

University of Missouri, St. Louis

IRL @ UMSL

Dissertations

UMSL Graduate Works

7-16-2021

Thriving in Student Affairs Professionals: An Exploration of Supporting Constructs

Shawn Brodie

University of Missouri-St. Louis, brodies@umsystem.edu

Phillip Campbell

University of Missouri-St. Louis

Gretchen Day Fricke

University of Missouri-St. Louis

Kawanna Leggett

University of Missouri-St. Louis

Norris Manning

University of Missouri-St. Louis

Follow this and additional works at: <https://irl.umsl.edu/dissertation>



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Brodie, Shawn; Campbell, Phillip; Fricke, Gretchen Day; Leggett, Kawanna; and Manning, Norris, "Thriving in Student Affairs Professionals: An Exploration of Supporting Constructs" (2021). *Dissertations*. 1059. <https://irl.umsl.edu/dissertation/1059>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the UMSL Graduate Works at IRL @ UMSL. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of IRL @ UMSL. For more information, please contact marvinh@umsl.edu.

Thriving in Student Affairs Professionals: An Exploration of Supporting Constructs

Shawn Brodie

M.A., Professional Counseling, McKendree University, 2011
B.S., Psychology, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, 2008

Phillip Campbell

M.S.Ed., College Student Development and Administration
University of Wisconsin-Lacrosse, 2008
B.A. Sociology/Anthropology, Truman State University, 2006

Gretchen Day Fricke

M.S.Ed., Instructional Technology, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, 2015
M.B.A., North Park College, 1995
B.A. Sociology, Wheaton College, 1990

Kawanna Leggett

M.Ed., Higher Education Administration, University of Arkansas-Fayetteville, 2004
B.A. Political Science, Clemson University, 2002

Norris Manning

M.Ed., Student Personnel Services, University of South Carolina, Columbia, 1992
B.S. Political Science, Berry College, 1989

A Co-Authored Dissertation submitted to
The Graduate School at the University of Missouri-St. Louis
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Education with an emphasis in Educational Practice

August
2021

Dissertation Committee

Shawn Woodhouse, Ph.D.

Chairperson

Christiane Hubbard Jackson, Ph.D.

Jennifer Simms, Ph.D.

Abstract

Student affairs professionals provide vital services to college students while also facing various challenges that impact their ability to thrive at work. This study examined overall thriving, its constructs and a set of predictors that impact thriving in student affairs professionals. Seligman's (PERMA) theory of thriving provided the conceptual foundation for this study. Understanding the constructs that support thriving for student affairs professionals will help institutional leaders and professional organizations develop work environments and strategies that promote thriving. A global pandemic occurred during the time of this research, allowing exploration of how COVID-19 impacted thriving. This study also included variables of generation and functional areas to explore if there were variations of thriving.

To test the research questions, an existing survey was modified for use in this study's population. The original source of the survey was the Thriving Project at Azusa Pacific University under the leadership of Dr. Laurie Schreiner. The survey included questions related to PERMA (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment) constructs, along with predictors of thriving (sense of community, spirituality, institutional integrity and commitment to staff welfare). The survey was administered to student affairs professionals at a mid-sized public university in the Midwest. The results supported the conclusion that student affairs professionals at this institution were experiencing a higher level of thriving. Pearson correlation revealed a positive relationship between all the PERMA constructs and overall thriving. A multiple regression revealed three of the four predictors contributed to overall thriving with commitment to staff welfare not having an impact. Results of two one-way ANOVAs

revealed there was not a significant relationship of generation or functional area to overall thriving. However, the COVID-19 global pandemic was found to significantly impact thriving.

Overall, the results of this study suggested that student affairs professionals at this public university were thriving and provided ways to further support thriving. This study included recommendations on ways this and other institutions could continue to bolster thriving among student affairs professionals.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Shawn Brodie

First and foremost, I want to thank my wife Jaclyn for putting up with me and this program for the past three years. I had the wonderful idea to pursue my doctorate two months before we were married, and we both had to deal with the stress, anxiety, and late nights that followed. Without you, I would never have made it through. Thank you for the love and support you have shown me. Remember to never let me do something like this again.

Mom, dad, and the rest of my wonderful family: you continued to provide encouragement, motivation, and support to help me persevere through very difficult times personally and professionally while completing this program. Your love and support never went unnoticed or unappreciated, even if this process took me away from you all from time to time. I am incredibly lucky to have you all.

To my incredible group members: where do I begin? Things have been difficult for all of us the last few years, but we found a way to pull each other through during crazy times, incredible amounts of pressure, and a global pandemic. You all have been a second family throughout this process, and I cannot thank any of you enough for all you have done for me during this program. I am forever indebted to each one of you.

To Ian: thanks for being a sounding board and my voice of reason for the past three years.

To Cody, Penny, and Bowie: you have been the best study buddies.

Lastly, many thanks to the 2018-2019 St. Louis Blues. I will forever associate my time in this program with the greatest summer of my life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Phillip Campbell

In most years, studying the concept of thriving student affairs professionals who perform work to support students would go unrecognized. Prior research found that student affairs professionals can be overworked, underpaid, and overextended; but also impactful, essential, and instrumental to student success. This is my chosen profession to which I am impassioned to help improve. The collective challenge navigating the COVID-19 global pandemic elevated how students, faculty, staff, and administrators partnered, collaborated, and innovated. While working full time and navigating these challenges as a cohort; we chose to commit to this research and complete this degree.

I thank my fellow researchers - Shawn Brodie, Ed.D.; Gretchen Day Fricke, Ed.D.; Kawanna Leggett, Ed.D.; and Norris Manning, Ed.D. - who have become dear friends and close family. Shawn is a realistic and encouraging leader who always reminded us to work smart. Gretchen embodied organization and her ability to juggle motherhood, work, and school was inspiring. Kawanna's positive attitude and commitment to inclusion demonstrated her exceptional leadership skills. Norris is purposeful and joyous whose storytelling brought our research to life and smiles to our faces. While I applied to this program by myself, I am grateful to be graduating with an uncanny connection to these thriving individuals.

I'd like to thank my family - both given and chosen. Thank you to my biological family, namely my mother and sister, who have always encouraged me to work towards my goals. From the energy I gained spending time with a cousin or when family gathered, each member of my family has supported me in some way.

Thank you to my chosen family of a supportive partner, friends, colleagues, coworkers, supervisors, and mentors who responded to text messages, assisted via virtual chats, read drafts, and gave feedback, or sent positive vibes to celebrate milestones along this doctoral journey. I cannot fully express how much your support has helped me reach this goal.

This research evolved through thoughtful, stressful, and hours upon hours of writing at coffee shops, wine bars, office desks, dining room tables; anywhere an idea would strike, or a deadline would near. I thank our dissertation committee and faculty mentor team as well as all the course instructors who helped us hone our knowledge, skills, and drafts to complete this research.

Lastly, there are two people who were here when I started my pursuit of this degree but have since passed away. I am named after my grandfather and my father (Phillip and Jeffrey); both of whom are not able to see me graduate or read my research. In memorandum, along with my grandmothers (Norma and Rose), I thank them for instilling the values of dedication and tenacity in me.

Thanks to those near and far who have helped me learn about what thriving looks like and feels like to me. Thank you for my past experiences, current challenges, and this degree; as a proud student affairs professional, I believe in my ability to thrive in the future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Gretchen Day Fricke

To my husband, Perry, thank you for encouraging me to finally complete this lifelong goal and picking up the slack when I had class, was stressed trying to keep all the different balls in the air, had to study or was sequestered away writing. I could not have done this without your support.

To my kids, Carson and Elise, this is proof that you can do anything you dream! It might not always happen in the timeframe you initially imagine but live life with no regrets, keep your dreams alive and never give up! I love you both more than life itself and I am so proud to have been back in school alongside you as you both worked on your degrees. The sky is the limit, kids! There is always something new to learn.

To my parents, Dave and Betty Day, thank you for making faith and education priorities growing up and encouraging your kids to never stop learning.

To my dissertation group members, Shawn Brodie, Phillip Campbell, Kawanna Leggett and Norris Manning, we did it! You became like family through the highs and lows of this process. I am so proud to have been a part of this with you. You are all amazing individuals who brought so much to the research process.

A special thank you to both my colleagues at SIUE and the UMSL HESS cohort, program faculty and the mentor team of Dr. Christiane Hubbard Jackson, Dr. Shawn Woodhouse and Dr. Jennifer Simms at UMSL for the support and laughs along the way. There were moments when I questioned the sanity of this decision, but your support and encouragement helped keep me focused on finishing.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Kawanna Leggett

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Peggy Leggett, who taught me my first lessons about resiliency, grit and perseverance. Thank you for your endless support and encouragement to obtain an advanced degree. This dissertation is also dedicated to my father, James Leggett, grandmothers Josephine Smallwood and Mary Leggett, who are sharing this moment with me in spirit.

I appreciate the support and patience I have received from many people over the last three years of my academic pursuits. I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to the following individuals:

First my thriving 5 family. Shawn Brodie, Phillip Campbell, Gretchen Fricke, and Norris Manning you all truly embodied the term thriving. I am so grateful for our hours of studying, processing, writing, editing, complaining and supporting one another through this academic journey. I could not have done this without you all. My committee members – Dr. Christiane Hubbard Jackson, Dr. Jennifer Simms, and Dr. Shawn Woodhouse thank you for your feedback and support throughout this process.

Dr. Laurie Schreiner for your inspiration in pursuing the topic of thriving further. Thank you for your time, guidance and research that served as a foundation to this study. You helped our group develop, define, and further our research topic. Dr. Delmy Lendof, Dr. Leon McClinton, Dr. Yetty Marquez-Santana, Dr. Rob Wild and Dr. Lori White who have all inspired and encouraged me to begin my doctoral studies and have supported my academic and professional development.

Jason who has loved, counseled, encouraged, and supported me. I could not have done the last year of this program during a global pandemic without you, and I am eternally grateful.

A special thanks to the HESS cohort, ACUHO-I executive board and the staff at Washington University in St. Louis in the Office of Residential Life for your support throughout this doctoral process.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Norris Manning

Under normal circumstances completing a dissertation as a component of a doctoral program is challenging. Completing a dissertation during a worldwide pandemic might have been impossible without the individuals who supported and encouraged me along the way. First, I want to thank my dissertation team members: we have been connected for almost three years. They have been individually and collectively a constant source of collaborative energy and support. Thank you to Shawn Brodie, Phillip Campbell, Gretchen Fricke, and Kawanna Leggett throughout this roller coaster ride. May you always thrive in your personal and professional pursuits! I also wish to thank the mentor team: Dr. Christiane Hubbard Jackson, Dr. Jennifer Simms, and Dr. Shawn Woodhouse. Their guidance, feedback, and patience were instrumental in this endeavor. Many sincere thanks to Dr. Laurie Schreiner who provided the inspiration for this study of thriving in student affairs professionals, the instrument as well as crucial information we needed to connect these concepts into a study.

To my work colleagues, I thank you for your patience when I was pulled in many directions. This research into thriving in student affairs professionals was inspired by you and the work you do to support students. To the student affairs professionals who participated in the survey, your time and thoughtful consideration of the questions was appreciated. Additional thanks go to Dr. Timothy Schoenecker, Dr. Janice Joplin, and Dr. Michael Hair: our discussions about practice-oriented data and using research results provided a firm foundation for examining our research results and explaining the findings for our dissertation.

Finally, thank you to David Saverin. You will never know how much I have appreciated your patience and willingness to endure many tough moments and celebrate milestones throughout the process. Thank you for accompanying me on this journey!

Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES.....	xvii
 CHAPTER 1: PROBLEM OF PRACTICE	
Introduction.....	1
Background of the Problem	5
Why Thriving Matters.....	6
Absence of Thriving	8
Contextual Perspectives of Student Affairs Professionals.....	12
Historical Perspectives.....	13
Social and Cultural Perspectives.....	15
A Career in Student Affairs	18
Candidates’ Perspective	22
Local Contextual Perspectives.....	25
Problem of Practice.....	27
Purpose.....	29
Research Questions.....	30
Limitations	31
Chapter Summary	33
 CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF KNOWLEDGE FOR ACTION	
Introduction.....	36
Conceptual Framework.....	37
Instrument and Operational Definitions.....	40
Literature Review.....	42
Foundations of Thriving	43
Positive Psychology	43
Workplace Thriving.....	44
Thriving Constructs and Predictors	54
Positive Emotion Construct (P)	55
Engagement Construct (E).....	58
Relationship Construct (R)	61
Supervisor Relationships	62
Co-Worker or Peer Relationships	64
Meaning Construct (M).....	66
Accomplishment Construct (A)	72
Predictors of Thriving	74
Psychological Sense of Community Predictor.....	75
Spirituality Predictor.....	77
Institutional Integrity Predictor.....	80
Commitment to Staff Welfare Predictor	84
Student Affairs Professionals.....	86

Demographics of Student Affairs Professionals	89
Generations of Student Affairs Professionals	89
Silent Generation (1928-1945)	90
Baby Boomers (1946-1964).....	91
Generation X (1965-1980).....	91
Millennials (1981-1996)	91
Generation Z (1997- chronological endpoint not yet established).....	92
Multigenerational Workplace Relations	92
Functional Areas of Student Affairs Professionals	93
Academic Advising.....	95
Admissions and Financial Aid	95
Campus Recreation	96
Career Development	96
Counseling and Health Services	96
Disability and Learning Support Services	97
Diversity and Inclusion, International Student Services, and Veterans.....	97
Enrollment Management and Registrar	98
Housing and Residence Life	99
Student Involvement	99
COVID-19 and Higher Education	101
Stakeholder Perspective	103
Administrators.....	104
Supervisors and Managers	105
Graduate Programs and Professional Associations.....	106
Chapter Summary	107

CHAPTER 3: METHODS AND DESIGN FOR ACTION

Introduction.....	110
Research Design and Research Questions	112
Participants.....	113
Instrument	115
Thriving Quotient (TQ).....	115
Thriving Quotient for Staff and Administrators (TQ-SA).....	118
Demographics Section	118
PERMA Constructs of Thriving Section	119
Schreiner’s Predictors of Thriving Section.....	120
COVID-19 Section.....	121
Supplemental Section.....	122
Instrument Scoring.....	122
Instrument Reliability and Validity	123
Threats to Validity	124
Analysis Variables	125
Implementation	129
Beta Testing and Institutional Review Board Approval.....	130
Informed Consent.....	131

Data Collection	132
Data Analysis	134
Research Questions	135
Themes and Improvements	145
Chapter Summary	146

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction.....	148
Data Collection	149
Framework and Instrument	150
Procedure	153
Participants.....	155
Preliminary Analysis.....	156
Research Question Results.....	160
Research Question One Results	160
Research Question Two Results	163
Research Question Three Results	166
Research Question Four Results	169
Research Question Five Results.....	171
Supplemental Question Results	177
Chapter Summary	179

CHAPTER 5: ACTION PLAN AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Introduction.....	182
Purpose and Research Questions	183
Study Overview	184
Conceptual Framework and Instrument.....	184
Participants.....	187
Data Collection and Analysis Overview.....	188
Summary of Results and Study Conclusions	189
Recommendations for Practice	191
Recommendations for Administrators	192
Recommendations for Supervisors and Managers.....	199
Recommendations for Graduate Programs and Professional Associations	203
Recommendations for Future Research Opportunities.....	206
Chapter Summary	208

REFERENCES	211
------------------	-----

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Thriving Quotient for Staff and Administrators.....	234
Appendix B: Initial Outreach to Dr. Schreiner	238
Appendix C: Permission from Dr. Schreiner.....	239
Appendix D: Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities	244

Appendix E: Email Communication with Potential Participants.....	247
Appendix F: IRB Approval from UMSL and Thriving University	253
Appendix G: Responses to “What has Happened this Semester that has Shaped your Assessment of your Own Thriving?”	265
Appendix H: Responses to “How has your Thriving here Changed over the Past 7Year?”	267
Appendix I: Responses to “How has Covid-19 Affected your Ability to Thrive in your Role at this Institution?”	268

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1:	Description of Variables and Coding.....	128
Table 2:	Generations	157
Table 3:	Functional Areas	157
Table 4:	Cronbach Alpha of TQ-SA	160
Table 5:	Goodness-of-Fit Tests for Normal Distribution, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.....	161
Table 6:	Overall Thriving Statistics	162
Table 7:	PERMA Constructs and Overall Thriving Descriptive Statistics	163
Table 8:	Pearson Correlation Analysis Between the PERMA Constructs and Overall Thriving.....	166
Table 9:	Predictors of Overall Thriving.....	168
Table 10:	Parameters Estimates, Predictors	169
Table 11:	Means, Standard Deviation, and One-Way Analysis of Variance in Overall Thriving by Generation.....	171
Table 12:	Means, Standard Deviation, and One-Way Analysis of Variance in Overall Thriving by Functional Area.....	172
Table 13:	Relationship Between COVID-19 Variable and Thriving.....	174
Table 14:	Supplemental Questions Descriptive Statistics.....	180
Table 15:	Student Affairs Professionals by Functional Areas	189
Figure 1.	Organizational Chart of Thriving University.....	114

Chapter One

Problem of Practice

Kawanna was tired. She was an upper-level student affairs administrator at a university and had experienced a rough spring semester. A global health pandemic caused by the spread of a contagious viral disease had disrupted lives and the operations of most colleges and universities in the United States. The annual international student affairs professional conference she usually attended was cancelled and, in its place, a virtual conference experience had been arranged. Kawanna found this annual conference professionally and personally rejuvenating. It was an opportunity to exchange ideas, meet new colleagues, learn new strategies to support students and cultivate professional relationships. As she prepared to engage with her colleagues, Kawanna reflected on her career as a student affairs professional and the students and staff members she had mentored, helped, and supervised over the years.

While assisting students and helping them accomplish their educational goals was a primary focus of student affairs professionals, Kawanna had developed concerns about the staff that she supervised and mentored. Many of her staff over the years exhibited positive emotion, were engaged in their work with students, had a network of professional and personal relationships on which they relied, found deep meaning in their work, and accomplished their work with pride and zeal. Kawanna also had staff who struggled with positive emotion or were not engaged or who had very few relationships on which to rely or were not finding meaning in their work and who struggled to accomplish their work. She wondered about the differences in these staff members and was eager to talk with her colleagues about her observations.

Over a virtual dinner that evening, her small group of colleagues, who are truly friends at this point, began talking about the same concerns that Kawanna had reflected on earlier: the differences between student affairs professionals who had struggled in their careers or in their daily work with students and those who had excelled in their work with students. Each of her colleagues discussed similar experiences with their staff members. One colleague expressed concern for disengaged staff, and another noted some staff had initiative and positive attitudes. A third colleague spoke of the lack of collaborative connections staff make with others on campus and another colleague was rhapsodic about the meaningfulness that some staff found in working with students.

The conversation meandered through examples of student affairs professionals who continued to work but were burned out, disengaged, stressed, or dissatisfied. Some discussed their colleagues who had left the career field of student affairs after a short time. On the other hand, they shared examples of student affairs professionals who have stayed in the career field and continue to be energized by their work. One colleague's eyes lit up and he exclaimed, "we have had the same discussion all the time about our students! Some students lacked positive emotion, they lacked engagement and connections on campus, they did not appear to see the meaning in their coursework, they did not find pride in their achievements; they were not thriving! But there were other students who were the complete opposite. They were engaged, positive, found meaning in their work and achieved at very high levels; they were thriving!" For the remainder of the evening Kawanna and her colleagues discussed thriving and how they might understand what makes some of their staff thrive more than others.

Thriving is a concept which has existed for a while and can be described in a variety of situations in which positive gains can be observed. For example, a world region or country or an industry can be described as thriving. A city or corporation or civic organization can be described as thriving. A person can be described as thriving physically, emotionally, or mentally. How thriving is defined and examined is related to the subject which is being studied and the setting. Interest in studying human thriving appeared in the latter part of the 20th century, but the scholarly literature is divergent and lacks agreed upon definitions and concepts (Brown et al., 2017). While a variety of definitions of thriving have appeared (Brown et al., 2017), thriving for student affairs professionals is the focus of this study.

Thriving in humans has been seen and explored in a variety of settings that are part of an individual's life – such as work. Thriving at work was “marked by both a sense of learning (greater understanding and knowledge) and a sense of vitality (aliveness)” (Spreitzer et al., 2005, p. 537). Further clarification on this definition of thriving at work reinforced that the experience of thriving “communicates a sense of progress or forward movement in one’s self-development” (Spreitzer et al., 2005, p. 538). Spreitzer and Sutcliffe (2007) provided an overview on how thriving at work leads to positive outcomes. “Thriving is about personal growth and development” (Spreitzer & Sutcliffe, 2007, p. 75). Thriving was not a condition which is either on or off, but, rather, thriving occurred on a continuum shaped by the work context. In other words, individuals were influenced by conditions in the workplace (Spreitzer et al., 2005).

Seligman (2011) advanced a framework of five constructs which supported well-being. The constructs of positive emotion (P), engagement (E), relationships (R),

meaning (M) and accomplishment (A) created the pillars of well-being (PERMA) which established the outcome of well-being, flourishing, or thriving (Seligman, 2011). Based on Seligman's (2011) PERMA model, thriving was defined as positive engagement in meaningful work, connecting to others at a deeper level, and being optimistic about one's present and future life (L. Schreiner, personal communication, October 11, 2020). Positive human experiences defined the constructs of thriving regardless of the population or the environment.

While Seligman, Schreiner, and other researchers have examined thriving in various populations, thriving for student affairs professionals is the focus of this study. The researchers of the current study sought to understand more about the broad constructs under which student affairs professionals thrived and the level of thriving for student affairs professions. This exploration was propelled by a multidimensional framework based on Seligman's (2011) PERMA model of thriving to provide a more holistic view of the experience of thriving for student affairs professionals.

Student affairs professionals are employees at colleges or universities who work in offices and divisions which support student learning and development (Long, 2012). Their specific work further defines their roles and functions. These functions typically include admissions and enrollment management, academic advising, housing and residence life, student activities, athletics, disability services, new student programs, and multicultural student services (Love, 2013). Student affairs professionals nurture students' development of interpersonal and cognitive competencies, ethical and cultural perspectives, as well as identity formation, public service, individual health, and career interests (Long, 2012). To one outside the profession, a definition of student affairs

professionals may be confusing and abstract, which reveals the complexity of the profession and the work performed by student affairs professionals.

Understanding the constructs that support thriving for student affairs professionals can help managers, leaders, and professional organizations develop work environments and strategies that promote thriving. The researchers hope that these findings will assist graduate programs and professional associations in better preparing future student affairs professionals to thrive. Before exploring the problem and its significance, it is important to first understand more about the background of the problem and student affairs professionals, why this exploration of thriving is important and what happens when student affairs professionals are not thriving or are low in thriving.

