions:** The researcher began using a reflexive journal as she was writing her proposal and continued writing it until the conclusion of the dissertation writing process.

Audit Process

- 1) **Preentry:** The researcher and I met to review various documents and we determined I would serve as the auditor for this research.
- 2) **Determination of Auditability:** In reviewing the materials provided, the research appears to be in good order and one can follow how inferences and conclusions were made.
- 3) **Formal Agreement:** A verbal agreement was reached to use me as the auditor.
- 4) **Determination of Trustworthiness:**
 - a. *Confirmability:* In reading the findings, they seem to be based on the data gathered and the organizing of categories and data is logical. Inquirer bias does not seem evident.
 - b. *Dependability:* A purposive sampling method was used in accordance with standards of the field. The researcher interviewed to the point of redundancy, fulfilling the requirements for dependability. Rich description in the dissertation product aids to this dependability.
 - c. *Credibility:* Professionals interviewed were asked to conduct a review of their transcripts. All 9 participants in the study did do a member check (both during the interview and of the transcripts via e-mail). All agreed the transcripts were accurate; only minor changes were needed.
- 5) **Closure:** I am sharing this memorandum with the researcher and it will be an appendix to the dissertation.

Findings

Overall, the audit has found that the researcher conducted the study in accordance to the naturalistic inquiry methods. The researcher was thorough and meticulous in producing a complete audit trail. Additionally, all processes lead to ensure trustworthiness in her research.

Overall Attestation

It is the auditor's opinion that the researcher's methods and conclusions have met the requirements of dependability, confirmability and credibility measures.

Auditor's Vita

The auditor has been employed in higher education for 16 years as a student affairs professional. She holds a bachelor's degree from West Texas A&M University, an M.A. from Bowling Green State University and a Ph.D. from Texas A&M University. She currently serves as the Assistant Vice President for Retention Management at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas.

VITA

Name: Rebecca Lynn Spurlock

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M.Ed., Counseling and Guidance; Student Affairs Emphasis, Texas State University, 1996

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Director, Campus & Community Involvement, Trinity University, 2005-present

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Hall Director, Texas State University, 1996-1998

The editor for this dissertation was Margaret Y. Luévano.