Background of the Problem

Educating college students is an important endeavor and everyone involved in the process, including students themselves, faculty and staff, especially student affairs professionals, contribute to student learning and development. Since student affairs professionals provide services that support the education and development of college students, it is essential to attract, nurture, develop, and retain student affairs professionals who are engaged, energetic, invested, passionate, and thriving in their careers. The roles and work of student affairs professionals within higher education institutions have developed and changed over time which may contribute to issues of concern. Current concerns include increased workload, low job satisfaction, limited options for meaningful professional development, lack of training, and high levels of staff turnover. While these issues may not be unique to student affairs professionals, they are the issues with which this study's researchers are concerned due to the roles and work performed by student

affairs professionals. At the same time, there are opportunities to explore the experiences of student affairs professionals and capitalize on the thriving experiences to counterbalance these issues of concern.

Why Thriving Matters

Why does thriving matter? Student affairs professionals play pivotal roles at colleges and universities that support the educational and developmental experiences of students, as well as provide important services to students and campus operations (Komives & Woodard, 2003; Rentz & Saddlemire, 1988; Schuh et al., 2011). Many student affairs professionals complete specific graduate degrees which prepare them to enter student affairs work. It is their selected career field. If the work environment doesn't support student affairs professionals and encourage thriving in their work and careers, colleges and universities have failed to support employees in whom they have invested time and money.

When student affairs professionals experience low job satisfaction, stress, burnout and turnover, there is disruption in supporting students and providing services (Allen et al., 2010; Howard-Hamilton et al., 1998; Lorden, 1998; Rosser & Javinar, 2003). Ultimately, students are negatively impacted when institutions experience employee vacancies due to turnover of student affairs professionals. Institutions should nurture student affairs professionals, through structured selection processes, mentoring, and professional development, to work with students and ensure that those professionals are thriving and contributing to institutional goals. A thriving workforce of student affairs professionals is a way to ensure that those professionals make positive impacts on students and support the endeavors of the institution.

The current study's examination of thriving at work is grounded in the research of positive psychology and psychological well-being. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) emphasized the need for the social and behavioral sciences to embrace frameworks based on positive perspectives in their research and work to "articulate a vision of the good life which is empirically sound while being understandable and attractive" (p. 5). The value of positive psychology as a sector of study and basis for practice led to "well-being, to positive individuals, and to thriving communities" (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 5).

Following World War II, psychologists embraced defining and diagnosing mental or emotional disorders and the healing of those disorders was their primary focus. The potential to examine positive individual and community experiences was neglected (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Positive psychology focused on human experiences, individual traits, and group virtues that capitalized on positive aspects. Three themes emphasized by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) were positive experiences, positive personalities, and the social context in which people and their experiences were embedded. It is within the framework of positive psychology that examinations of thriving at work developed.

Thriving was linked to positive organizational outcomes for both individuals and institutions. Spreitzer and Sutcliffe (2007) contended that thriving mattered because "it serves as an adaptive function that helps individuals navigate and change their work contexts in order to promote their own development" (p. 77). Thriving supported the health of individuals since employees who were thriving were less likely to feel anxious or depressed when they experienced a sense of vitality and aliveness when thriving

(Spreitzer & Sutcliffe, 2007). In addition to mental health benefits, the sense of learning inherent to thriving supported physical health benefits (Spreitzer & Sutcliffe, 2007). In the presence of learning at work, thriving individuals developed new knowledge and skills to improve functioning at work. Spreitzer and Sutcliffe (2007) speculated that work performance was positively impacted by healthier and more energized individuals.

Thriving in the workplace served as a catalyst for others to become energized and positively impact the energy of the unit and workplace (Spreitzer & Sutcliffe, 2007). There was the possibility for thriving at work to be carried over into personal spaces such as home and community (Spreitzer & Sutcliffe, 2007). Substantiating the importance of thriving at work, Kleine et al. (2019) in their meta-analysis of thriving research concluded that thriving at work was “positively related to various important work outcomes, including employee health, favorable job attitudes, and performance-related outcomes. Consequently, practitioners should aim for established working conditions that foster thriving at work.” (Kleine et al., 2019, p. 992). An exploration of thriving in the workplace for student affairs professionals benefits a variety of audiences and supports a sustainable workplace environment for current and future student affairs professionals.

Absence of Thriving

When student affairs professionals are not thriving, there is the potential for them to experience low job satisfaction, stress, burnout, and turnover. Some may contend that low job satisfaction, stress, burnout, and turnover might be by-products of student affairs professionals’ work life. Others may contend that while these issues are not unique to student affairs professionals, they are significant issues which negatively impact

organizational operations, staff work life, the university community, and, ultimately, the students' experiences.

Within the landscape of higher education, changing expectations from institution leaders combined with decision-making processes has led to increased stress for student affairs professionals (Menkes, 2011; Shin & Jung, 2014). Student affairs professionals are at a greater risk of turnover due to the contributing factors of role ambiguity, role stress, lack of adequate supervision, lack of goal attainment, and burnout (Marshall et al., 2016). It estimated that early on in their careers, within the first five years, half or more of student affairs professionals leave the field (Davis & Cooper, 2017; Marshall et al., 2016; Tull, 2006).

As student affairs professionals exit the field, so do one of the greatest resources students have on campus. Long (2012) outlined the diverse nature of the work of student affairs professionals, while also noting how impactful the learning and growth that occurred outside the classroom was for students. Long (2012) related the historical impact of student affairs professionals on students' ability to persist in college, find a sense of community on campus, and ultimately graduate with a degree. Student affairs professionals were equipped with knowledge of student development theories to help guide their interactions with students. Student affairs professionals served students through creating personal connections between students and institutions to make campuses feel like a supportive environment.

Retention of student affairs professionals directly supports student persistence and contributes to students' level of connection to campus. Stephens and Beatty (2015) argued that "students who are thriving in college are much more likely to persist to

graduation, perceive the tuition they pay as a worthwhile investment, and earn higher grades” (p. 129). Farrell (2007) explained the importance of campus relationships as a source to assist students in navigating the complicated structures of universities. The ability for students to connect with student affairs professionals helped students feel welcomed and supported within the university community. This support was provided as student affairs professionals helped students to understand institutional culture, values, and the mission by creating community and resources to help socialize students into the collegiate environment.

Additionally, student affairs professionals provide direct support on complex issues like financial aid, advising, and housing. Given their impact, the loss of student affairs professionals negatively impacts a student’s ability to consistently connect with campus administrators (Marshall et al., 2016). When a student affairs professional departs the campus environment, the student loses someone who was as a mentor, resource, or support person. Not only are students negatively impacted by the turnover of student affairs professionals, but they also experience disruptions to services provided by the institution due to the time and effort required to replace employees.

Turnover significantly impacts the continuity of institutional operations, which leaves a void in front line student-facing departments such as admissions, academic advising, student activities, and residence life for periods of time. Evans (1988) indicated the impact of high turnover rates has the potential to harm and impact the future of the student affairs profession. The research of Mullen et al. (2018) highlighted how higher levels of job stress and burnout were associated with turnover intentions and greater job dissatisfaction for student affairs professionals. When student affairs professionals left,

institutions lost critical talent from their overall workforce and “units lose efficiency, consistency, and quality in the delivery of services, as well as the investment made in the knowledge base of the institutions or unit” (Rosser & Javinar, 2003, p. 825). These losses influenced the ability of the organization to sustain a positive and productive culture (Allen et al., 2010).

Employee turnover is disruptive to financial stability, especially during a time of limited funding when institution budgets are dependent on tuition revenue, financial aid, and state and federal allocations. Universities have faced external challenges that impacted the delivery of student services. Increased government oversight added to the demands of student affairs, along with an increased sense of consumerism related to higher education (Pritchard & McChesney, 2018). These challenges have led universities to expand their efforts to recruit and retain students which resulted in the justification and expansion of many student affairs areas (Pritchard & McChesney, 2018).

Furthermore, salary compression is an issue in higher education that adversely impacts employee satisfaction and retention, particularly with longer-tenured employees. Salary compression occurs when institutions “offer new hires salaries higher than those of more senior employees” (Pritchard et al., 2019, p. 7). This same assessment was extended to student affairs professionals. “Higher education leaders must act to ensure that the pipeline for key positions is adequate to fulfill future staffing needs” (Pritchard et al., 2019, p. 8). Marshall et al. (2016) emphasized that “the expenditure associated with employee turnover, such as recruiting and training during a transition, are but a few of the costs associated with attrition,” (p. 146) adding that these losses “are significant and may disrupt the creation and sustainability of a positive and productive campus culture” (p.

147). Colleges and universities invest significant time to hire, train and support student affairs professionals to perform key roles to support the education and development of students. When student affairs professionals leave, institutions must invest more resources to hire, train, and support new employees. In addition, institutions must address the indirect costs of the increased work assignments delegated to other employees during the loss of a colleague (Allen et al., 2010).

To provide more context to the work of student affairs professionals, prior research, literature, and relevant data was summarized to demonstrate historical, cultural, and social perspectives. These perspectives were used to develop an understanding of the integral work that thriving student affairs professionals provided in higher education and how they identified thriving in their work. A brief history of higher education, a discussion about how student affairs professionals meet cultural and social needs of students and the larger U.S. economy, and an elaboration on the work that student affairs professionals perform are provided. The candidates, also referred to in this study as researchers, shared their direct professional experiences of how researching thriving for student affairs professionals impacted their work and provided opportunities to strengthen work environments for student affairs professionals.

Contextual Perspectives of Student Affairs Professionals

Historical, social, and cultural perspectives informed the candidates' views on the problem of practice. The local perspectives provided insight to the specific setting and established additional background. These perspectives together provided breadth and depth of the problem and framed the purpose of the study, specific research questions as well as limitations of this study.

Historical Perspectives

Higher education has a long history in the United States. While the field of student affairs has existed since the early 1800s, research about the field did not appear until the mid-1990's (Hevel, 2016). Student affairs professionals first emerged when administrators were hired, typically deans of students, who were responsible for the housing and discipline aspects of students during the early era of college life (Hevel, 2016). Since the early days of a solitary dean of students, typically a dean of men, the field grew into functional areas and focuses on enhancing student learning (Task Force on the Future of Student Affairs, 2010). Student affairs professionals have faced challenges in the field over the years including professional setbacks and the sexism, racism, and homophobia present in society during these historical times (Hevel, 2016).

During the Colonial Era in higher education, which began in the early 17th century and lasted until about the late 18th century (Thelin, 2011), faculty and administrators were charged with promoting the mission of the college or university as well as managing the social and co-curricular aspects of students' lives (Fenske, 1989a; Schuh et al., 2011). In the late 1800's, distinct individuals separate from faculty and administrators originated to support students in and out of classroom settings (Dungy & Gordon, 2010). These early student affairs-oriented positions assumed tasks and functions which had previously been performed by college presidents, faculty, or tutors (Dungy & Gordon, 2010; Horowitz, 1987; Rudolph, 1962). These "direct antecedents to the modern student affairs administrators were the deans of women and deans of men" (Hevel, 2016, p. 847). They often were selected from faculty ranks and supervised the

education, student conduct, institutional standards, and development of students at their respective institutions (Fenske, 1989b).

During the early 20th century, student affairs emerged as a more organized professional practice to support student success (Hevel, 2016). Immediately after World War I, the number of college-bound students increased dramatically, which led to the development of specializations within student affairs, related to personal development, vocational interests, and academic advising (Cook, 2009). In the period between World War, I and the end of World War II, enrollment in colleges and universities across the country grew from 250,000 students to 1.3 million in large part due to the G.I. Bill, which allowed veterans returning from combat greater access to higher education (Fenske, 1989a; Thelin, 2011). With this boom in student enrollment, along with the use of mental evaluation and counseling techniques developed in World War I, many of the student affairs offices of today began to solidify and rose to prominence within American higher education institutions (Fenske, 1989b). Functional areas such as admissions, housing, advising, athletics, and student activities assisted students with specific services rather than a solitary dean of students (Hinton et al., 2016).

The field of student affairs evolved from the early adoption of student life and conduct supervised by college administrators to a network of separated, yet collaborative, offices with unique specializations. Although the field has changed over time, the focus of student affairs professionals has remained the same: the students. Understanding this evolution of student affairs establishes a base from which to explore the characteristics and demographics of student affairs professionals which impact the understanding of thriving amongst student affairs professionals.

Social and Cultural Perspectives

Higher education and the profession of student affairs have continued to change with each generation of students. These changes have impacted the social and cultural perspectives that have shaped the work of student affairs professionals. The student experience is supported by student affairs professionals who deliver a variety of services and activities to help students succeed academically and grow developmentally. Student affairs professionals enhance the development of college students by assisting them with understanding personal strengths and aligning them to personal and professional goals (Torres et al., 2009). Another view suggests that the fundamental mission of all student affairs professionals is to “ensure that students are safe, cared for, well treated, and (more or less) satisfied with their higher education” (Long, 2012, p. 7). No matter how they are characterized, today’s student affairs professionals must possess a set of skills, along with flexibility, to impact students and support institutional missions and goals. As the social and cultural needs of students change, so has the work of student affairs professionals.

As access to higher education institutions and enrollments increased over the decades, the student population became more racially, socially, and economically diverse. Colleges and universities experienced rising pressures from external and internal constituents surrounding social justice, affordability, student behavior, federal legislation, campus safety concerns, student mental health, an increase in international students, and gaps in educational access. Issues not traditionally addressed on college campuses are now seen as normal and vital campus initiatives are carried out by expanded student affairs functional areas (Task Force on the Future of Student Affairs, 2010; Zhang & Associates, 2016). Expanded technologies have led to an increase in distance and online

education which indicated that student affairs professionals must support students in non-traditional ways (Task Force on the Future of Student Affairs, 2010). In addition, student affairs professionals have increased support for first generation and low-income students, groups who have benefited the most from increased college access efforts (Thelin, 2019). This demonstrated the social and cultural environments in which student affairs professionals worked and supported the education and development of the diverse college student population.

As enrollment management efforts including admissions, retention, and graduation strategies took a more prominent place in colleges and universities over the years, the role of student affairs professionals expanded to support these efforts. Quality academic advising, for example, had a positive correlation on improved student retention rates (Priest & Milne, 1991). Similarly, behaviors related to unresolved mental health issues have disrupted community members, in both residence halls and classrooms. The American College Health Association (2017) reported that mental health concerns have impacted 21 million college students. Student affairs professionals began to take on a case management approach in response to campus crises and identified and targeted resources for students who may be in distress or cause campus crises (Adams et al., 2014). Crisis situations were now part of the social landscape on college and university campuses and student affairs professionals were key participants who responded directly to crisis situations (Holzweiss & Walker, 2018). Student affairs professionals were also expected to participate in activities that occurred outside of the classroom that complimented the learning process (Blake, 2007). An example of cross-campus collaboration was a residence hall director who served on an academic curriculum

committee. This residence hall director connected and translated university learning objectives to residence hall programs as well as provided valuable insight of resident students' experiences to the academic curriculum committee. Cross-campus collaborations focused on student learning support the teaching mission of colleges and universities (Blake, 2007).

The complexity of current concerns about students resulted in a stronger reliance on student affairs professionals and expanded the competencies which entry-level student affairs professionals were required to have to effectively support students (Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017). Professional organizations set out to identify what specific skills made a competent practitioner of student affairs services. In 2009, a joint task force made up of members from the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), and the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) built the framework of core competencies for student affairs professionals and educators. The most recent adaptations, which were introduced in 2015, identified 10 specific competency areas for student affairs professionals to utilize in their work with students (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). These core competencies included (a) personal and ethical foundations; (b) values, philosophy, and history; (c) assessment, evaluation, and research; (d) law, policy, and governance; (e) organizational and human resources; (f) leadership; (g) social justice and inclusion; (h) student learning and development; (i) technology; and (j) advising and supporting. The task force asserted that although each competency was focused on a specific goal, all the competencies intersect at different times within student affairs work (ACPA & NASPA, 2015).

As today's student affairs professionals have continue to adapt to new changes within institutional expectations and policies, a basic understanding of the skills and competencies needed to be successful in the field is of utmost importance. Professionals within the field adapted to the changes to ensure that the needs of those they served were met. These minimum skill competencies ensured that student affairs professionals adapted in their roles and participated broadly in the institution. These social and cultural perspectives provided context for understanding elements of a career in student affairs and the challenges and rewards of a career in this field.

A Career in Student Affairs

Graduate preparation for student affairs professionals often included programs such as higher education administration, educational leadership, or student personnel services (Long, 2012). Those who purposefully chose to enter a graduate program with the goal to become student affairs professionals were most likely interested in this career field and, therefore, possessed the potential to thrive. After moving from graduate programs into entry-level positions, some student affairs professionals began to exhibit job stress, burnout, lack of job satisfaction, and ultimately, turnover (Marshall et al., 2016; Mullen et al., 2018).

Job stress was defined as the “feeling an individual has when the work deviates from normal or self-desired functioning in the workplace as the result of opportunities, constraints, or demands relating to potentially important work-related outcomes” (Parker & DeCotiis, 1983, p. 165). Staff burnout was first articulated as a phenomenon by Freudenberger (1974) and was further described as a “state of fatigue and frustration arising from unrealistic, excessive demands on personal resources leading to physical and

mental exhaustion” (Brewer & Clippard, 2002, p. 171). In contrast, job satisfaction was the sense of success and enjoyment an individual gets from the work that they do (Fields, 2002). Turnover occurred when an employee left a position for reasons that were employee driven, such as leaving for a better paying position or relocation, or were employer driven, such as termination of an employee or organization downsizing (Allen et al., 2010). While the exact number of student affairs professionals who experienced job stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction, and turnover were unknown, those who experienced this phenomenon had a propensity to leave careers such as student affairs professionals (Marshall et al., 2016).

Despite the potentially bleak experiences of some student affairs professionals who experienced stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction, and turnover, there are others who demonstrated a commitment towards goals, dedication, and workplace loyalty which deterred turnover from the field (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008; Rosser & Javinar, 2003). These student affairs professionals were engaged, productive, satisfied, and continued in their selected careers until they retired. It is suggested that these student affairs professionals demonstrated thriving because they established long-term careers, demonstrated institutional commitment, and were inspired by working with students. However, not much is known about those who stay and what propelled them to continue to be engaged as student affairs professionals. A potential explanation is that the student affairs professionals who are engaged in their work with students and have had long careers in student affairs are thriving.

Once in a student affairs role, the environment and political landscape often influence the work of student affairs professionals, the institutions where they work, and

the students whom they support. Knowing the roles and responsibilities that student affairs professionals played helps paint a vivid picture of who they are as well as the elements of their work which enhance or detract from thriving specifically in the workplace. Student affairs professionals who work at colleges and universities provide support to students to achieve their academic and career-related goals. The functional areas in which student affairs professionals work include admissions and enrollment management, academic advising, housing and residence life, student activities, athletics, disability services, new student programs, and multicultural student services. The work of student affairs professionals occurs during a period in which students are maturing, and, many times, live independently from their families for the first time. It is these student affairs professionals who enhance or diminish student experiences (Schuh et al., 2011).

Engaged, focused, and vital student affairs professionals positively influence the student experience while disengaged or burned-out staff negatively impact students' experiences. Student affairs professionals who maintain a constant relationship with students focused on student needs make the most positive impact on students (Schreiner et al., 2011). Chickering and Reisser (1993) articulated the influence that various relationships had on college student development when they highlighted student development programs and those designated staff who coordinated such programs. Through student development programs, student affairs professionals played a role in student adjustment to and success in college. Such student affairs professionals were instrumental in aiding student transitions into higher education institutions, supporting students during their academic program, and in the transitions out of higher education institutions (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Student affairs professionals, through their work, provided inclusive environments, narrowed success gaps for underserved student populations, and created equitable opportunities for students who had physical or learning challenges. Gurin et al., (2002) found evidence that affirmative action and diversity efforts by colleges and universities both increased access to higher education for greater numbers of students as well as fostered students' academic and social growth. These efforts added to a more educated population overall. The continued development of multicultural competence was commonly expected for all student affairs professionals (Long, 2012; Pope et al., 2019). Ensuring that there were representative voices of all races, ethnicities, and ages working as student affairs professionals and supporting those professionals was ultimately crucial to serving a diverse student population. Student affairs professionals were often seen as role models for promoting social justice within higher education, making social justice a core competency for student affairs professionals (Pope et al., 2019). Student affairs professionals frequently worked with all student populations directly. Because of this, emphasizing the need for multicultural competence was essential for student affairs professionals so they could foster more diverse and inclusive institutions (Pope et al., 2019).

As the needs of the college student population and society changed, so did the work of student affairs professionals along with the mission of institutions of higher education. While charged with supporting learning in the educational environment, student affairs professionals continually navigated the changing state and federal laws, evolving professional competencies, as well as funding and access disparities within their work responsibilities. The training and education student affairs professionals received

while in graduate programs served as a baseline to propel them into entry-level roles. However, the researchers believed that demonstrating thriving behaviors over the course of a career supports student affairs professionals' ability to navigate the shifting social and cultural landscapes of higher education and strive for higher level positions as well as longer careers in the field of student affairs.

Candidates' Perspective

Unlike career paths leading to fields such as nursing, teaching, accounting, or engineering, the path to a profession in student affairs is slightly different as there is no one undergraduate major that directly leads to a career in student affairs. Most programs that prepare an individual for student affairs work are graduate-level programs. Taub and McEwen (2006) conducted a survey of enrolled students in college student personnel/higher education graduate programs. Around 300 participants from 24 different programs responded to the survey. Taub and McEwen (2006) found that students were influenced to enter student affairs based on conversations with student affairs professionals and involvement in student activities while undergraduates. The five candidates, also referred to as researchers of the current study, were no different than the students in Taub and McEwen's (2006) study. For instance, one of the researchers discovered the student affairs field by way of an undergraduate work study job in housing. Another was involved in student activities and developed a close connection with key student affairs personnel. Yet another took an enrollment management position to help pay for a graduate program not related to student affairs. Not one of the researchers arrived at college thinking they would pursue a career in student affairs and these pathways seem to fit the norm.

The researchers of the current study are all experienced student affairs professionals at various institutions in a metropolitan area in the Midwest, with a range of experience from seven to over 25 years in higher education. The researchers who work as supervisors at their institution, have directly experienced the departure of student affairs professionals from the functional areas we supervise as well as witnessed the same in other functional areas on our campuses. We have observed that student affairs professionals are leaving the field for a variety of reasons such as better pay and a better balance between work and personal life. We have seen colleagues leave institutions that could not offer advancement opportunities for student affairs professionals. This concern is prevalent in research about employee burnout and turnover. We have seen colleagues become disengaged in their work due to lack of institutional support. We have worked with other student affairs professionals who struggled to find meaning in the work they performed or struggled when they felt unappreciated and unrecognized by the institution at which they worked.

We have managed disengaged student affairs professionals who exhibited low levels of commitment to the university or college community. We have witnessed the impact of disengaged and stagnant student affairs professionals on the student experience and the work environment for other staff and faculty. We have observed that these phenomena are not unique to functional area, level of position, generation, or race. Within the context of our campuses and over the past few years, we have invested additional time and expense to fill vacancies by recruiting, interviewing, selection, onboarding, training, and maintaining a sense of engagement with new employees. We have invested time and resources to re-engage experienced student affairs professionals

who were not contributing to their immediate functional area and the campus community. We have labored to mitigate negative impacts on students as well as staff and faculty.

Throughout our years of experience, we have also worked with and supervised professionals who have continued their careers in student affairs. We have managed energetic and engaged student affairs professionals making positive contributions to students' experience and campus environments. We have witnessed the passion and concern of student affairs professionals who eagerly worked with students and sought additional knowledge and skills to support their work with students. We have heard comments from students, faculty and staff about these thriving and engaged student affairs professionals. We have observed these engaged student affairs professionals welcome and mentor new professionals on our campuses. We are inspired and energized when working with these thriving student affairs professionals.

Within this context of our experiences, we examined the concept of thriving to understand how student affairs professionals developed behaviors to remain engaged, energized, and growth in their work. Even though we have observed these differences in the student affairs professionals and experienced the departure of staff from our institutions, we readily acknowledge that while turnover is an issue for institutions and, more specifically, the researchers of this study, we don't make assumptions that only good or bad employees leave, and we don't make assumptions that only good or bad employees stay.

Our goal as researchers was to better understand how student affairs professionals maintained thriving behaviors during this unprecedented period. At the time of this study, student affairs professionals were navigating the COVID-19 global pandemic, decreasing

enrollment, state budget cuts, and staff attrition while adapting to enhanced distance-learning formats of student support and staff development. While current circumstances appeared to be more challenging than optimal or ordinary, this unprecedented time also provided the researchers the opportunity to highlight and understand thriving student affairs professionals in a unique way.

Local Contextual Perspectives

This study focused on student affairs professionals at a public university located in a metropolitan area in the Midwest. The institution, which was referred to as Thriving University, offered undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, had an enrollment slightly below 13,000 students, held a Carnegie classification of Doctoral/Professional, and employed over 2,400 individuals including faculty, administrative leadership positions, professional staff and civil service (U. S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System [IPEDS], 2019). The student affairs professional and civil service staff at this institution represented a wide range of generations, experiences, and functional areas.

Student affairs professionals at this institution were distributed among the functional areas of academic advising, admissions, campus recreation, career development, counseling, disability support services, diversity and inclusion, enrollment management, financial aid, health services, housing, international student services, learning support services, registrar's office, student involvement, and veterans' affairs. The positions within these functional areas ranged from entry-level professionals to senior-level management positions. The positions were classified as civil service,

professional staff, and administrative professional staff based on the institutional employee classification system. Several of the researchers had knowledge of or experience at this institution and had access to Institutional Review Board policies and procedures to ensure safe, fair, and equitable standards for the research study.

Thriving University was in a metropolitan area which was also home to several postsecondary education institutions. Selecting an institution in this metropolitan area offered a unique opportunity to explore the student affairs workforce of a university that had a significant impact on the local economy. Student affairs professionals in this geographic area had a wide range of employment opportunities at both public and private colleges and universities and at several for-profit educational and vocationally oriented institutions. There are 45 institutions recognized by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching within a 40-mile radius of the institution used in this study (Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research [IUCPR], 2018). The 45 institutions in this radius enrolled 165,142 students at both the undergraduate and graduate level in fall 2017 and conferred a total of 37, 210 degrees in 2018 (IUCPR, 2018).

This study was conducted during the global pandemic of COVID-19 and included perspectives on the impact of the pandemic on thriving at the institution studied. COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic while the institution was on spring break. The institution initially extended spring break, but quickly moved to offering only online instruction for the remainder of the spring 2020 semester. During this time, offices developed plans for staff to work from home and most employees moved to a remote working situation beginning the week of March 16, 2020. University leadership quickly

worked to support faculty in the abrupt change to an online instructional methodology. On March 21, 2020, the Governor of the state issued a stay-at-home order that required all staff, faculty, and students to work remotely. The university continued to pay all employees regardless of their ability to work remotely. Thriving University established a task force to determine how to offer classes and student services safely and effectively during the upcoming summer term and following fall and spring semesters.

During the first part of June 2020, Thriving University started to bring some employees back to campus, but classes continued to be offered mostly in online formats. The employees who returned first were those who were unable to do their jobs at home, such as building service workers. Offices continued to slowly re-open to offer in-person services for students on a limited basis. The university stressed a desire to de-densify campus and employees who could work from home were encouraged to continue doing so. During the fall 2020 semester, most student services offices were open but with a rotating schedule of in-person staff. Most classes were offered online or in a hybrid format, a mix of in-class and online coursework, with very few on-campus classes. Residence halls were reopened but were enforcing restrictions on the guest policy. In-person student activities and meetings were strictly limited to follow state-issued guidelines. Most student support services, including counseling, advising, and tutoring were moved to an online format. There was, at that time, no sense of when the university would return to the pre-2020 operational levels of in person classes and services.

Problem of Practice

The concept of thriving is complex with known and unknown factors. An exploration of thriving specific to the work of student affairs professionals will add to the

narrative about thriving and increase opportunities to potentially address issues related to job satisfaction, burnout, stress, and turnover. A better understanding of thriving, specific to the higher education setting, could help stabilize and encourage thriving for student affairs professionals. While some researchers have focused on why student affairs professionals leave soon after they enter the field (Tull, 2006), it is important to understand variables that contribute to student affairs professionals' overall sense of thriving.

Student affairs professionals are important contributors to college students' development and education as well as participants in supporting overall institutional goals. The work of student affairs professionals changed, developed, and expanded over time causing some to experience job stress, burnout, lack of job satisfaction, and turnover. In contrast, employees with a high level of job satisfaction demonstrate a higher level of thriving and lower levels of turnover intention (Hafeez, 2019; Paterson et al., 2013). Job satisfaction for student affairs professionals is a significant factor connected to their intention to leave a position (Donnelly, 2009; Evans, 1988; Rosser & Javinar, 2003; Tull, 2006).

While the more negative aspects of student affairs professionals' experiences have been highlighted, there are student affairs professionals who are less stressed, more energetic, more satisfied, and have longer careers in student affairs. It is suggested that these student affairs professionals are thriving. Fully understanding the experiences of student affairs professionals who are thriving is important in supporting student success and achieving the academic mission of higher education. Thriving student affairs professionals are those who are positively engaged in meaningful work, connected to

others at a deeper level, and optimistic about one's present and future life (L. Schreiner, personal communication, February 17, 2020). The researchers in the current study used Schreiner's Thriving Quotient for Staff and Administrators (TQ-SA), based on Seligman's PERMA (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, achievement) constructs of well-being (Seligman, 2011) to explore the constructs and predictors that influence thriving in student affairs professionals. Knowing what impacts thriving among various demographic characteristics such as generation and functional area, could help create working environments that are more productive, rewarding, and stimulating for student affairs professionals, supportive of student development, and advance the mission and vision of the institution.

The work environment for student affairs professionals is crucial for delivery of services to students and the educational services provided by colleges and universities. While there is research on thriving in broad employee populations, college students and college faculty, there is no research specific for the field of student affairs professionals. The first desired outcome of this research is to learn more about thriving for student affairs professionals within specific contexts of the working environment of higher education. Use of this knowledge could support ways in which new student affairs professionals are recruited, onboarded, trained, and developed with the goal to keep them engaged in the student affairs profession. Knowledge about the conditions under which student affairs staff thrive at work could provide a platform from which to make institution-level changes to human resource policies, procedures, and practices.

Purpose

Student affairs professionals are at the forefront of providing critical services to ensure student success. While job dissatisfaction and burnout occur in these positions,

there are those who are thriving as student affairs professionals. The purpose of this study is to explore the experience of thriving for student affairs professionals to discover which constructs and predictors are related to their level of thriving. Seligman's (2011) constructs of positive emotion, engagement, relationships, and accomplishment (PERMA) and their impact on thriving assisted the research team in better understanding the experiences of thriving student affairs professionals. In turn, the researchers used data gathered from student affairs professionals' experiences to promote changes to the onboarding, training, and overall retention of student affairs professionals. In this study, thriving was defined as positive engagement in meaningful work, connecting to others at a deeper level, and being optimistic about one's present and future life (L. Schreiner, personal communication, October 11, 2020). This exploration was propelled by a multidimensional framework of thriving to provide a more holistic view of the experience of thriving for student affairs professionals. It was expected that the inquiry would assist in answering the research questions and propel the development of a more sustainable workplace in which more student affairs professionals will thrive.

Research Questions

This study explored the following research questions about student affairs professionals' construction of thriving in the workforce:

RQ1: How do student affairs professionals experience thriving?

RQ2: How strongly correlated are the PERMA constructs (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments) with thriving for student affairs professionals?

RQ3: What predictors (psychological sense of community, spirituality, institutional integrity, and commitment to staff welfare) significantly impact thriving for student affairs professionals?

RQ4: How does thriving differ amongst different generations and functional areas of student affairs professionals?

RQ5: What impact has the COVID-19 global pandemic had on thriving for student affairs professionals?

Limitations

This exploration of thriving student affairs professionals was limited to one metropolitan Midwest institution, thus there were a few specific limitations to the study. First, the study only focused on student affairs professionals rather than examining thriving levels of faculty and staff outside of student affairs. Thriving may differ when explored in faculty and staff outside of student affairs functions at the same institution. There was a limitation to studying only one institution of higher education as thriving results may vary based on the institution. The institution selected is a public university and results may vary at private institutions, for-profit institutions or at two-year institutions. Additionally, the selected instrument was validated in higher education, but not specifically with student affairs professionals.

Limitations also included the study's reliance on self-reported information from participants. Participants were asked to share their experiences as it related to thriving. Understanding that participants offered their own perspective, the researchers trusted the data provided as the participants' true experience. Additionally, the study measured thriving at a single point in time rather than over a longer period. The researchers felt that

while exploring the constructs of thriving at one point in time for this population would be insightful, results could vary across different points in time of a student affairs professional's career.

A significant limitation beyond the control of the researchers was how the global pandemic of COVID-19 in 2020 impacted and continued to challenge higher education institutions in 2021. The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website updated on June 2, 2020, defined "COVID-19 [as] a new disease, caused by a novel (or new) coronavirus that has not previously been seen in humans. The name of this disease was selected following the World Health Organization (WHO) best practices for naming of new human infectious diseases" (CDC, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted normal operations of many businesses, colleges, and universities, and continued to interrupt the operations of those colleges and universities within the United States. Course delivery methods were altered in favor of online learning since March 2020 to avoid spread of the disease among students, faculty, and staff. Many colleges and universities continued modified course delivery into the 2020-2021 academic year. It was likely that fewer students were living on campus and participated in campus life. During this pandemic, student affairs professionals were developing new ways to approach their work with students. Due to the impacts of COVID-19, this exploration of thriving included an inquiry to specifically understand how student affairs professionals were navigating the current COVID-19 global pandemic, their job responsibilities, and the expectations of the institution where they worked.

As a result of the pandemic and the varying state and national responses, college and university enrollments were monitored in anticipation of a decline in institutional

revenue. In addition, it was anticipated that less state and federal aid would be available to support higher education. The *Chronicle of Higher Education* published an article titled “Major Cost-Cutting Begins in Response to Covid-19, With Faculty and Staff Furloughs and Pay Cuts” (Kelderman, 2020) which outlined the parallels between the current unknowns of the pandemic affecting both the economy (i.e., comparisons drawn to the Great Recession) and the funding of higher education and student aid. However, the United States government authorized some emergency grants in addition to federal funding allocations through the Coronavirus Aid, Recovery, and Economic Security (CARES) Act as well as the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund II (HEERF II) by the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) to support institutions and students during the COVID-19 pandemic (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). Across the United States, overall budget reductions led to employment furloughs of university staff, position eliminations, and hiring freezes that adversely impacted the student affairs profession. Additionally, the roles and functions of student affairs professionals changed due to budget constraints, hiring freezes, or position restructuring to meet institutional priorities. This research began before the unforeseen events of the pandemic. Due to the impact of COVID-19 on higher education and the field of student affairs, the participants shared different perspectives from when this study was initially designed. Notwithstanding these limitations, this study added to the minimal research on understanding thriving among student affairs professionals.

Chapter Summary

Student affairs professionals support student learning, facilitate student development, advance the mission of higher education, and contribute positively to the

development of a more socially just world. Some student affairs professionals have lost interest and motivation in student affairs work; they become burned out, leave their chosen career field or stay, and disconnect from the university community. Continuously losing student affairs professionals due to turnover interrupts institutional stability in student affairs functions in addition to impacting students and sustainable institutional knowledge. These instances likely represent a failure to thrive at work for some student affairs professionals. Other student affairs professionals are engaged, motivated, interested, flourishing, and thriving in their chosen career field. The researchers sought to better understand the experiences of thriving for student affairs professionals to develop ways to support student affairs professionals who were not thriving. In this study, the researchers also sought to understand differences in thriving based on select demographic characteristics of the participants.

Chapter One introduced the contextual landscape for student affairs professionals by providing social, cultural, and candidate perspectives that are leading to the purpose of this research study. The purpose of this study is to explore the experience of thriving for student affairs professionals to discover which constructs and predictors are related to their level of thriving. The researchers developed five research questions to test and explore how to address the problem of practice that student affairs professionals are leaving the field or seeking improved conditions to work.

In Chapter Two the researchers introduced the foundational research on thriving and thriving in the work setting, described the conceptual framework and supporting literature for the research study, explored the background of student affairs professionals within higher education, and detailed the demographic characteristics of the study

participants. Chapter Three explained the methods that were used to answer the research questions designed to explore the thriving experiences of student affairs professionals as well as the research and analysis procedures for the research study. Chapter Four presented results and findings, while Chapter Five extended a discussion of the findings as well as relevant action items to address the problem of practice.

Chapter Two

Review of Knowledge for Action

Student affairs professionals are at the forefront of providing critical services to ensure student success. While job dissatisfaction and burnout occur in these positions, there are those who are thriving as student affairs professionals. The purpose of this study is to explore the experience of thriving for student affairs professionals to discover which constructs and predictors are related to their level of thriving. Seligman's PERMA (2011) constructs of positive emotion, engagement, relationships, and accomplishment and their impact on thriving assisted the research team in better understanding the experiences of thriving in student affairs professionals. In turn, the researchers used data gathered from student affairs professionals' experiences to promote changes to the onboarding, training, and overall retention of student affairs professionals. In this study, thriving was defined as positive engagement in meaningful work, connecting to others at a deeper level, and being optimistic about one's present and future life (L. Schreiner, personal communication, October 11, 2020). This exploration was propelled by a multidimensional framework of thriving to provide a more holistic view of the experience of thriving for student affairs professionals.

It was expected that this exploration of thriving among student affairs professionals would assist in answering the research questions and potentially propel the development of a more sustainable workplace in which more student affairs professionals would thrive at higher levels. Fully understanding the experiences of thriving in student affairs professionals can support improvements to workplace culture that meet each

professional's needs and contribute to a positive work environment that addressed the problems of job satisfaction, burnout, stress, and turnover.

This chapter included the conceptual framework for the current study based on Seligman's (2011) PERMA model of well-being, a brief overview of positive psychology and a detailed overview of research on thriving at work. Next, a supporting literature review of the thriving constructs and predictors was presented. Following the review of literature is a summary of the demographics of student affairs professionals as well as a discussion about the impact of COVID-19 on higher education. Finally, an examination of the stakeholder perspective provided additional context for this study.

Conceptual Framework

The concept of thriving has deep roots in the areas of philosophy, positive psychology, well-being, and the idea of flourishing. Thriving at work has focused on human performance in the workplace as well as the benefits to organizations when their employees are thriving. Studying human thriving at work has promoted an understanding of what propels success in workplace settings. The researchers of the current study used Seligman's (2011) PERMA model of well-being, also referred to as flourishing or thriving, as the framework within a student affairs workplace setting. The elements of well-being are referenced by the acronym PERMA (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement) (Seligman, 2011). The researchers used the term flourishing when referring directly to Seligman's research. However, the researchers used the term thriving as a synonym to flourishing to provide the context for the literature review of this study, as it corresponds with the measure of thriving used in this study.

Providing the conceptual framework for this study, the researchers selected Seligman's (2011) PERMA model of well-being to address the holistic approach to thriving for student affairs professionals as the framework. Seligman (2011) explained that well-being was a construct that consisted of several elements that contribute to one's sense of well-being, but no single construct defined well-being on its own. For this study, a comprehensive and interconnected framework was used to assess how individuals are thriving.

Seligman (2011) discussed the evolution of the PERMA model of well-being in the book *Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being*. However, Seligman's (2011) PERMA model of well-being began as a focus on authentic happiness and then grew into the current theory. The PERMA model of well-being that was published in *Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being* included the foundational concept of authentic happiness plus the supplemental knowledge towards flourishing which emerged through additional research and developed into the current theory.

Seligman (2011) defined authentic happiness as what we choose that makes us feel good and the goal of authentic happiness was to increase one's satisfaction with life. To achieve this satisfaction, Seligman (2011) identified three main elements of authentic happiness as positive emotion (P), engagement (E), and meaning (M). Positive emotion was described by Seligman (2011) as "what we feel: pleasure, rapture, ecstasy, warmth, comfort, and the like. An entire life led successfully around this element; I call the 'pleasant life'" (p. 11). Engagement involved the idea of "flow" (p. 11) or becoming so involved with something that one gets into a rhythm of sorts when involved in some sort

of activity. Seligman (2011) argued that engagement differed from positive emotion since it requires complete use of one's emotional and cognitive resources to achieve the sense of flow. The third element of authentic happiness is meaning. Seligman (2011) noted that meaning consists of doing something that is bigger than the individual self; it can include belonging to or serving a particular group or organization, and ultimately contributes to one's sense of purpose.

Expanding upon the baseline of authentic happiness, Seligman (2011) explained how the model of authentic happiness did not completely portray one's full experience towards flourishing. Seligman (2011) cited three primary inadequacies in *Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being*. First, Seligman (2011) worried that examining the idea of "happiness" would be confused with the idea of merely having a cheerful demeanor. Second, Seligman (2011) described that when one was asked how satisfied they were with their life, it was subjective as to how they felt at that moment in time as opposed to a comprehensive examination and understanding of one's overall life satisfaction. Lastly, Seligman (2011) described that the elements of positive emotion, engagement, and meaning were not an exhaustive collection of factors that contribute to one's overall happiness and well-being. Seligman (2011) concluded that "a better theory will more completely specify the elements of what people choose" (p. 14). As a result, Seligman's work in flourishing evolved from the model of authentic happiness, where the primary focus was on increasing life satisfaction, into the model of well-being.

Seligman (2011) theorized that the model of well-being increased flourishing (i.e., thriving) by way of the three elements of authentic happiness (positive emotion,

engagement, and meaning), as well as the two additional elements of relationships and accomplishments. Schreiner used the five elements of Seligman's (2011) model of well-being as the foundation for the survey tool used in this study (personal communication, October 11, 2020) to measure and understand the complexity of happiness, flourishing, and what Schreiner and the current study's researchers refer to as thriving.

Instrument and Operational Definitions

Seligman's (2011) PERMA model of well-being integrated elements of positive emotion, engagement, relationship, meaning, and accomplishments which was used to frame the measure of thriving for this study. Schreiner (personal communication, October 11, 2020) developed the Thriving Quotient (TQ) and Thriving Quotient for Staff and Administrators (TQ-SA) based on Seligman's (2011) PERMA model of well-being in addition to adding predictors and outcomes that may impact thriving. Schreiner (2010a) began her work by exploring thriving in college students then examine thriving in faculty, staff, and administrators within the higher education work environment. In general, Schreiner developed the Thriving Quotients to evaluate thriving in a way that shifted the focus on thriving from a deficit perspective that aimed to prevent failure to a strengths-based perspective that focused on future success (Louis & Schreiner, 2012).

Various instruments have been developed based on Seligman's (2011) PERMA well-being model. In researching higher education settings, thriving has been studied primarily through the lens of college students. Schreiner (2010a) developed a Thriving Quotient to measure a student's ability to thrive in academic, intrapersonal, and interpersonal areas. The TQ-SA was based on the five elements of Seligman's (2011) model of well-being, termed as constructs in the TQ-SA. The term construct was used to

identify a factor or building block that supports the theory that have been correlated and verified by the instrument author. Building on Seligman's research, Schreiner expanded the measures to include aspects of PERMA based on the evaluation of well-being in higher education settings. Schreiner mapped out PERMA using the lens of student development and research in positive psychology. Based on personal communication with the research team, Schreiner explained that she examined student's thriving through their well-being, social and intrapersonal experiences using PERMA as the model (L. Schreiner, personal communication, October 11, 2020).

There were conceptual overlaps in comparing flourishing as defined by Seligman and thriving by Schreiner. The research terms of construct and predictor were used by Schreiner in the instrument and within this study. For the purpose of this study, thriving constructs focused on the positive human experiences that impact a person's ability to thrive within an environment. In addition to thriving constructs, Schreiner identified four specific predictors of thriving (personal communication, October 11, 2020). The predictors that impacted thriving were (a) psychological sense of community, (b) spirituality, (c) institutional integrity, and (d) commitment to staff welfare (L. Schreiner, personal communication, October 11, 2020). These predictors of thriving were relevant to the current study as they helped identify which predictors were more impactful to overall thriving within the sample population. Based on personal communication with Schreiner, she noted that predictors can influence a person's level of thriving.

This study also identified demographics specific to the sample population. These demographics were generation and functional areas within student affairs. These specific demographics were selected by the researchers because they related to variations in the

workplace environment that may impact thriving and a student affairs professional's work experience. Examining these demographics in relation to thriving provided the researchers with a deeper understanding of thriving student affairs professionals.

Finally, this study began prior to the COVID-19 global pandemic and the institutional responses to the pandemic changed the nature of work for student affairs professionals. The researchers had a unique opportunity to explore thriving in student affairs professionals during what was, hopefully, a once in a lifetime disruption to daily life. The lasting impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic will not be known for years to come. However, exploring the theoretical ways to foster and develop thriving student affairs professionals now will assist the field in the future.

Literature Review

A review of prior scholarly research provided more details to support the conceptual framework and foundation for this exploratory study of thriving in student affairs professionals. There was extensive published research about the field of student affairs as well as job satisfaction, burnout, stress, and turnover in student affairs professionals. There was also research for thriving among faculty members (L. Schreiner, personal communication, October 11, 2020) and professionals outside of higher education (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009; Conway & Foskey, 2015; Liu & Bern-Klug, 2013; Paterson et al., 2013; Sim et al., 2016). However, at the time of this study, the authors found limited scholarly research that specifically explored the experience of thriving among student affairs professionals. One of the goals of this study was to explore the experience of thriving for student affairs professionals. Another was to fill the gap in thriving research to explore predictors of thriving in student affairs professionals.

A review of literature related to thriving, each thriving PERMA construct, and the predictors related to thriving in the workplace, in general, and in a higher education or student affairs setting is provided in the next section. The literature supported the conceptual framework for the current study by providing connections to the key constructs identified by Seligman (2011) which guided the work of Schreiner (personal communication, October 11, 2020) who examined thriving in students, faculty and administrators in higher education.

Foundations of Thriving

Thriving has been studied in such disciplines as medicine, sociology, philosophy, economics, education, and in a variety of other settings. While thriving is an active area of scholarly exploration, there are many different definitions and approaches to studying thriving, as well as variations in measurements (Brown et al., 2017). Even though thriving existed as a concept prior to the start of the 21st century, thriving was expanded as an area of inquiry after the advent of positive psychology as a movement (Brown et al., 2017).

Positive Psychology

Positive psychology was a movement within the field of psychology which gained momentum within the last 20 years. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) appealed to the psychology and social sciences communities to focus attention on positive frameworks for exploring “how normal people flourish under more benign conditions” (p. 5) in addition to the more traditional focus on “how people survive and endure under conditions of adversity” (p. 5). It is within this general framework that the movement of positive psychology operated. Note, flourishing and thriving were often used

interchangeably in the literature. Except as noted, in this study thriving is used in place of flourishing.

While Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) advocated for positive psychology as a separate movement, Sheldon and King (2001) tempered this argument by observing that positive psychology was a part of psychology which was a framework through which the human experience could be understood. In 2001, the momentum of positive psychology increased, spawning active research in different directions resulting in books, journal articles, a handbook of positive psychology, a dedicated journal as well as academic centers for the study and development of positive psychology (Linley et al., 2006). Human thriving was one thread of study in the positive psychology movement and focused on settings such as school, community, and workplace so that improvements to those individual settings could be proposed and evaluated.

Workplace Thriving

Using the study of positive psychology, companies explored ways to enhance workplace thriving (Abid, 2016). Over the last two decades, employers invested time and resources on employee wellness programs to promote thriving in the workplace. Companies created goals to improve staff retention to increase productivity and engagement. The American Psychological Association (APA) (2016) identified the important role managers played in supporting employee well-being. The APA (2016) conducted a workplace study which examined workplace wellness programs and found that 73% of staff who had a supervisor who promoted well-being believed they had a more thriving work environment. In comparison, only 11% of staff with supervisors who did not support employee well-being indicated they were thriving (APA, 2016).

There are various frameworks and definitions of thriving within the workplace, which is often known as workplace thriving (Seligman, 2011; Spreitzer et al., 2005). Spreitzer et al. (2005) defined thriving as feelings of positive progress and momentum that are characterized by the senses of greater understanding and vitality. Spreitzer et al. (2005) examined how thriving at work contributed to a sense of self-adaptation and created a theoretical model based on the positive influence that work could have on people. Spreitzer et al. (2005) highlighted the role of self-adaptation in thriving. Self-adaptation recognized the internal motivations within individuals that lead to accomplishment of defined goals as opposed to external influences. According to Spreitzer et al. (2005), self-adaptation was woven through the concept of thriving as it related to positively accomplishing one's goals. Their four points of thriving at work focused on socially embedded aspects of work whereas the work organization contributed to one's sense of well-being (Spreitzer et al., 2005).

Spreitzer et al. (2005) explained in their four points of thriving at work, “the foundational assumptions, introduce agentic behaviors as the engine of thriving, explain how the context (unit features and resources) enables agentic behaviors, and conclude with a discussion of how thriving contributes to a model of self-adaptation” (p. 539). The researchers defined agentic behaviors as task-oriented work focus, relationships, and exploration of learning. They found that thriving levels were higher when employees viewed their agentic behaviors in a positive regard. Spreitzer et al. (2005) proposed a theoretical model of thriving at work and suggested the need for additional scholarly inquiry to validate the construct they presented. Following Spreitzer et al. (2005), other researchers provided additional research examining thriving at work.

For instance, Carmeli and Spreitzer (2009) examined how workplace thriving, trust, and connectivity led to innovative work behaviors. Thriving, for their study, was defined as “the joint experience of a sense of learning (growing and getting better at what one does at work) and a sense of vitality (feeling energized and alive at work)” (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009, p. 169). Innovative behavior was defined as a three-step process: identifying a problem and a potential solution, promoting the solution to others to gain support, and developing the solution into a model that can be used within the workplace (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009).

Thriving was hypothesized to be a stimulant for innovative behaviors in the workplace. Carmeli and Spreitzer (2009) believed that other factors contributed to overall levels of thriving. First, they stated that employees who were able to grow within their positions at work were stimulated to recognize workplace issues and generate solutions (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009). Next, Carmeli and Spreitzer (2009) believed that vitality, or positive emotional energy, motivated individuals to be innovative at work. Lastly, connectivity, defined as “relationships that are open and encourage generativity” (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009, p. 174) was identified as another constructive element of thriving. Thriving had a higher likelihood to occur in work environments where workers supported and helped each other (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009). This feeling of connectivity was hypothesized as a contributor to vitality and learning amongst individuals who were thriving at work (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009).

Carmeli and Spreitzer (2009) hypothesized that thriving mediated the relationship between connectivity and innovative behavior. Additionally, trust was introduced as a construct which positively related to thriving, and that connectivity mediated the

relationship between trust and thriving (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009). Trust, in Carmeli and Spreitzer's (2009) study, was based on Robinson's (1996) definition as "one's expectations, assumptions, or beliefs about the likelihood that another's future actions will be beneficial, favorable or at least not detrimental to one's interests" (Robinson, 1996, p. 576). Both trust and connectivity were described as two different constructs which promoted engagement in work tasks as well as enabled learning and vitality at work (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009).

Carmeli and Spreitzer (2009) surveyed 172 employees from varying professional organizations and industries. The researchers administered a survey at two different times in which at the first point in time they gathered information about the employees' levels of trust and connectivity, then at a second point three weeks later, gathered information about their level of thriving and innovative work behaviors. The rationale for the gap in time was to measure how connectivity and trust later influenced thriving and innovative behaviors (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009). The respondents answered survey questions focused on the areas of thriving, innovation in the workplace, employee connectivity, and trust. The researchers found that thriving contributed to proactive, creative, and innovative behaviors in the workplace (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009). Employee trust was identified as a key component that generated connectivity among employees which supported thriving and facilitated innovative behaviors (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009). Carmeli and Spreitzer (2009) connected thriving to innovative behaviors, an important outcome in the workplace, and provided support for their hypothesis that vitality was a factor in thriving. Carmeli and Spreitzer (2009) stressed that additional scholarship was needed to clarify thriving as the joint experience of both vitality and learning.

Spreitzer et al. (2012), in another theoretical examination, reinforced that thriving was critical when applied to the workplace. They described individuals who thrive as “growing, developing, and energized, rather than stagnating or feeling depleted” (p. 155). Spreitzer et al. (2012) continued to build on the Spreitzer et al. 2009 work that explored vitality and learning. Spreitzer et al. (2012) posited that having one factor without the other did not lead to thriving, but rather to feelings of burnout, stagnation, and depletion within the workplace. Ultimately, they introduced a combination of individual and organizational strategies to encourage thriving among employees, concluding that thriving employees were likely to be retained within an organization. To achieve this sense of thriving in employees, they introduced ideas for enabling thriving in the workplace that included fostering a diverse work environment, providing feedback on employee performances, and empowering employees to make decisions that affect their work and give them a sense of control in their job roles (Spreitzer et al., 2012).

Thriving has been linked to essential outcomes which support organizational continuity and success. Paterson et al. (2013), used the theoretical base advanced by Spreitzer et al. (2005), to affirm that thriving at work supported two outcomes, job performance and self-development. The self-development outcome, Paterson et al. (2013) noted, was missing from the empirical research on thriving at work even though Spreitzer et al. (2005) theorized a connection. Further, Paterson et al. (2013) explored two potential antecedent variables to thriving, psychological capital and supervisor support climate, which supplied two agentic behaviors, task focus and heedful relating, with the necessary fuel to influence thriving at work.

In their study, Paterson et al. (2013), defined thriving at work as the experience of vitality and learning as articulated by Spreitzer et al. (2005). Self-development was defined as employees' ability to locate feedback about their work performance, establish goals, engage in activities which develop employees' knowledge or skills and assess progress toward meeting goals (Paterson et al., 2013). Psychological capital combined hope, optimism, efficacy, and resiliency in an individual's appraisal of situations and their decision to invest time and energy based on the perceived outcome (Paterson et al., 2013). Supervisor support climate was defined by the degree of supervisor concern for employees, the level of support that the supervisor provided to employees and the perceived level of value which supervisors placed on their employees (Paterson et al., 2013).

Finally, task focus was defined as an individual phenomenon in which full engagement in work tasks occurred, and heedful relating was defined as the effective collaboration among group members to accomplish work goals (Paterson et al., 2013). The goal of Paterson et al.'s (2013) study was to understand the influence of an employee's psychological capital and the level of support generated by one's supervisor, as well as heedful relating and task focus on thriving in the workplace (Paterson et al., 2013). Further, Paterson et al. (2013) examined self-development as an outcome of thriving in the workplace and analyzed job performance. Paterson et al. (2013) selected a sample of 1,115 full-time employed adults from a cross section of firms and working environments to complete a survey. Of the sample 600 employed adults fully completed the surveys. The survey instrument included questions from the 10-item thriving at work survey developed by Porath et al. (2012) along with questions to measure task focus,

psychological capital, and work performance. Supervisors of the employees who completed the employee survey were contacted to complete a survey to assess employee self-development. Of the supervisors contacted, 198 of the supervisors returned fully completed surveys.

Paterson et al. (2013) determined that thriving contributed to an employee's self-development at work and that task focus and heedful relating were positively related to thriving at work. The researchers also found that both psychological capital and supervisor support climate, separately, were significantly related to both heedful relating and task focus (Paterson et al., 2013). An indirect effect of supervisor support climate on thriving via task focus was supported and the indirect effect of supervisor support climate on thriving via heedful relating was not supported. Overall, Paterson et al. (2013) linked thriving at work to an important outcome variable, self-development, and refined the relationships between thriving and the agentic behaviors of task focus and heedful relating. Finally, the researchers tested two new antecedent variables, psychological capital and supervisor support environment, and determined they had an indirect effect on thriving via task focus and heedful relating.

These findings provided further evidence that when employees thrive at work, they perform at higher levels and positively progress with their self-development and, by extension, organizations experience positive outcomes (Paterson et al., 2013). Paterson et al. (2013) concluded that "organizations need employees at all levels who are not just performing the work that needs to be done today but are also developing into the type of employee they will need to be tomorrow" (p. 443).

Thriving has been explored in a variety of populations and workplace settings such as social services directors in nursing homes (Liu & Bern-Klug, 2013), apprentices in vocational placements (Conway & Foskey, 2015), and counselors in college counseling centers (Sim et al., 2016). Explorations of thriving in these populations and settings reinforced the importance of understanding what makes people thrive in the workplace and revealed conditions which supported thriving. Themes which emerged across these explorations included relationships at work, accomplishments, and positive emotion.

Based on an interest in employee retention and how the social environment of work helped explain thriving, Liu and Bern-Klug (2013) studied thriving in social services directors working in nursing homes. Liu and Bern-Klug (2013) asked social services directors in nursing homes to reflect on questions about decision-making discretion, broad information sharing, climate of trust in the workplace, and task characteristics of the role of a nursing home social services director (Liu & Bern-Klug, 2013). Liu and Bern-Klug (2013) found that 62.8% of the full-time nursing home social services directors in the study identified that they felt they were thriving. Job autonomy and being treated like an important part of a team contributed to increased thriving. Not having enough time to devote to the residents' psychosocial needs, having to do work that others could do, and an unclear understanding of the social service role decreased thriving. The two most unique contributors to thriving for nursing home social services directors were having enough time to meet the psychosocial needs of residents and being treated as part of the team by one's boss (Liu & Bern-Klug, 2013). Time to accomplish

work tasks and the relationship with one's supervisor supports the inclusion of accomplishment and relationships in the PERMA model.

Experiences of apprentices in Australia were examined to discover what promoted thriving at work (Conway & Foskey, 2015). Managers, other employees, vocational educators as well as apprentices in Australia were enlisted to participate in semi-structured interviews. Fourteen participants including eight apprentices, three employers and one vocational educational education staff member were interviewed (Conway & Foskey, 2015). Relationships at work emerged as a central theme of the interviews including relationships with supervisors, other employees, or instructors (Conway & Foskey, 2015). Apprentices spoke of the impact of positive relationships in their experiences as well as the support and introduction to the occupational community by the employers and employees (Conway & Foskey, 2015). Employers spoke of the mentoring relationship they developed with apprentices and the supportive work environment they attempted to create and sustain. Some apprentices remarked on the impact of their enjoyment or the fun in their work on their learning experiences. Work environments which were either too busy or did not balance enjoyment and learning were not supportive of thriving (Conway & Foskey, 2015). Thriving for these apprentices occurred when "apprentices were able to develop positive psychosocial relationships at work and in VET [Vocational Education and Training] that they had the opportunity to not only survive to the end of their training, but also to thrive in the process of becoming a tradesperson" (Conway & Foskey, 2015, p. 346). Positive relationships were a supportive component of thriving (Conway & Foskey, 2015) and reinforced the importance of the relationship construct in the PERMA model.

Thriving, burnout, and coping strategies in early- and late-career counseling psychologists at university counseling centers were explored by Sim et al. (2016). Fourteen counseling psychologists participated in a semi-structured interview where they described an experience in which they felt they were thriving as well as an episode in which they were burned out at work (Sim et al., 2016). The participants were also asked to reflect on the factors which contributed to experiences of thriving or burnout and how they managed their burnout and tactics they employed to increase thriving (Sim et al., 2016).

Several overall themes emerged from the interviews. The presence of autonomy and control over one's work life enabled thriving whereas lack of control over one's work life fueled burnout (Sim et al., 2016). Relationship dynamics within a counseling center were critical for incoming counselors (Sim et al., 2016). Incoming counselors felt supported in an environment where relationships with other counselors were positive and lacked contention (Sim et al., 2016). Frequency of communication among counseling center staff both supported and enhanced interpersonal connections between the counseling center staff, psychologists, and counselors (Sim et al., 2016). Balancing the tasks and demands of both clinical and non-clinical work were important in fending off burnout and promoting thriving (Sim et al., 2016). Involvement in professional associations supported thriving through rejuvenation of counselors' passions and interests in their work (Sim et al., 2016).

While this study did not measure levels of burnout or thriving with a quantitative instrument, Sim et al. (2016) provided support for taking proactive steps to combat burnout, increase the likelihood of thriving, and provided support for exploring a variety

of coping strategies (Sim et al., 2016). The ability to accomplish work is directly dependent on the control one has over their work (Sim et al., 2016). This is supportive of the accomplishment construct in the PERMA model. Furthermore, the relationships formed in the workplace were supportive of thriving and reinforces the relationship construct in the PERMA model.

Pack (2018) conducted a qualitative study which examined thriving through the perceptions of 12 employees within a Fortune 500 Company. Data was collected through open-ended interviews and follow-up interviews. From the research Pack (2018) identified several factors that influence self-perception of thriving within a Fortune 500 Company. These factors included: (a) positive connections, (b) support of family, (c) supportive co-workers, (d) passion, (e) sense of determination, and (f) time for self and others (Pack, 2018). Pack's (2018) participants identified the concepts of "doing your best, having passion, and learning" (p. 80) as the main factors that enabled them to thrive in a workplace setting. The researcher also identified the impact a work environment can have on employee thriving and concluded that thriving was driven by both individual behavior and organization contribution (Pack, 2018).

Thriving Constructs and Predictors

Thriving has been researched in different populations and several themes have emerged as a part of this research which are related to Seligman's (2011) model of well-being. Seligman (2011) presented a PERMA model which included positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaningfulness, and accomplishment as constructs of flourishing or thriving. Research presented on each of these constructs highlighted their significance and contributions to the experience of thriving. The research articles that

follow, provide research which support the conceptual framework for the current study and provide connections to the PERMA constructs identified by Seligman (2011).

Seligman's (2011) PERMA constructs guided Schreiner in the creation of the Thriving Quotient (personal communication, October 11, 2020), which was modified in the current study (TQ-SA) to examine thriving in student affairs professionals.

Positive Emotion Construct (P)

Positive emotion was the first construct of Seligman's (2011) theory and referred to the pursuit of a pleasant life, or overall happiness. Happiness, like many of the elements present in the PERMA, was identified as an element present in all instances of flourishing (Seligman, 2011). In the workplace, happiness directly contributed to the positive emotion construct. In previous literature, the positive emotion construct was equated to positive emotional capacity and the development of a growth mindset. The following review of research provides a trend that demonstrates the sustained interest in the concept of positive emotion supporting a thriving employee.

In the 1990s, psychological research tended to focus on the problems, or negative, aspects of emotions. Fredrickson (1998) created models around positive emotion and development of emotional capacity. In this study, Fredrickson (1998) considered the distinct and recognizable emotions of joy, interest, contentment, and love. From this study, Fredrickson (1998) developed the Broaden and Build model of positive emotion, by which positive emotion broadens one's thought-action repertoire, but also builds one's personal resources such as intellectual and social resources. The Broaden and Build model allowed people to store up resources which they can draw from in later situations (Fredrickson, 1998). This created an ever-increasing base of positive emotional

resources. This idea of a changing and ever-increasing base of emotional resources supported the current study as it indicates an area where intervention might impact the thriving of student affairs professionals. Aligning with the positive emotion construct, Fredrickson (1998) emphasized how individuals build emotional, intellectual, and social capacity to face life and work circumstances when they encounter them. It was anticipated that thriving student affairs professionals may find similar positive emotion to support thriving.

Individuals who continued to increase their emotional capacity through the Broaden and Build notion would most likely have a growth mindset. Dweck (2006), found that mindset was a powerful way to shape goals, attitudes, work, and relationships as well as promote success. Dweck (2006) noted two basic mindsets: a fixed mindset where talents and abilities are set and must be proved repeatedly, versus a growth mindset which allows for talents and abilities to build over time. “The fixed mindset limits achievement” (p. 67) while the “growth mindset lets people use and develop their minds fully” (Dweck, 2006, p. 80). Dweck (2006) also suggested that a change of mindset can occur at any stage of life reinforcing the malleability of the mindset. Crafting a positive outlook and perspective on one’s attitudes, relationships, and goals in life carried over into the realm of thriving in the workplace. Aligning with the positive emotion construct, Dweck (2006) demonstrates how the malleability of one’s mindset such as the student affairs professionals in the current study, impacts thriving. It is anticipated that thriving student affairs professionals will demonstrate positive emotion to support thriving when being adaptable to the circumstances.

Han and Stieha (2020) asserted that building growth mindsets is a compatible goal for human resource development in organizations. They examined a variety of published

empirical investigations of how Dweck's growth mindset was incorporated into human resource development topics (Han & Stieha, 2020). Han and Stieha (2020) used meta-analysis and isolated a total of 12 research articles based on their selected criteria. From their analysis of the articles, Han and Stieha (2020) identified three levels of outcomes of a growth mindset: individual, dyadic, and organizational.

On the individual-level, Han and Stieha (2020) found that growth mindsets supported outcomes such as improved task performance, workplace satisfaction and increased work engagement. On the other hand, the fixed mindset limited individuals' ability to overcome obstacles and dampened creative and entrepreneurial behaviors (Han & Stieha, 2020). On the dyadic-level, interactions between two people, evidence was found to support the impact of mindset on the behavior of other people. Growth mindsets correlated positively to improved relationships between supervisors and subordinates, while fixed mindsets deterred managers from recognizing employee performance improvements (Han & Stieha, 2020).

On the organizational-level, fewer studies were reviewed but those that included organization-level, indicated positive impacts on the organization, such as positive relationships, effective communication, and increased collaborative efforts when leaders and managers possessed a growth mindset (Han & Stieha, 2020). Mindset, specifically fostering a growth mindset, formed a positive attitude and propelled investment of effort to support thriving in the workplace, while the fixed mindset formed a negative attitude which dampened effort as well as thriving in the workplace. Incorporating workplace training, professional development workshops, and seminars that provided student affairs

professionals with knowledge of growth mindset could assist professionals with developing a more positive perspective.

As it relates to the framework of the current study, Seligman (2011) noted, incorporating a positive attitude or emotion, and mindset can provide hope for the future as well as impact corresponding elements of thriving. Such that, the ability for student affairs professionals to demonstrate their positivity and mindset in their work environment across various work relationships supports the positive emotion construct. The findings of a more recent study by Han and Stieha (2020) highlight the positive relationship between positive emotion and mindset that Seligman mentioned, which were applied to student affairs professionals in this study. It is anticipated that the thriving student affairs professionals in this study will demonstrate positive emotion to support thriving when they demonstrate a positive attitude and a growth mindset.

Engagement Construct (E)

Seligman (2011) described the engagement construct as a state of being completely absorbed in an activity and used the term “flow” to describe that feeling. As discussed earlier, Peterson et al., (2005) found that the pursuit of this engagement is a strong predictor of overall thriving. The engagement construct was conceptualized for student affairs professionals as engaged workplace learning. Engaged workplace learning involved the formal and informal ways in which one learns, barriers to the learning process, and how student affairs professionals develop a knowledge base. Engaged learning, regardless of the context, is identified as “the channeling of personal energies into physical, cognitive, and emotional labors” (Kahn, 1992, p. 322). It occurs through a variety of activities or methods that encourage and support the learning process (Kahn,

1992). Ultimately, learning activities focus on the individual learner connecting actual experiences and knowledge to both individual and workplace organization goals (Park & Lee, 2018; Raelin, 1997). These activities, or methods, and the subsequent learning, result in the development of professional knowledge and skills that keep employees engaged in workplace learning (Lohman, 2005).

Workplace learning is how employees acquire and develop skills and knowledge that are vital for their success in the workplace (Raelin, 1997). This learning occurs in many ways, creates meaning in a shared organizational life, and allows employees to learn skills to adapt to a changing environment and increase performance (Crouse et al., 2011; Doyle & Young, 2007; Park & Lee, 2018). Workplace learning is not limited to formal educational settings since any environment provides access to developing new knowledge and skills. A breakdown of the workplace learning process leads to a lack of engagement, and therefore a low level or lack of thriving, in student affairs professionals.

Just as important to the actual learning are the things that facilitate or prevent learning from occurring. Billet (1995) conducted a study that explored workplace learning strategies, barriers, and facilitators. Surveys were completed by 143 accountants who responded to statements related to learning strategies, barriers and facilitators. Participants ranked the statements on a 5-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Billet (1995) found the most preferred learning strategies were informal forms of learning which included both listening to and observing other employees. These informal strategies helped employees conceptualize and approximate tasks, created learning pathways for increasingly complex tasks and deeper conceptual knowledge, and helped

employees apply the knowledge gained to other work situations (Billett, 1995). Oftentimes, employees were not even aware that learning was occurring in these casual settings (Billett, 1995). This form of learning, however, was not always positive or appropriate for the workplace (Billett, 1995; Crouse et al., 2011). There was value to employers combining both formal and informal learning opportunities to engage employees (Manuti et al., 2015). This was relevant to the current study as it supports the concept that learning must occur in both formal and informal ways to be most effective.

Both informal and formal learning experiences framed student affairs professionals' engagement with their work which ultimately impacted their thriving. Specific to student affairs workplace learning, Lovell and Kosten (2000) conducted a meta-analysis of research from 30 years prior and examined what it meant to be a successful student affairs professional. To determine the characteristics, including the knowledge base, that led to success in student affairs, Lovell and Kosten (2000) examined 23 publications. They determined that the best way to increase learning on the job was to increase a student affairs professional's knowledge base (Lovell & Kosten, 2000). The authors found that a knowledge base comprised of the areas of management, administration, human facilitation, student development theory, and higher education was key to being a successful student affairs professional (Lovell & Kosten, 2000). Not only was possessing the knowledge important but having the ability to identify skill or knowledge gaps was also important, especially in changing environments (Lovell & Kosten, 2000). Therefore, the ability of student affairs professionals to identify their own knowledge gaps and take the initiative to remedy those gaps demonstrates that engaged workplace learning is central to this construct.

Gaining new knowledge and skills to support workplace goals is important to adapt to the changing landscape of the workplace as well as the changing characteristics of students. As indicated in the previous research, when employees, especially student affairs professionals, are not actively pursuing new knowledge and skills there is a likelihood that student affairs professionals are not thriving.

Relationships Construct (R)

Seligman (2011) extolled the positive benefits in life of interaction with other people. Social connections are the foundation to relationships both in and out of the workplace environment. When describing the social connectedness construct for students, Schreiner suggested that “thriving students are connected to others on and off campus in healthy ways; they have people in their lives who support them, listen to them, and spend time with them” (Schreiner, 2010c, p. 4). These elements of social connectedness are also important for employees in the workplace. Social connectedness contributes to the sense of belonging, getting to know one another and the small actions that people take to get to know each other (Eichler, 2016; Rettie, 2003; Visser et al. 2011). These small actions of connectedness develop a sense of belonging, make a big difference in the workplace, and contribute to overall employee well-being (Eichler, 2016; Visser et al., 2011). Employees in the United States have a 90.2% chance of having coworkers, so workplace social connectedness is a relevant consideration (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). The behaviors of both leaders and coworkers as well as spontaneous connections influence the social environment in the workplace which can be a key construct to promote thriving in the workplace.

Supervisor Relationships. For a new employee, a sense of connection with the supervisor begins as soon as they are hired and start work. This relationship is important in job satisfaction and in how the employee develops and grows within an organization. Researchers who focused on supervision in student affairs specifically (Tull, 2006; Winston & Creamer, 1998) found that the introduction of a synergistic supervision model was connected to higher levels of job satisfaction as well as emphasizing the importance of the connection between employees and their supervisors.

Winston and Creamer (1998) presented the concept of synergistic supervision, specifically in student affairs, to bolster supervision approaches which fostered a sense of community through respect and communication while accomplishing institutional and unit goals. Winston and Creamer (1998) described synergistic supervision as a holistic approach to staff supervision, adding that, while each area may not require the same level of attention continuously, synergistic supervision “focuses on four areas of competence: knowledge, work-related skills, personal and professional skills, and attitudes. Each of these areas requires ongoing, although not necessarily equal, attention” (Winston & Creamer, 1998, p. 30). They elaborated that synergistic supervision was focused on “promoting the personal and professional development of staff members” (Winston & Creamer, 1998, p. 30) since staff members “have a legitimate expectation that the institution will show concern for their welfare and provide the support needed for a nourishing work environment and career advancement” (Winston & Creamer, 1998, p. 30).

Winston and Creamer (1998) posited that supervision should be a process provided by the institution to develop staff members as opposed to a source of discipline

for unsatisfactory employee performance. For synergistic supervision to be effective, Winston and Creamer (1998) stated that both supervisor and employee must invest time and energy into the relationship; a one-sided relationship will not yield success. Of note, Winston and Creamer (1998) observed that a synergistic relationship between supervisor and the staff member supported the premise that “[s]taff members who have sufficient evidence that their supervisor wants them to be successful are much more likely to accept constructive criticism and to be willing to take corrective steps” (Winston & Creamer, 1998, p. 32). Winston and Creamer (1998) noted that the initial step to combine professional development and synergistic supervision was a trusting and open relationship between the supervisor and staff member. The research of Winston and Creamer (1998) specifically demonstrate how valuable supervision relationships are to employee thriving. For this study, it was predicted that student affairs professionals who sought synergistic supervision would achieve greater levels within the relationship construct and therefore would be more likely to thrive.

Supporting the synergistic supervision model advanced by Winston and Creamer (1998), Tull (2006) provided insight into the impact of synergistic supervision and job satisfaction on intention to turnover. Tull (2006) examined the relationship of synergistic supervision, defined as a “holistic approach to supervision” (p. 466), to job satisfaction and argued that the quality of supervision, especially in the early years of student affairs professionals’ careers, reduced turnover intention. Tull (2006) focused on student affairs professionals with less than five years of experience in the field of student affairs by surveying 435 student affairs professionals that examined the relationship between synergistic supervision to turnover and job satisfaction.

Tull (2006) found that the relationship between synergistic supervision and job satisfaction was significant. Employees who had good relationships with their supervisors were more satisfied in their day-to-day work in the field of student affairs (Tull, 2006). The significance of the interpersonal relationship between the student affairs professional and supervisor highlights the “sense of belonging and validation” found within the social connectedness construct. The relationship between employee and supervisor is one that has lasting effects on an employee’s retention, or in theory, thriving. Continued development of this relationship is important in understanding to the connection of the relationship construct since the supervisor directly helps develop an employee by approaching supervision from a holistic and person-centered focus. However, it is not only relationships with a supervisor that is meaningful in the workplace, connections with peers were also found to be significant.

Co-Worker or Peer Relationships. Peers and co-workers are important in supporting employee connections within the relationship construct. Chiaburu and Harrison (2008) conducted a meta-analysis on 161 independent samples composed of 77,954 employees linking coworker support and coworker antagonism to employee outcomes of role perceptions, work attitudes, withdrawal, interpersonal effectiveness, and organizational effectiveness. Chiaburu and Harrison (2008) found that coworker support was directly related to these role perceptions. In jobs that required a higher degree of social interaction, coworkers mattered and affected the settings for such jobs (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). Chiaburu and Harrison (2008) found that “coworkers matter—making the place” (p. 1097).

One practical implication found in Chiaburu and Harrison's (2008) finding was that often interventions were more effective at the co-worker level rather than from the leader because of the strong social connections that occurred between co-workers. This research specifically demonstrates how valuable peer-to-peer relationships are to employees thriving. For the current study, we anticipated that student affairs professionals would seek synergy and positive interactions with peers to demonstrate higher levels within the relationship construct to achieve a higher level of thriving.

Employee retention was an outcome supported by strong relationships in the workplace. Feeley et al., (2008) explored how social networks might have influenced employee retention and turnover. Social networks were identified as interconnected individuals who were associated in patterned streams of communication (Feeley et al., 2008). They hypothesized that employees in the center of a friendship network were less likely to turnover than employees who were in a peer network (Feeley et al., 2008). Further, the degree of closeness of the employees within the friendship networks deterred turnover (Feeley et al., 2008).

The sample of 40 employees was drawn from a fast-food restaurant located in a suburb of a large city. The employees completed a survey composed of demographic questions as well as questions about their job satisfaction, closeness to other employees and the amount of time spent with other employees and the reported relational closeness with employees (Feeley et al., 2008). Three months following the administration of the survey, the manager of the restaurant verified turnover of employees. Feeley et al. (2008) found that the employees who were active in their friendship networks at work were more likely to be retained as employees. Further, the number of friends was more important

than the closeness of the friendships (Feeley et al., 2008) which supported the observation that coping resources available, based on number of friends, was important in a dynamic workplace. Feeley et al.'s (2008) research demonstrated how peer relationships extend beyond workplace relationships to personal friendships. For the current study, it is anticipated that that student affairs professionals will have significant friendship relationships amidst their workplace relationships which contribute to their level of thriving.

Supervisor, peer, and friendship connections are examples of positive support networks in the workplace and further demonstrate how social connections in the workplace evolve. While it is true that not all employees develop friendships at work, the connections to peers, co-workers, and supervisors provides a connection in the workplace. These connections often enhance the potential for success in the workplace and support an environment in which employees may thrive. As such, student affairs professionals who have positive peer, supervisor, and friendship relationships are more likely to achieve a higher sense of thriving. The value of varying professional and personal relationships was noted by prior research and guides the conceptual framework for this study. The current study's researchers believe that if student affairs professionals have an environment that fosters teamwork and generates opportunities for forming relationships through social connections, that student affairs professionals will experience higher levels of thriving.

Meaning Construct (M)

Meaning was defined by Seligman (2011) as “belonging to and serving something that you believe is bigger than the self” (p. 17). This construct contributes to an

individuals' well-being, is pursued for its own sake, and is measurable (Seligman, 2011). Isolating the construct of meaning to the workplace environment, it is apparent that people often find meaningfulness in their work (Steger et al., 2012). Meaningful work has been explored by researchers asking questions such as what is meaningful work, how do we measure it, and why is meaningful work to individuals and organizations?

According to Steger and colleagues (2012), when employees found meaningfulness in their work, organizations found qualities of those employees desirable and supported organizational outcomes (Steger et al., 2012).

Steger et al. (2012) explored various research studies on meaningful work and concluded that there was a lack of information about the experiential dimensions of meaningful work as well as a lack of an instrument that measures meaningful work. Steger et al. (2012) set out to remedy this and argued that three facets characterized the umbrella concept of meaningful work. These three facets were (a) positive meaning attached to work, (b) the contribution of work to making meaning, and (c) motivation to contribute to a greater good (Steger et al., 2012). It was further argued that these facets supported the overarching concept that meaningful work was characterized and distinguished by positive and significant experiences at work which contributed to a purpose-oriented sense of fulfillment in one's life (Steger et al., 2012).

To examine these three facets, Steger et al. (2012) recruited employees from a research university to complete a battery of 40 questions from 11 established instruments. Based on the results of the separate instruments which Steger et al. (2012) mapped onto their three hypothesized facets, they tested the structural model through both exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. The resulting 10 question Work as Meaning Inventory

(WAMI) provided support for the hypothesis that desirable work variables including career commitment, intrinsic work motivations and organizational commitment were positively correlated with meaningful work (Steger et al., 2012).

Meaningful work was also found to be negatively correlated with absenteeism and withdrawal intentions (Steger et al., 2012). A positive relationship between well-being and meaningful work was found indicating that those who found their work meaningful were likely to score high on well-being measures in the instrument. A negative relationship between meaningful work and psychological distress was found indicating that those who found their work meaningful were less likely to exhibit hostility and depression (Steger et al., 2012). While Steger et al. (2012) developed an instrument tied to theoretically based facets of meaningful work, the dialogue among researchers continued about the ambiguity of what meaningful work was and the best way to measure the concept of meaningful work.

Bailey and Madden (2016) interviewed 135 people who worked in 10 different occupations to find out how they described moments when they found their work meaningful as well as times when they were not sure there was meaning in their work. Distinct from work engagement and commitment, Bailey and Madden (2016) found meaningfulness was individualized and deeply personal. When the interviewees spoke of meaningfulness in their work, there was a passion and personal connection to significant events which were completely unexpected and not routine (Bailey & Madden, 2016). Meaningful work was not attributed to the quality of leadership or management styles. Regardless of occupation, meaningful work was connected to sense of achievement in their work and pride in their accomplishments.

In exploring how and why people found their work meaningful, Bailey and Madden (2016) identified five qualities of meaningful work; meaningful work was self-transcendent, poignant, episodic, reflective, and personal. When speaking of meaningful work, interviewees felt their work was meaningful when their work meant more to others than themselves. For example, when faculty members saw their students graduate from college or when a community organizer helped others accomplish a common goal (Bailey & Madden, 2016). These were examples of the self-transcendent quality of meaningful work. In describing meaningful work, interviewees also described situations when in adverse conditions they still found meaning. Nurses, for example, when working with hospice patients and their families had meaningful work experiences despite the adversity inherent to such work (Bailey & Madden, 2016).

Meaningful work experiences were episodic in nature and inconsistent. Brief moments of accomplishment and meaning were the situations related by interviewees which carried high levels of personal relevance and emotion (Bailey & Madden, 2016). Meaningful work was realized after reflection on the situation rather than being realized at the exact moment it was happening. After stopping to inspect their work on a street, garbage collectors reflected that their work was meaningful since they contributed to a cleaner city for everyone (Bailey & Madden, 2016). Meaningful work was also described as very personal in nature. It was a meaningful experience for a musician's parent to attend performance for the first time and a lawyer felt her work was meaningful when family and friends recommended her services to others (Bailey & Madden, 2016). This personal contextualization of meaningful work was amplified when there was also a

sense that a job had been performed well and was appreciated by others (Bailey & Madden, 2016).

Participants were also asked to reflect on the factors which created meaninglessness in work. Bailey and Madden (2016) discovered that interviewees found their work meaningless when there was a tension between their values and the values of the organization. Examples included a company which only focused on the financial bottom line while neglecting other considerations for employees (Bailey & Madden, 2016). When taken for granted or their work was not appreciated, employees felt their work was meaningless (Bailey & Madden, 2016). Work tasks which were perceived as pointless by employees created a feeling of meaningless work. When employees were treated unfairly, felt their judgement was questioned, or felt their physical or emotional security was at risk, they also felt their work was meaningless (Bailey & Madden, 2016). Finally, when employees felt disconnected from supportive relationships, they felt their work was meaningless. These factors which destroyed the potential for meaningful work were fully controlled by managers or company leaders (Bailey & Madden, 2016). These same leaders were not cultivators of meaningful work, but they were fully in control of circumstances which sometimes deterred employees from experiencing meaningful work. When work was meaningful for employees, there were positive effects on individual employees as well as positive contributions to organizational outcomes.

Meaningful work for employees supported increased work performance as Van Wingerden and Van Der Stoep (2018) discovered. They hypothesized that meaningful work was positively related to an employee's performance (Van Wingerden & Van Der Stoep, 2018). This relationship was moderated by strengths use and work engagement.

Meaningful work was defined as work which was significant and was positively meaningful for an individual (Van Wingerden & Van Der Stoep, 2018). Strengths was defined as an ability to feel, reason and act in ways which increases performance in the workplace and work engagement was defined as a state in which the individual is dedicated to, involved in, and absorbed by their work (Van Wingerden & Van Der Stoep, 2018). When work was perceived as meaningful by employees, those employees were more engaged and used their strengths and a higher level of work performance was the outcome.

Van Wingerden and Van Der Stoep (2018) identified a sample of 459 professionals of which 85% were male, the average age was 42 years and 84% had achieved a university education in technology or had completed higher vocational training (Van Wingerden & Van Der Stoep, 2018). To measure the meaningful work construct, a subscale of the Work and Meaning Inventory (WAMI) was used (Steger et al., 2012). Strength's use was measured using items from the Strengths Use Scale (Keenan & Mostert, 2013) and work engagement was measured with questions from the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli et al., 2006). Work performance was measured using the In-role Performance scale (Williams & Anderson, 1991).

Meaningful work found to positively predict work engagement and strengths use while strengths use was also related to work engagement as well as in-role performance. Work engagement also predicted in-role performance (Van Wingerden & Van Der Stoep, 2018). These findings support the proposed model path that meaningful work increases the likelihood of strengths use which influences work engagement, and, ultimately, individual performance. The findings support an additional pathway demonstrating

meaningful work influences work engagement directly, which in turn influences individual performance (Van Wingerden & Van Der Stoep, 2018).

The meaning construct is supported by prior research as being a construct which is connected to thriving in student affairs professionals because it signals the level of immersion and service to the organization. When student affairs professionals are supported in finding meaning in their work with students, faculty, staff, or the field; it is assumed that their propensity to thrive will be higher.

Accomplishments Construct (A)

Seligman (2011) suggested that people found both meaning and positive joy in their accomplishments, but also suggested that even when there is no meaning or joy in those accomplishments, people still found purpose and pride in those accomplishments. According to Seligman (2011) accomplishment is achieving something for its own sake. A sense of accomplishment is thought to be a construct which supports thriving or flourishing in the work environment since employees are accomplishing tasks and experiencing successes at work.

Building on Seligman's (2011) research of the PERMA constructs, in researching accomplishment as it relates to flourishing, Kaplan and Maehr (1999) examined the role achievement goals play in student well-being. Their research highlighted the importance of building goals through specific measures and outlined tasks to accomplish those goals. Kaplan and Maehr (1999) found that students with clear goal-oriented tasks were less prone to disorderly behavior and had decreased well-being concerns. Kaplan and Maehr (1999) survey participants:

consisted of 168 students of which 91 were girls (54.2%) and 77 were boys (45.8%). All participants were in the sixth grade and in their first year after a transition to middle school. Of the total, 91 of the students (54.2%) were Euro-Americans, 66 (39.3%) were African Americans, and 11 (6.5%) were of other ethnic backgrounds. (p. 336)

Kaplan and Maehr (1999) concluded, “that perceived school emphasis on task goals and personal task goals related to a positive pattern of student well-being, whereas perceived emphasis on ego goals and personal ego goals will be related to a negative pattern of student well-being” (p. 335). This study supports the importance of achievement as one of Seligman’s (2011) PERMA constructs which accomplishment impact one’s well-being and thriving level.

Related to accomplishment as seen in Seligman’s (2011) PERMA, is the idea of achievement and what motivates an individual to achieve at different levels. Hassanzadeh and Mahdinejad (2013) explored the relationship between happiness, motivation, and achievement. They contended that “happiness has a critical and important role in motivation of students” (Hassanzadeh & Mahdinejad, 2013, p. 58). The researchers surveyed university students in Iran to understand how happiness relates to achievement motivation with the goal of developing strategies that increase happiness, and therefore, motivation of this sample population. They were specifically interested in determining if there were gender differences in this relationship.

Hassanzadeh and Mahdinejad (2013) administered existing happiness and achievement surveys to 50 university students, including 25 males and 25 females. They found that there was a relationship between happiness and achievement motivation for

this population and concluded that “motivation helps people to be successful and happy” (p. 62). They further found that there were no gender differences, meaning that male and female students had a similar relationship between happiness and achievement motivation. This supports Seligman’s (2011) theory that accomplishments, or achievements, are tied to an emotional level of feeling joy or finding meaning in the task.

The sense of accomplishment established from finding or building these achievements aligns with the accomplishment construct and supports thriving in student affairs professionals. The prior research on the accomplishment construct supports thriving for student affairs professionals by demonstrating the strength and interaction found between meaning and achievement. The accomplishment construct supports thriving in student affairs professionals because it signals the level of growth, tenacity, and achievement which could support student affairs professionals’ thriving level as they navigate the higher education workplace.

Predictors of Thriving

Where the PERMA constructs were defined by Seligman (2011) as contributing to a holistic framework of thriving; predictors were additional measures that have been found to also impact thriving (L. Schreiner, personal communication, October 11, 2020). The researchers in this research study, included Schreiner’s predictors of thriving in student affairs professionals which include (a) psychological sense of community, (b) spirituality, (c) institutional integrity, and (d) commitment to staff welfare. Existing literature supports the conceptual framework for the current study by providing connections to these predictors of thriving suggested by Schreiner (personal

communication, October 11, 2020), who has examined thriving in faculty and administrators in higher education.

Psychological Sense of Community Predictor. A psychological sense of community is described as a predictor of thriving which consists of membership, relationships, and partnerships within that community as well as understanding the “symbols, signs and rituals” along with “a sense of belonging and validation” (Schreiner, 2016). The psychological sense of community predictor differs from the relationship construct previously discussed in that social connectedness within the relationships construct refers to the immediate connections with colleagues, supervisors, peers, and friends with which one most closely works. The sense of community predictor applies to a broader sense of belonging and a connectivity with the institution.

For student affairs professionals, a sense of community is established when an employee feels a sense of membership in the community, that their job fills an important need for the organization and there is a connection to the institution (Boyd & Nowell, 2017). A sense of community is not only a valuable part of the work environment for student affairs professionals, but it is also a key function of the work that student affairs professionals create at institutions for their students. “Student affairs professionals have not only been community builders but also group workers” (Taub, 1998, p. 416). Taub (1998) noted that community building occurs through outreach, teaching, training, and consultation. Schreiner (2010c) and Taub (1998) both referenced the Social Change Model, indicating the important role that student affairs professionals play in the development of students and creating successful experiences that are impactful. Paralleling how a positive sense of community allows students to thrive, student affairs

professionals benefit from a sense of community which helps to foster thriving in their work.

The connection a student affairs professional has to the community and the institution is seen when employee opinions are trusted, work is valued and included or sought at various levels of the institution, and collegiality extended beyond immediate offices or functions. Burkard et al. (2005) examined 104 student affairs professionals in mid- and senior-level roles who were NASPA members regarding their perceptions of positions, responsibilities, competencies, and theories for professional practice of new student affairs professionals. Participants had an average age of 40 years old, 65 participants were women while 39 were men, and participants had worked in student affairs an average of 15 years (2-37 years) with 5 years in their current role (Burkard et al., 2005). Participants answered a series of questions about entry-level positions, responsibilities that aligned with those positions, the skills necessary to be successful, and theoretical foundations that were important. The survey process was repeated two more times, each time narrowing and clustering the responses to form consensus on the specific theories, competencies, and knowledge base that were important for an entry-level professional in student affairs (Burkard et al., 2005). This study supports the current study as opportunities for mentoring and support around the basic theories, competencies, and knowledge that are deemed as essential for the specific community contribute to the sense of community predictor of thriving.

As student affairs professionals enter the profession or a new role, the institutional work environment is created by the organization and colleagues in the work environment establish the sense of community. In the same sense, a strong collegial campus

community for student affairs professionals could impact thriving. Based on their professional experience, the researchers of the current study believe, if established early a strong sense of community could positively impact employee retention, institutional commitment, optimal performance and level of thriving.

Spirituality Predictor. Moon et al. (2020) defined spirituality as the basic feeling that connects employees with a higher power. Research on spirituality in the workplace is new and does not appear to have yet expanded to application in the workplace for student affairs professionals. As a result, in this literature review the focus is on how spirituality impacts individual thriving. Exploring how spirituality contributes to thriving for student affairs professionals could further support thriving in the workplace setting. Prior research supports the concept of spirituality's contribution to thriving and is included in this study.

McEntee et al. (2013) asserted that the dimension of spirituality is vacant from the previous models of thriving and explored the relationship that spirituality had with positivity, positive psychological, and social functioning. They also explored spirituality as a variable in the overall construct of thriving and the relationship between spirituality and altruism, which is the act of doing something for no benefit to the person doing the act (McEntee et al., 2013). The 167 participants (56 men and 111 women) represented a variety of Christian and non-Christian faiths, were mostly Caucasian (78%) and recruited through networks of friends, students, churches, colleagues, and other communities (McEntee et al., 2013). The participants in this study completed a survey either online via PsychData or through a paper survey. McEntee et al.'s (2013) results substantiated an expanded model of thriving that included spirituality. McEntee et al. (2013) specifically

found a close relationship between spirituality, positivity, psychological and social well-being, and social functioning at a societal level. One important result was the predictive relationship spirituality had to altruism, which was seen as the one of the highest ordered motivational states in that it focuses on increasing the welfare for another with no reward for that action (McEntee et al., 2013). While discussing or considering spirituality in a holistic flourishing model could be uncomfortable for some, McEntee et al.'s (2013) research supports the importance of spirituality as a predictor to overall thriving.

Dirkx (2013) examined workplace spirituality in the early 2010s, after a period of economic decline in the United States when employers focused their concerns on maximizing productivity and efficiency. Innovative technologies allowed workers to do more with less. Dirkx (2013) argued that this created a situation that demoralized workers and led to lower job satisfaction and higher stress. Dirkx (2013) suggested that employers needed to consider the spirituality of work to help workers find the meaning and purpose that work brings. Dirkx (2013) explored the employee learning process that more deeply engaged the employee's relationship with work by conducting a thorough literature review on existing research at that time. The spirituality of work literature that Dirkx (2013) reviewed indicated that learning was meaningful when it connected the skills needed for one's job to the needs of the broader community.

Researchers continued to explore the relationship of spirituality in the workplace and how it affected employee engagement. Roof (2015) set out to further explore the spirituality-engagement relationship in the workplace. Roof (2015) conducted an extensive literature review on the topic of employee engagement, and explored the dimensions of vigor, dedication, and absorption. Vigor was defined as "high energy,

resilience, persistence, and the willingness to exert extra effort” (Roof, 2015, p. 587). Dedication was defined as “enthusiasm, a sense of purpose, inspiration, and pride” (Roof, 2015, p. 587), and absorption was defined as concentration or a sense of being engrossed. This absorption was like the construct of engagement, or flow, as articulated by Seligman (2011). Roof (2015) stated that spirituality was the experience that defined one’s existence and helped one shape their meaning in life, but it did not need to either include or exclude religion. Roof (2015) found that spirituality was not significantly related to absorption. However, there was a significant relationship of spirituality with the dimensions of engagement, vigor, and dedication. Roof’s (2015) findings are important to the workplace as they suggest that organizations have the responsibility to consider employee spirituality as a means by which engagement, vigor, and dedication are influenced. This study indicated that spirituality has a positive relationship with engagement at work and supports the hypothesis of the current study that spirituality predicts thriving.

The research by Moon et al. (2020) further explored the impact of spirituality within the workplace. Moon et al. (2020) examined how spirituality affected one’s job performance and, specifically, the enhancement to one’s job performance because of their spirituality. Moon et al. (2020) based their research on Schaufeli and Bakker’s (2004) Job Demands-Resources model, which found that engagement and job resources drove the motivational process of employees. Moon et al. (2020) suggested that employees’ spirituality was one of the driving forces of engagement in the Job Demands-Resources model. They contended that “spirituality in the workplace plays a major role in providing a new lens through which employees assign meaning to day-to-day work experiences”

(Moon et al., 2020, p. 1620). Moon et al. (2020) surveyed 306 employees and their corresponding supervisors in a variety of South Korean organizations. The employees were asked questions related to spirituality, intrinsic motivation, and job crafting. Job crafting was the process by which employees made physical and cognitive changes in their work. The corresponding supervisors were then surveyed to report on the employee's job performance.

Moon et al. (2020) found that job crafting mediated “the positive relationship between employees' spirituality and their job performance” (p. 1627). This research emphasizes the role that spirituality plays in motivation and directly impacts job performance. Moon et al. (2020) suggested that incorporating a spirituality index could be useful in the recruitment and selection process of employees as it could indicate a deeper sense of meaning and purpose. One limitation of this study was the focus on one culture and Moon et al. (2020) stressed that results could vary in difficult cultures that have higher or lower norms for spirituality. Moon et al.'s (2020) results support the current study as they showed that spirituality has a positive impact on job performance, motivation and thriving.

Institutional Integrity Predictor. Seligman (2011) describes individual integrity as how one represents individual intentions and commitments in a genuine way based on beliefs and truthfulness. Institutional integrity represents characteristics on an organizational level and is evident in how an institution conducted itself. For colleges and universities, institutional integrity “rests on how we treat our students, our colleagues, our staff, our board, and the parents of our students” (Barr, 1987, p. 2). Institutional integrity is expressed in the practices, procedures and policies plus is present in “every aspect of

our daily functioning as an institution of higher education” (Barr, 1987, p. 2).

Institutional integrity impacts all who are constituents of higher education institutions and most presently, student affairs professionals. When there is a congruence between institutional integrity and individual expectations, there is a connection formed and reinforced which supports thriving. If there is conflict between institutional integrity and individual expectations, there is a likelihood that an individual may not thrive in that institution. This is particularly true for students and employees of higher education institutions.

Institutional integrity is a consideration when students are exploring their college options as well as during their time as students in college. Ash and Schreiner (2016) remarked that the consistency of staff and faculty behaviors in relation to the institutional mission impacts a student’s belief that “the institution was accurately portrayed during the admissions process, and when their expectations have been met or exceeded, they believed that the institution had acted with integrity, that it had delivered on its promises” (p. 49). In short, the experiences that students have at their college or university determine how they perceive the university met their expectations and upholds commitments to the students. The same was thought to be true for student affairs professionals in higher education institutions. When an institution met the expectations of student affairs professionals then the institution was perceived as acting with integrity which established a relationship of trust and pride in working at that institution propelling staff to thrive or flourish. An ethical work environment could be identified as a distinguishing factor of institutional integrity.

Institutional integrity can also be seen in how professional reasoning skills and conduct support the ethical behavior of employees. Reybold et al. (2008) explored ethical behavior in a higher education student affairs workplace. Reybold et al. (2008) wanted to learn how professional ethics are defined, how student affairs professionals are prepared for using the complex problem-solving skills necessary in the workplace, and how ethical decisions were made and justified. They also wanted to determine the extent to which student affairs professionals adhered to their ethical principles and standards, also known as ethicality (Reybold et al., 2008). Reybold et al. (2008) conducted in-depth interviews of 12 student affairs professionals, half of whom served at an associate vice chancellor level and the other half at a director level. Participants were asked about their definition of professional ethics, how professional codes were developed, and how ethical decisions were made. Participants were also asked their perceptions of how factors related to the institution and department influenced their reasoning (Reybold et al., 2008).

Most of the interview participants saw professional ethics as “doing the right thing” and did not distinguish personal or religious values from professional ethics (Reybold et al., 2008). Reybold et al. (2008) indicated that while personal characteristics and values influenced the process, they did not solely guide ethical reasoning and actions in the complex environment of higher education. Student affairs professionals benefited from ethical modeling and relational leadership from colleagues, supervisors, and administrators that helped to create and sustain ethical work environments for student affairs (Reybold et al., 2008). Reybold et al. (2008) concluded that an increased awareness and development of professional ethics would benefit higher education institutions and should be in the form of ethics education to all professionals to “engage

more fully in the development and maintenance of ethical decision making across their campuses” (Reybold et al., 2008, p. 122). An overall emphasis on ethics and ensuring all employees are making professional decisions in accordance with institutional values supported the institutional integrity as a predictor of thriving. Consistency and role-modeling are instrumental to establishing institutional integrity for student affairs professionals. Institutional integrity is a supportive predictor of thriving when employees feel like their institution behaves in an ethical way at all levels.

Ahmed et al. (2018) explored the connection between organizational virtuousness and employee performance. Organizational virtuousness was defined as an environment in which trust, forgiveness, integrity, and humanity were present and supported by an institution (Ahmed et al., 2018). Work engagement was defined as the emotional and psychological attachment to an organization and affective well-being was defined as the balance of employees’ positive and negative emotions and moods, which some also call happiness (Ahmed et al., 2018). A survey was used to examine the relationship between the organizational virtuousness, engagement, and well-being. The sample was selected using a multi-stage sampling technique which resulted in 487 bankers participating in the survey (Ahmed et al., 2018). The survey questions were selected from established instruments and aligned with the study variables.

After analyzing the results from the survey, Ahmed et al. (2018) determined that organizational virtuousness positively and significantly predicted the extent to which employees were psychologically and emotionally attached to the organization. Employees were more attached to the organization when they perceived the organization as an environment in which trust, integrity, and humanity were present. Additionally, it

was determined that organizational virtuousness also predicted well-being, or happiness, and performance (Ahmed et al., 2018). When organizations provided employees with an environment of trust and integrity, employees reacted to that environment favorably through their performance and engagement with the organization. Ahmed et al. (2018) reinforced the importance of perceived institutional integrity, or organizational virtuousness and organization responses to tough situations. For employees, finding the right fit at an organization is a critical aspect that influences one's ongoing commitment to the organization, the energy, which is invested, and the positive benefits accrued to both the employee and organization. Feeling connected to an institution that aligns with one's personal beliefs, goals, and hopes directly influences one's level of thriving.

Commitment to Staff Welfare Predictor. As employees devote significant portions of their daily lives within workplaces, employer support plays a vital role in staff well-being and commitment. According to a Center for Disease Control study on workplace health in America (2018), almost half of workplaces in the United States offer health and wellness programs. Additional benefits such as these are seen by many as organization sponsored employee supports which promote a staff welfare. Commitment to staff welfare could be summarized as when an employee feels supported by their organization. Employee support could be demonstrated in various ways including health and wellness programs, work environment, professional development, compensation, and benefits packages. Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) noted, "employees with high perceived organizational support find their job more pleasurable, are in a better mood at work, and suffer fewer strain symptoms, such as fatigue or burnout" (p. 87).

Employers have increasingly recognized the value of employees in meeting the mission and goals of the organization. Employers have begun looking at what factors keep employees happy and feel supported, especially related to staff welfare. Teti and Andriotto (2013) examined how attention to staff welfare efforts, called “welfare schemes” in their study (p. 3234), impacted staff satisfaction. Teti and Andriotto (2013) distributed a questionnaire to the entire workforce of a large Italian company, which resulted in 4,210 responses. The survey included questions on how important various welfare schemes were to the employee. The welfare schemes consisted of roughly 80 benefits and services but those could be broken down into six categories: benefits, assurances (policies), services (laundry, banking), welfare (childcare, summer camps), promotional agreements (wellness facilities, restaurants), and technology. Teti and Andriotto (2013) concluded the items that improved an employee’s satisfaction required a limited cost and the items that were more expensive did not appear to influence satisfaction as much. Teti and Andriotto (2013) pointed out the limitations of this study on one organization but suggested that other organizations examine what attention to staff welfare efforts would best improve job satisfaction locally. This finding supported the current study in that organizational attention to staff welfare might influence or predict thriving.

Within the context of higher education, the work environment could cause staff to consider their commitment to an institution. Marshall et al. (2016) found that unsupportive work environments that included demanding hours, environments, and workload contributed to student affairs departing the field as a result of burnout. The very nature of student affairs work makes the professionals within the field more prone to the

dangers of burnout. Preventing burnout is relevant as a commitment to staff welfare, since it emphasizes the need for employees to experience positive professional performance and see the institution as a good fit professionally. In their study of well-being in higher education professionals, Du Plessis et al. (2016) discovered that the more an organization provided support to the well-being of their staff, the harder staff worked and had increased levels of motivation. As these professionals have greater risk for burnout due to their positions, employees could pay special attention to these risks and ensure that supportive working environments.

Prior research provides a strong connection between employees feeling a commitment to staff welfare from the institution and decision-makers in the workplace. The potential for student affairs professionals to have received adequate training, welcomed and supported in their unique diverse identities, to have created equitable and inclusive environments for their colleagues and students could impact thriving. When a student affairs professional is thriving, they are more likely to feel supported as professionals by their workplace, thus supporting the connection of commitment to staff welfare as a predictor of thriving level.

Student Affairs Professionals

This current study focuses on student affairs professionals who fulfill a variety of functions and responsibilities in higher education. As suggested in prior sections of this chapter, job responsibilities and the workplace environment either support or inhibit student affairs professionals' ability to thrive. In addition to the PERMA constructs and Schreiner's predictors of thriving, it is important to include other individual factors which may also impact thriving in student affairs professions such as demographic

characteristics and specific functional area. A brief review of relevant literature connected to the demographic characteristics of student affairs professionals as well as the functional areas where student affairs professionals work is provided in this section.

As the needs of students and higher education institutions have evolved throughout history, so have the roles which student affairs professionals perform to respond to these changing dynamics. Student affairs professionals are responsible for serving students successfully, representing the institution, and promoting its mission and values. Long (2012) argued that student affairs professionals are essential for assuring that a campus is committed to serving as “a role model of fairness and inclusion for all people,” (p. 9) adding “staff are encouraged to recognize and be prepared to remedy inequality within the campus and surrounding community” (p. 9). Generations of students have changed, and student affairs professionals have changed as well. Long (2012) indicated that a successful student affairs employee must “develop a sophisticated range of multicultural competencies” (p. 10). Pope and Reynolds (1997) added that awareness of multicultural competencies is not enough; these competencies must be interwoven into the day-to-day practices of student affairs professionals to create diverse and welcoming places of learning. Pope and Reynolds (1997) used the example of utilizing one’s helping and communication skills to understand the communication styles between men and women.

To further illustrate, when researching effective student development theory practices, one should research the experiences of students of color (Pope & Reynolds, 1997). Pope and Reynolds (1997) stated that “as college campuses become increasingly diverse, multicultural competence has become a requisite core competency area for

ethical and efficacious practice” (1997, p. 275). As institutions of higher education prioritize diverse campus climates, it is equally important to understand the importance of how student affairs professionals impact those efforts and how their work contributes to carrying out these institutional missions. Ensuring that student affairs professionals are thriving within this work will ultimately help build diverse student and staff populations where many voices and experiences could be amplified.

Student affairs professionals play an important role in the overall recruitment and retention of college students. “An enrollment management system encourages student affairs officers to create a campus environment that will retain as well as attract students” (Ward & Hossler, 2016, p. 78). Recruitment and retention issues were at the heart of every college and university. As the demographic characteristics and needs of higher education students continued to change, so did student affairs professionals. These needs included combating alcohol and other substance abuse, violence, mental health issues, and societal and parental demands (Jones et al., 2011). These were needs that fell outside of the classroom but needed to be addressed to fully support student academic success. Student affairs professionals had to be fully engaged, even thriving, to perform this crucial work of supporting students throughout their college experience.

Furthermore, essential key values that student affairs professionals must demonstrate included educating students, caring about the well-being of students, service to the university, students and community, and advancing ideas of diversity, inclusion, and social justice (Long, 2012). Successful student affairs professionals must have exhibited specific competencies to successfully serve students, represent the institution, and promote its mission and values (Long, 2012). This allowed student affairs

professionals to continue developing the campus community around them and cultivating sense of belonging.

Demographics of Student Affairs Professionals

Student affairs professionals work in a variety of higher education institutions in the United States. The U. S. Department of Education (2019) identified 7,021 postsecondary Title IV institutions which include public and private two-year and four-year institutions that receive federal student aid under Title IV of the Higher Education Act. Many postsecondary institutions employ student affairs professionals, but there is no central database or listing of student affairs professionals within the United States from which to obtain an exact count. However, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019) reported that the career field of post-secondary administrator, which includes student affairs professionals, consists of 144,880 employees (U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). As of 2018, employment of post-secondary education administrators, including student affairs professionals, was projected to grow about 7% from 2018 to 2028 based on expected student enrollment in colleges and universities (U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018).

Generations of Student Affairs Professionals. As the number of student affairs administrators continually grows, so shall the generations in the workforce. The unique characteristics connected to generation affiliation may influence student affairs professional's perspectives which support conditions that enable thriving. According to Pritchard et al. (2019), the median age for higher education staff is 45 years old, with 85% of student affairs professionals falling under the age of 55. While the median starting age of student affairs professionals is 32 years old (Pritchard & McChesney,

2018); student affairs professionals are as young as 25 years old if they were traditional college students who proceeded directly from undergraduate programs into graduate programs and into professional positions. Student affairs professionals represent several generations within the workforce which occur across these age ranges.

Parker and Igielnik (2020) noted the workforce to be mostly comprised of Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964), Gen X (born 1965-1980), and Millennials (born 1981-1996) while fewer are from the emerging Gen Z (born 1997-chronological endpoint not yet established) and even fewer, if any, are from the aging Silent Generation (born 1928-1945). Student affairs professionals have a wealth of both life and professional experiences. Examining thriving across the multigenerational student affairs professional workforce will provide a clearer understanding of who is thriving in the field of student affairs.

Silent Generation (1928-1945). The Silent Generation, also known as Traditionalists, were the oldest generation in the workplace (Wiedmer, 2015). These individuals were 75 years of age or older as of 2020, comprised our society's oldest citizens, and have generally aged out of the workforce (Wiedmer, 2015). Members of the Silent Generation preferred to work in a hierarchical, top-down environment with support from colleagues and supervisors. The Silent Generation tended to "prefer tangible items for recognition and reward" (Wiedmer, 2015, p. 51) as it contributed to a sense of pride for the employee. It was likely that not many student affairs professionals were from this generation, but it was important to be aware of this generation's work preferences as it was likely this generation established many organizational processes and structures which exist today.

Baby Boomers (1946-1964). The Baby Boomer generation was historically the largest generation in the United States. The youngest Baby Boomers were only 56 years old while the oldest were 74 years old as of 2020. Many from this generation are still active in the workforce and continue to exhibit strong influence in work environments. Research on the characteristics of the Baby Boomer generation describes them as competitive, work-focused, independent, and loyal (Gibson et al., 2009). As a result of the large number of current and future Baby Boomer retirements, the next two generations, Generation X and Millennials, have found themselves vying for and occupying the positions vacated by the Baby Boomer generation (Cohn & Taylor, 2010).

Generation X (1965-1980). Generation X, commonly referred to as Gen X, was much smaller than the prior generations and ranged from 40 years old to 54 years old as of 2020. Gen X workers had a “work-to-live” mentality in response to being hit hard by the 1987 recession and stock market crash. As a result, Gen X was often motivated to take care of themselves and remained independent (Lapoint & Liprie-Spence, 2017). They preferred self-directed, independent workplaces and laid-back approaches to workplace expectations such as dress codes and a sense of work-life balance (Wiedmer, 2015).

Millennials (1981-1996). The Millennial generation ranged aged from mid-20’s to 40 as of 2020. Millennials are the largest generation in the workplace comprising over one-third of the American workforce (Fry, 2018). Millennials began to enter the workforce in 2004 (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). Gallup (2016) found Millennials seek purpose more than a paycheck and are focused more on their personal and professional development as opposed to being satisfied within a particular job. Millennial turnover

costs the U. S. economy almost \$30.5 billion every year (Gallup, 2016). Ng et al. (2010) argued that millennials “want it all and want it now” (p. 282) in terms of pay, benefits, job advancement, and contributing to society. In terms of employment, Millennials are different from other generations as they do not stay in one job for as long as previous generations did. Therefore, the turnover of Millennials does have economic implications as well as organizational impact in the workforce.

Generation Z (1997-chronological endpoint not yet established). Generation Z is referred to as Gen Z. The oldest members of Gen Z are only 23 years old as of 2020. Members of this generation are just beginning to enter the workforce. Research on characteristics of Gen Z workers described this generation as technologically savvy, globally connected online, highly educated, tolerant of diverse cultures, and tend to crave more flexibility in daily routines (Lazanyi & Bilan, 2017; Singh, 2014). Additionally, members of Gen Z workers are already cognizant of their future roles within organizations and often think of their professional future and goals (Bencsik et al., 2016). This group will quickly fill the workforce in greater numbers in the next three to five years and more information will be discovered about their work attitudes, habits, and characteristics. Since many entry-level student affairs positions require a master's degree, very few from this generation are in the current student affairs workforce.

Multigenerational Workplace Relations. It is important to understand workplace preferences and personal motivating factors of student affairs professionals in order to explore thriving within the multigenerational workplace. In general, individual characteristics such as age, personality, race/ethnicity, and gender influence job satisfaction and work-engagement potential for professionals in higher education

(Schubert-Irastorza & Fabry, 2014). However, it is equally important to be cautious not to overgeneralize the generations into stereotypes and to focus more on the distinct characteristics of each to bridge generational differences (Gibson et al., 2009).

Promoting the development of multigenerational relationships within the workforce provides profound positive impacts on organizations. Vijayalakshmi (2013) argued that integrating multigenerational skills helped organizations promote creativity, innovation, collaboration, and new ways of thinking. Acknowledging that each generation is unique and views each other based on individual traits, strengths, and experiences helps create a workforce that is a model for the next generation (Angelique, 2011). Leadership and supervisory strategies in a multigenerational workplace require flexibility to support the various needs of the different generations (Wolfe, 2019). Implementing strategies such as continued diversity training, open communication channels, and mentorships assists with leveraging multigenerational diversity in the workplace while reducing stereotypes, competition, and miscommunication (Legas & Sims, 2011). The multidimensionality of student affairs professionals in the workplace, is apparent in the different functional areas within student affairs as well.

Functional Areas of Student Affairs Professionals

Student affairs professionals are tasked with a variety of programs and functions related to educating students as the central mission of higher education (Hinton et al., 2016). Student affairs functions have expanded, especially within the last 30 years, to meet the changing needs of students and institutional priorities. Student affairs professionals report to the various administrative structures on campuses depending on the function. The expansion of student affairs functions has reflected how higher

education institutions have grown and have attempted to meet the needs of a diverse student population.

Student affairs functions in the late 1980's included academic advising, admissions and enrollment management, career planning and placement, counseling, discipline, student financial aid, health services, orientation, residence halls and student activities (Rentz & Saddlemire, 1988). Almost 30 years later, student affairs functions now include collegiate recreation, multicultural affairs, and student learning assessment while other functions have evolved such as career planning and placement merging into career services, discipline developing into student conduct, and student activities clarified into fraternity and sorority life and student life programs (Zhang & Associates, 2016). Student affairs professionals interact with students throughout a student's entire time at the university, from the point of initial interest to enrollment to major declaration to graduation (Zhang & Associates, 2016). Zhang described this process as the "a seamless system of checks and balances to move students towards graduation" (Zhang & Associates, 2016, p. 58).

The landscape of student affairs functions contained a variety of services to support students. Komives and Woodard (2003) described the unique roles of each functional area within student affairs and acknowledged student affairs functional areas can be divided within two categories: traditional and emerging. Traditional functional areas included admissions, financial aid. Schuh et al. (2003) did not identify any specific emerging functional areas but defined the term as those that are "being adopted by more institutions each year but not yet by the majority of schools" (p. 342), adding that these areas will continue to play important roles in the future of the profession. To further

clarify the work that student affairs professionals in different functional areas do, Komives and Woodard (2003) provided descriptions for many of the functional areas that will be investigated in this study.

Academic Advising. Komives and Woodard (2003) highlighted academic advising as a role that focuses on academic and professional goal exploration. They indicated that one of the primary functions of an academic advisor is to support a student academically and developmentally throughout their time in college (Komives & Woodard, 2003). Academic advisors assist students with major selection, prerequisite course information, and building long-term academic plans that map out students' paths to graduation. Many advising offices share responsibilities with other offices such as new student orientation and counseling services (Komives & Woodard, 2003).

Admissions and Financial Aid. Professionals within the admissions office of an institution are primarily responsible for the dissemination of information about an institution as well as guiding the admissions process. Komives and Woodard (2003) stated that the basic function of professionals within the admissions office is to recruit and screen prospective students for entry into an institution. Komives and Woodard (2003) added that the process of the admissions office can be complex in that it can report to either student or academic affairs and were often part of the enrollment management functions of a college or university. Financial aid offices assist students in meeting their financial obligations for the educational services they are receiving (Komives & Woodard, 2003). The assistance students receive in obtaining financial aid such as grants, loans and scholarships helps students achieve their academic goals.

Campus Recreation. Campus recreation offices, as noted by Komives and Woodard (2003), are responsible for promoting the physical health and wellness of the student body. In addition to providing spaces to physically exercise and participate in club or intramural athletics, a major emphasis of campus recreation services is to promote healthy social interaction among students (Komives & Woodard, 2003).

Career Development. As the professional job market continued to evolve and diversify, so too did the minimum educational and professional requirements for entry into many careers. Undergraduate students must prepare for a challenging job market after they graduate. Career services offices assist students with tasks such as honing basic skills and provide services which include exploration of different careers, resume writing, interview skill development, and presentation skills (Komives & Woodard, 2003). Additionally, career services professionals assist students with exploring various career paths by helping them locate internship opportunities to obtain hands-on experience within their career field of interest (Komives & Woodard, 2003).

Counseling and Health Services. Mental health among college students is a critical focus on many college campuses today. Komives and Woodard (2003), noted that “colleges and universities believe strongly in the importance of helping students work through psychological and emotional issues that may impact their academic success and personal development” (p. 345). Counseling services offices provide individual and group counseling on college campuses and many of these professionals hold licenses to provide these services (Komives & Woodard, 2003). Professionals within counseling services offices are also often responsible for responding to student crises, providing community support and outreach services, and providing counseling services for the

campus community (Komives & Woodard, 2003). Komives and Woodard (2003) indicated that counseling services offices may be combined with student health services offices. Health services offices are those that provide “immediate medical assistance to students who are ill or injured; student health services also encourage good health and provide leadership in promoting the concept of a healthy campus” (Komives & Woodard, 2003, p. 349).

Disability and Learning Support Services. Student disability support offices provide supplemental services within and outside of the classroom for students with documented disabilities. Komives and Woodard (2003) identified academic services as note taking and providing an interpreter. They added that disability support offices work to ensure physical accessibility for all students on the institution’s campus. Additionally, these offices provided students with information on understanding their rights and advising both student and academic affairs offices on disability-related matters (Komives & Woodard, 2003). Learning support service offices provide students with an array of support functions to help achieve academic success. Features of a learning support services include testing options, tutoring, study skills programs and study tables (Zhang & McCoy, 2016).

Diversity and Inclusion, International Student Services, and Veteran’s Services. Today’s college campus is a diverse mix of students of various backgrounds, ages, ethnicities, and life experiences. As a result, offices have been created to exclusively provide services for specialized populations. Komives and Woodard (2003) identified the mission of multicultural student services offices was to “welcome, support, empower, and integrate all students into the life of the campus” (p. 350). Providing both

individual, group, and campus-wide services, professionals within multicultural offices work toward building and fostering an inclusive campus climate where all students are provided opportunities to be successful, be retained, and become empowered individuals. Komives and Woodard (2003) asserted that “an emphasis is placed on the educational, cultural, personal, and social goals of each student” (p. 350).

International student services offices focus their efforts on assisting prospective and current students with ensuring they follow federal regulations regarding visa status, passport issues, and other required documentation (Komives & Woodard, 2003).

Veterans in higher education are another complex and diverse student population. Assisting veterans in making the adjustment from military life to college life involves specific supports that may not be as needed in the general student population, such as Department of Veteran’s Affairs benefits, disability support and dependent family resources (Schneider Carodine et al., 2016). These offices serve to assist specific populations with unique needs based on their backgrounds or experiences.

Enrollment Management and Registrar. Imperative to the success of any institution of higher education is the tracking of student information, trends in enrollment, and critical assessment of student retention and graduation. Student affairs professionals working in enrollment management are often required to monitor and report this information to university administration. Komives and Woodard (2003) explained the goal of enrollment management offices was:

To insure that critical areas for recruitment and retention such as admissions, records, financial aid, student research, and marketing are working together to create a comprehensive plan to enroll more students, to shape the composition of

the class, to reduce attrition rates, and develop appropriate publications, services, and electronic alternatives for interacting with the college or university. (p. 347).

University registrar professionals often work in conjunction with admissions and recruitment and are essential to the enrollment management process of an institution (Komives & Woodard, 2003). The registrar's office works to ensure that student records were being accurately maintained, protected, and disseminated properly. In addition, professionals in this office support students and other student affairs offices with enrollment and course registration (Komives & Woodard, 2003). Enrollment management offices often also include admissions and financial aid functions as well.

Housing and Residence Life. Professionals working in housing and residence life are responsible for maintaining programming and facilities for students living in on-campus housing. The professionals in housing and residence life can vary in responsibilities, from maintenance and upkeep of facilities to monitoring student conduct among residents. One recent development in the role of residence life professionals was the creation of living-learning communities for students, which provide specialized areas of housing facilities for students of similar academic majors or other interests to live and support one another within the facility (Komives & Woodard, 2003).

Student Involvement. Student participation in campus activities is a critical component in student retention and persistence (Tinto, 1993). Professionals working within student involvement offices are primarily responsible for creating opportunities for students to become immersed within a college or university's campus culture. Specifically, student involvement offices are responsible for operation and oversight of campus organizations, campus entertainment, multicultural programming, and student

clubs (Komives & Woodard, 2003). As Komives and Woodard (2003) outlined, the work of student affairs professionals is vast, comprehensive, and adapting to ensure the success of students regardless of need. This, in conjunction with the core competencies outlined in previous research (ACPA & NASPA, 2015; Burkard et al., 2005), highlights not only the important role that student affairs professionals play in student and institutional success, but also the complex responsibilities these individuals must assume in their day-to-day roles.

The researchers of this study identified 10 core functional areas of student affairs that will be directly examined. These areas were identified based on the researchers' knowledge of the university. The functional areas identified included: academic advising; admissions and financial aid; campus recreation; career development; counseling and health services; disability support and learning support services; diversity and inclusion/international student services/veteran's services; enrollment management/registrar's office; housing and residence life; student involvement; and veteran's services. Some offices were combined due to similar services they provide and small numbers of staff. For example, admissions and financial aid, while two different roles in the realm of student affairs, work collaboratively with each other in the same office at the university.

Understanding the functions of student affairs work supports an investigation of thriving in the student affairs professionals. The work of student affairs professionals is diverse, and many responsibilities can be shared among different offices. However, each has a distinct function when it comes to serving students. As student needs grow and become more complex, the support provided to students also grows and becomes more

complex. Examining the functional areas in which student affairs professionals work in addition to the generation to which they belong provided insights about thriving.

COVID-19 and Higher Education

In March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a global pandemic based on the appearance and transmission of a novel coronavirus, commonly known as COVID-19 (Cucinotta & Vanelli, 2020). The declaration of this disease as a pandemic resulted in unprecedented challenges to the world in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. As the virus spread, businesses were forced to close, public gatherings were halted, and people found themselves distanced from family and friends. Higher education was not immune to these rapid changes. Higher education administrators developed quick yet effective ways of providing quality education to students while also keeping students, faculty, and staff safe. Although scholarly research on the overall impact of COVID-19 on higher education was limited at this time, it is a topic that has begun to be reviewed to understand the response that institutions of higher education have taken to continue educating college students.

One of the more prominent changes that higher education across the United States implemented was shifting coursework to an all-online format. Viner et al. (2020) argued that school closures were one of the best ways to prevent the spread of a virus. Crawford et al. (2020) found that the United States downplayed the threat of COVID-19 initially, compared to universities in other parts of the world, but by the end of March 2020, many educational institutions began to move learning to online formats. The shift to online formats in the United States occurred over the spring break period while students were

away from campus and coincided with the declaration of the pandemic (Crawford et al., 2020). This allowed instructors time to shift their courses to an online delivery method.

The implementation and use of technology as a primary modality to deliver courses is one change that higher education adopted in 2020. However, further precautions were taken on college and university campuses to ensure the safety and success of students during COVID-19. Toquero (2020) identified solutions that institutions of higher education considered when continuing to adapt curriculum and policy for students. To help students understand the severity of the pandemic, Toquero (2020) recommended institutions begin incorporating health courses into curricula to educate students on how to address these issues in the future (2020). Additionally, Toquero (2020) suggested that institutions who remained open and accessible to students increase hygienic practices on campuses to ensure students' safety. Toquero (2020) also argued that universities should offer virtual counseling and mental health services to help students remain successful at the institution and have their psychological needs met through the institution.

There was information about how institutions have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by adapting to online course modalities and early information about the impact of this response on students and faculty. At the time of this study, information was scarce on how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the work and ongoing professional development of student affairs professionals. While course instruction was central to the mission of colleges and universities, student affairs professionals provided valuable services and support to students and the institution during the pandemic. It was crucial to consider how student affairs professionals' ability to thrive during this time was impacted.

The current research provided insight into the experience of student affairs professionals during an ongoing and widespread pandemic.

Stakeholder Perspective

Student affairs professionals, like the general workforce, face a variety of challenges which could deter them from being engaged in their work and career field. These challenges include job dissatisfaction, poor working conditions, inadequate pay, ill-fitting, work overload, lack of education for the career field and not being properly socialized for the profession (Allen et al., 2010). With the expansion of the student affairs role within higher education and the responsibility of managing increasingly complex student issues, staff burnout was identified as a top concern facing the profession (Brewer & Clippard, 2002; Marshall et al., 2016; Mullen et al., 2018; Rubin & Moreno-Pardo, 2018). These challenges also contribute to turnover or departure from a career in student affairs (Marshall et al., 2016; Mullen et al., 2018). Replacing an employee costs an organization money as well as the intangible investments such as reduced productivity, loss of institutional knowledge and cultural factors (Petrucci, 2017; Shufitinsky & Cox, 2019). These challenges warrant an exploration of thriving to provide information to stakeholders such as administrators who are generally responsible for colleges and universities, the supervisors of student affairs professionals, and graduate preparation programs as well as professional associations. This study is necessary to understand the circumstances of student affairs professionals and develop strategies to support thriving in student affairs professionals.

Administrators

The highest level of administrators or executives on college and university campuses often hold positions which include titles such as Chancellor or Vice Chancellors or similarly crafted titles. These executives are responsible for the large operational divisions which support the mission of the university and manage university resources in ways that reflect the values and vision of the university. Among the resources which these executives managed are the human resources needed to sustain the university operations. Often, these executives are called to implement and monitor progress toward the university goals to recruit, support, and retain employees.

An exploration of thriving in student affairs professionals at a university will provide executives a glimpse into the experiences of the student affairs professionals who directly provide services and support to students. It is not uncommon for institutional strategic plans to include the recruitment, support, and retention of diverse employees in response to the diverse demographic shifts seen in higher education. Further, Dwyer and Azevedo (2016) recommended that educational leaders work across generational divides and investigate organizational initiatives to navigate the multigenerational workforce. Therefore, from this study, campus administrators will gain understanding of variables which contribute to student affairs professionals thriving. How the different generations experience thriving will provide insight into characteristics which can influence the potential to thrive. Understanding more about thriving of the student affairs professionals in different functional areas can highlight workplace conditions which influence the potential to thrive. Finally, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the experiences of student affair professionals was highlighted within this study in order to provide insight

into the factors which counteract the negative impact of a global pandemic on thriving in student affairs professions.

Allen et al. (2010) examined turnover through an evidenced-based system of retention management. From that evidenced-based approach, an organization or manager has science-based information on which to develop some cause-and-effect context which can lead to changes in employee retention approaches (Allen et al., 2010). Choi and Rainey (2010) suggested that the relationship between the diverse workforce and organizational performance was affected by contextual variables such as organizational culture, team processes, average tenure, and other demographic variables. Schreiner (2010a) described thriving as being “fully engaged intellectually, socially, and emotionally” (p.4). One could make the connection that thriving in the workplace is a key factor connected to individual performance and is a variable in organizational performance, or how well one does one’s job. Armed with the results from this study, campus leaders may be called upon to renew their commitment to support student affairs professionals and facilitate structures to encourage thriving.

Supervisors and Managers

Supervisors and managers of student affairs professionals can benefit from understanding influences which promote thriving of their staff members. Student affairs professionals are supervised by mid-level or upper-level administrators who are responsible for the unit operations and development of the professionals who implement university policies and evaluating practices. Titles for these manager roles included dean, assistant or associate dean, director, assistant or associate director or coordinator or other

titles indicating supervisory responsibilities. These managers are usually in constant contact with the professionals who provide direct services to students.

Managers and supervisors of student affairs professionals may gain a better understanding of predictors of thriving from examining the experiences of the staff in specific functional areas. With this understanding, supervisors can identify professional development opportunities for student affairs professionals which promote thriving. Supervisors will also be able to identify modifications to their managerial and leadership approaches to develop and support environments which promote thriving for student affairs professionals. Specifically, supervision plays a critical role in developing new student affairs professionals (Tull, 2006). Tull (2006) recommended a comprehensive training and socialization program for new employees. This was congruent with research that cites the value of professional development in student affairs (Marshall et al., 2016). Changes to onboarding processes, ensuring student affairs professionals' network, expansion of professional development, and recognition programs are strategies that result from an exploration of thriving for supervisors to implement.

Graduate Programs and Professional Associations

Faculty in academic departments who offer graduate preparation programs for a career in student affairs as well as professional associations gain insights from explorations of thriving in practicing student affairs professionals. Graduate programs deliver educational experiences to prepare students for careers in student affairs. They deliver curriculum and experiences that support the skills and knowledge to develop competencies needed to be effective student affairs professionals. Understanding how student affairs professionals experience thriving can assist faculty in developing

educational experiences which prepare entry-level professionals to thrive throughout the duration of their careers. Similarly, professional associations for student affairs professionals can capitalize on understanding the constructs which support thriving and incorporate that knowledge into broadly available and meaningful professional development experiences.

From information gained through this study, strategies and tactical approaches can be developed which will increase thriving in student affairs areas that are relevant to the variety of generations and institutions. Use of the knowledge generated by this study may support ways in which supervisors and managers recruit, onboard, train, and develop their staff with the goal of keeping student affairs professionals engaged in the student affairs profession. Knowledge about the conditions under which student affairs staff thrive provides a platform from which to make institution-level changes to human resource policies, procedures, and practices.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter the researchers introduced literature on thriving at work, described the conceptual framework and supporting literature for this proposed study, explored the background of student affairs professionals within higher education, and provided details of the demographic characteristics of the study participants to establish context. The impact of COVID-19 on higher education has also been explored. The conceptual framework is based on Seligman's (2011) model of well-being. The PERMA constructs of positive emotion (P), engagement (E), relationships (R), meaning (M) and accomplishment (A) all combine to support the ultimate outcome of well-being: flourishing or thriving (Seligman, 2011). This model has been used by Schreiner to

develop an instrument to study thriving in staff and administrators in higher education. As a conceptual framework in which to study the level of thriving in student affairs professionals, Seligman (2011) provided a holistic lens through which thriving is viewed.

Thriving has been explored in the workplace, but not specifically in the population of student affairs professionals. Given the level of responsibility placed on student affairs professionals for the key services they provide to students and the variety of ways student affairs professionals support the education and development of college students, the concern for the level of thriving in student affairs professionals is present in daily interactions between the authors of this study and their staff. There is significant concern that student affairs professionals are not engaged or continuing to learn new and better ways to serve students, or that staff are burned out or no longer find helping students to be rewarding. Previous scholarship as well as direct observations and experiences support these concerns. Student affairs professionals who are not thriving could negatively impact student experiences and may directly and negatively impact a higher education institution's ability to serve students.

While thriving has been studied in other contexts, there was little attention to the topic of thriving in student affairs professionals and their experiences with positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. Exploring thriving in student affairs professionals at one institution provided an opportunity to discover the extent of thriving and to highlight potential strategies to address turnover, burnout, general job dissatisfaction, and career discontent. The resulting discussion informed relevant stakeholders of opportunities for potential process improvements, supervision and professional development, and educational to enhance the experiences of student

affairs professionals in the field. Further, the study called for ongoing research on thriving over time for current generations and successive generations.

In chapter Three the researchers will explain the methods that were used to explore the thriving experiences of student affairs professionals as well as the research and analysis procedures. Chapter Four includes results and findings, while Chapter Five extends a discussion of the findings as well as relevant action items that address the problem of practice.

Chapter Three

Methods and Design for Action

Student affairs professionals provide critical services to ensure student success. While job dissatisfaction and burnout occur in these positions, there are those who are thriving as student affairs professionals. The purpose of this study is to explore the experience of thriving for student affairs professionals to discover which constructs and predictors are related to their level of thriving. The researchers in this study examined Seligman's PERMA (2011) constructs (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, and accomplishment) and their impact on thriving to better understand the experiences of thriving in student affairs professionals. In turn, the researchers used data gathered from student affairs professionals' experiences to promote changes to the onboarding, training, and overall retention of student affairs professionals. In this study, thriving was defined as positive engagement in meaningful work, connecting to others at a deeper level, and being optimistic about one's present and future life (L. Schreiner, personal communication, October 11, 2020). This exploration was propelled by a multidimensional framework of thriving that provided a more holistic view of the experience of thriving for student affairs professionals.

To achieve this purpose, the researchers of this study explored which constructs contributed to thriving in student affairs professionals. Additionally, the researchers examined experiences which predicted thriving for student affairs professionals, including the impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic in 2020. Lastly, the researchers reviewed the impact of key demographic variables to better understand thriving student affairs professionals. It was expected that this exploration of thriving among student

affairs professionals will assist in answering the research questions and propel the development of a more sustainable workplace in which more student affairs professionals will thrive.

Student affairs professionals play important roles at colleges and universities by delivering important services and supporting the education and development of students. Some student affairs professionals experience job dissatisfaction, burnout, stress, and ultimately turnover. In contrast, there are student affairs professionals who are engaged, motivated and thrive in their chosen career field. The researchers sought to better understand the experiences of thriving for student affairs professionals and to develop ways to support student affairs professionals who are not thriving. Understanding the experiences of thriving in student affairs professionals can support improvements to workplace culture that may meet each professional's needs and contribute to a positive work environment that addresses the problems of job satisfaction, burnout, stress, and turnover. It is important to note that the experience of thriving for student affairs professionals has not been explored in a scholarly study. Of course, there is literature and research, theory, and opinions about the career field of student affairs and the job satisfaction, burnout, stress, and turnover of those professionals (Allen et al., 2010; Howard-Hamilton et al., 1998; Lorden, 1998; Rosser & Javinar, 2003). However, there is no exploration of the positive aspects which impact thriving in the careers of student affairs professionals.

In this chapter, the researchers explained the research design and reviewed the research questions. The participants were described, and the timeline and instrument used

were presented. The implementation phase included the method of data collection and the analysis plan for the data was described.

Research Design and Research Questions

The researchers of this study utilized an explanatory quantitative method design for data collection, results, and analysis. The explanatory quantitative method was selected to explore the under researched area of thriving in student affairs professionals (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researchers used the data collected to help explain how student affairs professionals experience thriving. The researchers looked at the data with a postpositivist worldview and utilized a quantitative survey. The postpositivist worldview acknowledges that research on human behavior needs to be truthful and not watered down (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). “Survey research provides quantitative or numeric descriptions of trends, attitudes, or opinions in a population by studying a sample of the population” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 12). The study variables were identified related to questions and tested with statistical procedures.

The researchers in this study explored the following research questions about student affairs professionals’ construction of thriving in the workforce:

RQ1: How do student affairs professionals experience thriving?

RQ2: How strongly correlated are the PERMA constructs (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments) with thriving for student affairs professionals?

RQ3: What predictors (psychological sense of community, spirituality, institutional integrity, and commitment to staff welfare) significantly impact thriving for student affairs professionals?

RQ4: How does thriving differ amongst different generations and functional areas of student affairs professionals?

RQ5: What impact has the COVID-19 global pandemic had on thriving for student affairs professionals?

Participants

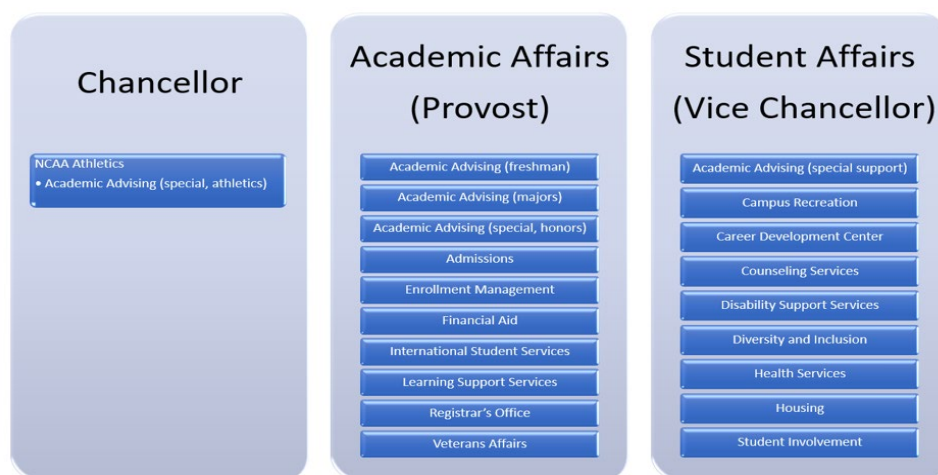
The participants in this study were student affairs professionals at a midwestern four-year university. To preserve anonymity, the study location is referred to as Thriving University. Thriving University was selected because several members of the research team have working knowledge of the university, the size of the university, the presence of a variety of student affairs professionals, and the sample population. Therefore, Thriving University was a convenient and available study location for the researchers. Participants were currently employed at Thriving University and identified based on their role in a student affairs functional area. Participants held a position that was considered entry-level or higher, that required a bachelor's degree or higher.

This study used a non-probability sampling method using a convenience sample. A non-probability sampling method was appropriate as the participants were selected "based on their convenience and availability" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 150). The sample for this study were student affairs professionals at a four-year midwestern public university. It was anticipated that the characteristics of the sample would mirror those of the entire employee population at Thriving University. The sample was expected to be largely female (60%). Racial breakdown of the sample was expected to be 77% white, 13% black and 10% as other non-white races. The other races were not disaggregated in publicly available information.

The student affairs professionals selected for this study aligned with the functional areas described in *Rentz's Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education* (Zhang & Associates, 2016). These functional areas highlighted that student affairs crosses both the academic affairs and student affairs areas and are involved in a wide range of services and co-curricular activities that support student success. Entry-level, mid-level, and senior level student affairs professionals in the functional areas distributed among the chancellor's office, academic affairs, and student affairs organizational reporting lines were included. The student affairs functional areas included academic advising, admissions, campus recreation, career development, counseling, disability support services, diversity and inclusion, enrollment management, financial aid, health services, housing, international student services, learning support services, registrar's office, student involvement, and veterans' affairs. The organizational reporting lines for these areas can be found in Figure 1. Positions that are classified as administrative support, data processing, or faculty were not included in this study.

Figure 1.

Organization Chart of Thriving University



Note: This graphic shows the organizational chart for Thriving University and displays the reporting line for the functional areas that will be included in this study.

With the assistance of the Institutional Research Office at Thriving University, the researchers of this study anticipated approximately 190 potential participants, out of 1,481 overall staff, in the functional areas that met the criteria for this study. The assumption was that the participants most likely fell within the expected demographic characteristics identified for this study. All 190 identified staff members received an invitation sent to their work email address to complete the survey. Prior to the implementation of the study, the researchers obtained current names and email addresses of the individuals in the positions identified, as there was the potential for changes in personnel prior to the start of data collection.

Instrument

The authors of this study used the Thriving Quotient for Staff and Administrators (TQ-SA) (Appendix A) to measure thriving among student affairs professionals. This instrument was framed for staff and administrators in higher education based on previous research and instruments created by Dr. Laurie Schreiner to measure the thriving of faculty members, undergraduate students, and graduate students. The TQ-SA used in this study explored similar areas of thriving that were investigated in Schreiner's (2010a) original study of thriving among undergraduate students.

Thriving Quotient (TQ)

The Thriving Quotient (TQ) was first introduced for validation in 2008 (Schreiner et al., 2009). Pilot testing of the TQ started as "a 198-item instrument that was pilot tested on 2,474 undergraduates at 13 institutions in the spring of 2008" (Schreiner et al., 2009, p. 8). In the pilot study Schreiner and colleagues (2009) explored 14 different thriving constructs which included: (a) engaged learning, (b) citizenship, (c) openness to diversity,

(d) mindset, (e) psychological well-being, (f) academic self-efficacy, (g) perceived academic control, (h) meaning in life, (i) mindfulness, (j) sense of community, (k) hope, (l) optimism, (m) resiliency, (n) subjective well-being, and (m) self-regulated learning.

Utilizing a principal component analysis, Schreiner et al. (2009) eliminated survey items that loaded on more than one component or had a Cronbach alpha score of less than .40. Items with Cronbach alpha scores of less than $r = .40$ or standard deviations of below 1.0 were eliminated (Schreiner et al., 2009). Additional feedback on the TQ survey was provided via student focus groups and feedback was taken into consideration to adjust the survey appropriately for college students. Finally, a confirmatory factor analysis determined that the TQ consisted of five factors that reflected universal components of thriving: (a) engaged learning, (b) diverse citizenship, (c) academic determination, (d) positive perspective, and (e) social connectedness (Schreiner et al., 2009). Cronbach alpha scores ranged from .80 to .85 and the internal consistency of the entire instrument resulted in a Cronbach alpha of .91 (Schreiner et al., 2009).

Once developed and validity was verified, Schreiner (2010a) used the TQ to examine levels of thriving in undergraduate college students. The TQ for the undergraduate college student study was described as “a reliable and valid 35-item instrument that measures the changeable psychological qualities in students that affect their ability to optimize their college experience” (Schreiner, 2010b, p. 2). It explored the five constructs of (a) engaged learning, (b) academic determination, (c) social connectedness, (d) diverse citizenship, and (e) positive perspective. Since 2010, an additional four constructs have been added in subsequent versions of the instruments. The

four additional constructs included (a) sense of community, (b) spirituality, (c) institutional integrity, and (d) outcomes measures (Schreiner, 2010a).

In all prior instruments, each construct measure was determined from mean scores found from asking between two and six survey questions per construct. Survey items consisted of Likert-style scales that asked students to rank questions with a score of 1 to 6, with 1 (*strongly disagree*) and 6 (*strongly agree*). Some items were reverse coded to ensure reliability. Examples of questions noted by Schreiner (2010a) included, “I feel energized by the ideas I am learning in most of my classes”, “I am confident I will reach my educational goals”, and “It’s important to me to make a contribution to my community.” Reliability for eight of the nine constructs were reported as follows: (a) engaged learning, $\alpha = .87$; (b) academic determination, $\alpha = .82$; (c) social connectedness, (d) $\alpha = .83$; diverse citizenship, (e) $\alpha = .79$; positive perspective, (f) $\alpha = .78$; sense of community, (g) $\alpha = .85$; spirituality, (h) $\alpha = .93$ (Schreiner, 2010a). The coefficient alpha for reliability for the construct of outcomes measures was not indicated in the article.

The researchers of this study contacted Dr. Laurie Schreiner, the originator of the TQ and obtained approval to use the TQ (See Appendix B). Dr. Schreiner responded positively and discussed the process for obtaining approval to utilize the TQ (See Appendix C). Dr. Schreiner suggested modifying the faculty and graduate student surveys to apply to use for student affairs professionals. Dr. Schreiner provided revisions from the faculty and graduate student survey questions that shifted the focus from student and faculty thriving to staff and administrators. Therefore, the staff and administrator version of the TQ measured thriving for student affairs professionals in this study. The authors of this study agreed to share all study results with Dr. Schreiner as part of her

ongoing research of thriving. The authors indicated this during the IRB approval process for both the University of Missouri Saint Louis and Thriving University. The authors of this study submitted all required documents to Dr. Schreiner for approval to use the TQ-SA instrument and received final approval to move forward with the use of the assessment tool (See Appendix C).

Thriving Quotient for Staff and Administrators (TQ-SA)

The authors of this study used a version of Schreiner's TQ (2010a) that focused on staff and administrators in higher education. This instrument was provided to the research team by Dr. Schreiner (personal communication, September 30, 2020). The TQ-SA incorporates Seligman's (2011) PERMA constructs to investigate thriving, identified predictor variables for thriving specific to staff and administrators, and an outcome variable based on the COVID-19 pandemic. The TQ-SA (Appendix A) consisted of questions that align to the following sections: (a) demographics, (b) PERMA constructs of thriving, (c) Schreiner's identified predictors of thriving, (d) Schreiner's identified outcome of thriving as impacted by COVID-19, and (e) supplemental information. The TQ-SA contains a total of 54 items. A description of the questions within each section is included below.

Demographics Section

The demographics section of the survey contained two questions (IV11 to IV12). Demographic questions were collected on characteristics of each respondent including (a) generation (IV11) and (b) functional area (IV12). Due to the small numbers of student affairs professionals in some functional areas, the areas were clustered based on commonalities of services provided by the units to increase the sample size for this

variable. The number of student affairs professionals at Thriving University within each cluster was: 73 in student success, 35 in student enrollment, 30 in student engagement and 32 in student support. The demographic values assisted with analyzing the data to explore how generations or functional areas impact student affairs professionals' thriving.

PERMA Constructs of Thriving Section

The PERMA section of the survey was original to the TQ-SA and assessed five of the independent variables in this research study. This section contains a total of 20 questions. The questions related to a specific construct and were used to develop a mean for the specific construct. As a result, the data analysis examined independent variables that were aligned with Seligman's (2011) PERMA thriving constructs of (a) positive emotion – P (IV1), (b) engagement – E (IV2), (c) relationships - R (IV3), (d) meaning – M (IV4), and (e) accomplishment – A (IV5). Participants were asked to rank their thoughts and feelings through Likert style scales from 1 to 6, with 1 (*Strongly Disagree*), 2 (*Disagree*), 3 (*Somewhat Disagree*), 4 (*Somewhat Agree*), 5 (*Agree*), and 6 (*Strongly Agree*). Questions on the survey that measured the PERMA constructs included “I feel energized by my work at this institution,” “I am able to do what I love much of the time at this institution,” “My immediate supervisor cares about me as a person,” “I feel valued by my colleagues,” and “I look for the best in situations, even when things seem hopeless.”

Together, the PERMA constructs determined thriving in an individual. The mean of the five PERMA constructs provided the overall thriving (DV) level. By examining the overall concept of thriving measured by the combination of the constructs, the

researchers were able to identify specific constructs that contributed to thriving or did not and how to support student affairs professionals in those areas.

Schreiner's Predictors of Thriving Section

The predictors section of the survey section of the survey was original to the TQ-SA and assessed four of the independent variables in this research study. This section contained a total of 18 questions that measured what Schreiner described as predictor variables of thriving: psychological sense of community (IV6), spirituality (IV7), institutional integrity (IV8), and commitment to staff welfare (IV9). There are three to eight questions that aligned with each of the predictors of thriving. These questions allowed participants to identify how often they experience different emotions at work. Like the first section of the survey, participants were asked to rank their thoughts and feelings through Likert style scales from 1 to 6, with 1 (*Strongly Disagree*), 2 (*Disagree*), 3 (*Somewhat Disagree*), 4 (*Somewhat Agree*), 5 (*Agree*), and 6 (*Strongly Agree*). Participants responded to items such as "I feel like I belong here," "My spiritual or religious beliefs provide me with a sense of strength when life is difficult," "This institution was accurately portrayed to me during the hiring process," and "Diverse perspectives are valued within this institution." These questions aimed to help the authors understand the respondent's emotional experiences as a student affairs professional.

Questions related to each PERMA construct and Schreiner's predictor of thriving were randomized. This ensured that participants were not aware of the specific category (constructs or predictors) that each question aligned to and were not influenced by their perception of the overall category. The researchers combined the questions to the specific category during the data analysis phase of the study.

COVID-19 Section

The COVID-19 section was original to the TQ-SA and was used to assess one independent variable in this research study. There was a total of seven questions in this section to assess what Schreiner had identified as the COVID-19 global pandemic outcomes (IV10). For the first three questions in this section, participants were asked to rank their thoughts and feelings through Likert style scales from 1 to 6, with 1 (*Strongly Disagree*), 2 (*Disagree*), 3 (*Somewhat Disagree*), 4 (*Somewhat Agree*), 5 (*Agree*), and 6 (*Strongly Agree*). Participants responded to items such as “Overall, senior leadership has done a good job helping staff adapt to the changes at the institution brought on by the spread of COVID-19.”

For the next four questions in the COVID section, participants were asked to rank their thoughts and feelings through Likert style scales from 1 to 6, with 1 (*Very Dissatisfied*), 2 (*Dissatisfied*), 3 (*Somewhat Dissatisfied*), 4 (*Somewhat Satisfied*), 5 (*Satisfied*), and 6 (*Very Satisfied*). Participants responded to items such as “The timeliness of the communication you’ve received from this institution about its ongoing responses to COVID-19.”

The researchers combined these two scales into one quantitative measure for the COVID-19 global pandemic variable (IV10) because each scale followed parallel low to high values on the 6-point Likert scale. In addition, this scoring approach aligned with the data analysis established by the other variables of the TQ-SA. This allowed for consistency throughout the instrument and scoring. A COVID-19 score for each participant was created from the seven questions related to the COVID-19 global pandemic variable (IV10).

Supplemental Section

The survey included several supplemental items that were original to the TQ-SA. While this data was collected, only data from the open-ended questions were analyzed as a part of this study. The extra questions included three questions that measured positive emotion on a different Likert scale than the previous positive emotion section. The three questions required participants to respond on a 6-point Likert scale, with 1 (*Never*), 2 (*Rarely*), 3 (*Occasionally*), 4 (*Often*), 5 (*Frequently*) and 6 (*Always*).

There was one question that asked participants to rate their own level of thriving using a Likert scale from 1 to 6, with 1 (*Not Even Surviving*), 2 (*Barely Surviving*), 3 (*Surviving*), 4 (*Somewhat Thriving*), 5 (*Mostly Thriving*), and 6 (*Consistently Thriving*). The last three questions were open-ended questions: “What has happened this semester that has shaped your assessment of your own thriving?,” “How has your thriving here changed over the past year?,” and “How has COVID-19 affected your ability to thrive in your role at this institution?”

Instrument Scoring

Within the survey instrument, participants responded to a randomized series of questions. The response options for each question were on a 6-point Likert-scale. While the typical Likert scale has 5 points (Fink, 2017), Schreiner designed the TQ using the forced-choice method, meaning there was not a neutral or “neither agree nor disagree” option. Respondents were forced to select a positive or negative response. The TQ-SA followed the same rationale using a 6-point scale for each question. An overall thriving measure was generated from the mean of the 20 questions that corresponded to the five PERMA constructs in the survey. This provided the measure of the dependent variable

used in the data analysis. Similarly, the measures for the independent variables were generated by the mean scores for each of the questions assessing the five constructs, three predictors, and COVID-19 outcome as well as the demographic questions. Mean scores were used to analyze the data to explore and answer the research questions.

Instrument Reliability and Validity

A test for significance allows researchers to evaluate whether something more than chance produced the differences seen in the data (Killion, 2017). Schreiner (personal communication, October 11, 2020) used a Cronbach alpha to assess reliability of the questions within each construct and throughout the TQ-SA instrument. The reliability coefficient provided by the Cronbach alpha falls between zero and one (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). An alpha score of 0.70 or higher is considered an optimal measure of internal consistency, which showed that “sets of items on an instrument behave in the same way” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 154). A high alpha score, 0.70 or higher, is an indicator of high correlation or high-test items. A low alpha, a score under 0.70, indicates that there is not a high level of correlation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Schreiner (personal communication, October 11, 2020) provided validation and reliability statistical analysis for the TQ for faculty which was closest to the TQ-SA instrument used in this research study. Since only small language changes were made to the instrument to administer to student affairs professionals, the same measures of reliability and validity found from the TQ for faculty were used for the TQ-SA. According to Schreiner (personal communication, October 11, 2020), the correlation coefficient alpha for the TQ for faculty was .94.

Threats to Validity

For this study a potential threat to internal validity could have occurred within the selection of participants. A convenience sample was used for this study. This study relied on self-reported information from participants and the researchers trusted that the responses submitted reflected true experiences. Another example of a threat to validity could have occurred if survey participants communicated with one another and potentially influenced the responses of the participants. Time of year could have also threatened the validity. Student affairs professionals may experience periods during the school year that naturally cause more stress than at other times of the year (registration, graduation, move in, orientation, beginning of the semester, end of the semester, etc.). If the survey outreach was launched during one of these stressful periods during a time when some student affairs functional areas or some student affairs professionals were historically busier, those emails might have been overlooked. Student affairs professionals may not have taken the time to open the email and complete the survey in a timely manner. The timing of survey administration could have also impacted the stress levels of individual student affairs professionals and, subsequently, the measure of thriving based on job duties at the time.

Another threat to validity was the unknown ways in which COVID-19 might have impacted the 2020-21 academic school year during which this research was conducted. Many student affairs professionals were working completely remotely or working a combination of in-office and remote work, through the spring 2021 semester. Roughly 80% of Thriving University classes were offered online during the fall 2020 and spring 2021 semesters. This change from traditional operations may have forced student affairs

professionals at Thriving University to reimagine their work environment and find new ways to support students in a remote setting. The realities and unknown factors of working during a global pandemic may have impacted both the participation in and results of this study. The budget implications of the Thriving University's COVID-19 response may have also impacted the results. The financial situation or future decisions at the time data was collected could not have been predicted by the researchers.

Analysis Variables

As noted earlier, this study was an explanatory quantitative approach to study thriving in student affairs professionals. The variables of this study were explored using the data gathered using the TQ-SA (see Appendix A), which was designed to assess overall thriving and the supporting constructs as well as predictors. The dependent variable was overall thriving (DV) and was measured by the mean of the questions distributed among the PERMA constructs (positive emotion (IV1), engagement (IV2), relationships (IV3), meaning (IV4), and accomplishment (IV5)). The independent variables were the five PERMA constructs that supported overall thriving (positive emotion (IV1), engagement (IV2), relationships (IV3), meaning (IV4), and accomplishments (IV5)); the four Schreiner-identified predictor variables (psychological sense of community (IV6), spirituality (IV7), institutional integrity (IV8), and commitment to staff welfare (IV9)); the COVID-19 global pandemic variable (IV10); and demographics (generation (IV11) and functional area (IV12)) of the student affairs professionals. The independent variables were classified as predictor variables because they were thought to “predict an outcome of interest” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 51) in this study.

For data analysis, each variable (dependent and independent) was converted to numerical scores for analysis. The analysis variables and the survey questions associated with the questions included below to inform the data analysis procedures. The survey instrument, printed with permission of Dr. Schreiner, is found in Appendix A. Table 1 was prepared to outline the variables, definitions, and coding calculations for the study variables that were used in the data analysis. There were several items on the TQ-SA that the researchers were required to include by Dr. Schreiner but were not used in data analysis. Those items were excluded from Table 1 but can be seen in the supplemental section of the instrument in Appendix A.

Table 1

Description of Variables and Coding

Variable	Definition and coding
Thriving - TB (DV) Continuous	First-order variable composed of the mean for the 20 thriving construct items including: Positive Emotion (P), Engagement (E), Relationship (R), Meaning (M), Accomplishment (A).
Construct: Positive Emotion - P (IV1) Continuous, Interval	Latent variable comprised of seven items measured on a 6-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 (<i>strongly disagree</i>) to 6 (<i>strongly agree</i>). The items include: (a) I look for the best in situations, even when things seem hopeless (P-BEST), (b) I really enjoy being a staff or administrator here (P-ENJOY), (c) I am optimistic about this institution's ability to weather the challenges facing higher education (P-OPTIMISTIC), (d) I tend to believe that things will eventually work out for me, if I invest enough effort (P-BELIEVE). <i>P=mean (P-BEST, P-ENJOY, P-OPTIMISTIC, P-BELIEVE)</i>

Construct: Engagement - E (IV2) Continuous, Interval	Latent variable comprised of four items measured on a 6-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 (<i>strongly disagree</i>) to 6 (<i>strongly agree</i>). The items include: (a) I feel energized by my work at this institution. (E-ENERGY), (b) The vision established by the senior leadership of this institution is motivating to me. (E-VISION), (c) I tend to become so absorbed in my work that I lose track of time. (E-TIME), (d) I enjoy my work. (E-ENJOY). <i>E=mean (EL-ENERGY, E-VISION, E-TIME, E-ENJOY)</i>
Construct: Relationship - R (IV3) Continuous, Interval	Latent variable comprised of four items measured on a 6-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 (<i>strongly disagree</i>) to 6 (<i>strongly agree</i>). The items include: (a) I have a positive working relationship with the administrators with whom I interact at this institution (R-POSITIVE), (b) I have good friends at this institution (R-FRIENDS), (c) My immediate supervisor cares about me as a person (R-SUPERVISOR), (d) I receive the support I need from my co-workers at this institution (R-SUPPORT). <i>R=mean (R-POSITIVE, R-FRIENDS, R-SUPERVISOR, R-SUPPORT)</i>
Construct: Meaning - M (IV4) Continuous, Interval	Latent variable comprised of four items measured on a 6-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 (<i>strongly disagree</i>) to 6 (<i>strongly agree</i>). The items include: (a) My work gives me a sense of meaning or purpose in my life (M-PURPOSE), (b) I believe I make a difference in the lives of students at this institution (M-DIFFERENCE), (c) I feel valued by my colleagues (M-COLLEAGUE), (d) My values are aligned with the mission of this institution (M-ALIGN). <i>M=mean (M-PURPOSE, M-DIFFERENCE, M-COLLEAGUE, M-ALIGN)</i>
Construct: Accomplishment - A (IV5) Continuous, Interval	Latent variable comprised of four items measured on a 6-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 (<i>strongly disagree</i>) to 6 (<i>strongly agree</i>). The items include: (a) I tend to achieve the meaningful goals I set for myself in my work at this institution (A-MEANING), (b) I am able to do what I love much of the time at this institution (A-LOVE), (c) My immediate supervisor has given me positive feedback about my work in the last month (A-FEEDBACK), (d) I feel good about what I have accomplished so far in my role at this institution (A-GOOD). <i>A=mean (A-MEANING, A-LOVE, A-FEEDBACK, A-GOOD)</i>

<p>Predictor: Psychological Sense of Community – SoC (IV6) Continuous, Interval</p>	<p>Latent variable comprised of eight items measured on a 6-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 (<i>strongly disagree</i>) to 6 (<i>strongly agree</i>). The items include: (a) I am proud to represent this institution in the broader academic community (SoC-REPRESENT), (b) I feel like I belong here (SoC-BELONG), (c) There is a solid sense of trust between the faculty, staff, and administration here (SoC-TRUST), (d) I feel supported by the administration of my institution (SoC-SUPPORT), (e) I have an opportunity to participate in institutional decision-making processes at my institution (SoC-DECISION), (f) My opinions matter to the leadership of my institution (SoC-OPINIONS), (g) There is a spirit of collegiality among the faculty, staff, and administration (SoC-SPIRIT), (h) There is effective communication across my institution (SoC-COMMUNICATION). <i>SoC=mean (SoC-REPRESENT, SoC-BELONG, SoC-TRUST, SoC-SUPPORT, SoC-DECISION, SoC-OPINIONS, SoC-SPIRIT, SoC-COMMUNICATION)</i></p>
<p>Predictor: Spirituality - Sp (IV7) Continuous, Interval</p>	<p>Latent variable comprised of three items measured on a 6-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 (<i>strongly disagree</i>) to 6 (<i>strongly agree</i>). The items include: (a) My spiritual or religious beliefs provide me with a sense of strength when life is difficult (Sp-STRENGTH), (b) My spiritual or religious beliefs are the foundation of my approach to my work at this institution (Sp-FOUNDATION), (c) My spiritual or religious beliefs give meaning/purpose to my life (Sp-MEANING). <i>Sp=mean (Sp-STRENGTH, Sp-FOUNDATION, Sp-MEANING)</i></p>
<p>Predictor: Institutional Integrity – II (IV8) Continuous, Interval</p>	<p>Latent variable comprised of three items measured on a 6-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 (<i>strongly disagree</i>) to 6 (<i>strongly agree</i>). The items include: (a) Overall, the actions of faculty, staff, and administrators at this institution are consistent with the mission of the institution (II-MISSION), (b) My experiences at this institution so far have met my expectations (II-EXPECTATIONS), (c) My institution was accurately portrayed to me during the hiring process (II-HIRING). <i>II=mean (II-MISSION, II-EXPECTATIONS, II-HIRING)</i></p>
<p>Predictor: Commitment to Staff Welfare - C (IV9) Continuous, Interval</p>	<p>Latent variable comprised of four items measured on a 6-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 (<i>strongly disagree</i>) to 6 (<i>strongly agree</i>). The items include: (a) The leadership of this institution is committed to the well-being of its employees (C-WELL-BEING), (b) This institution provides me with the resources I need to succeed in a multicultural environment (C-RESOURCES), (c) This institution treats staff equitably, regardless of their race, ethnicity, or gender (C-TREATMENT), (d) Diverse perspectives are valued within this institution (C-VALUED). <i>C=mean (C-WELL-BEING, C-RESOURCES, C-TREATMENT, C-VALUED)</i></p>

<p>C19/Pandemic - C19 (IV10) Continuous, Interval</p>	<p>Latent variable comprised of eight items measured on a 6-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 (<i>strongly disagree</i>) to 6 (<i>strongly agree</i>) or 1 (<i>very dissatisfied</i>) to 6 (<i>very satisfied</i>). The items include: (a) Overall, senior leadership has done a good job protecting staff from the negative health consequences of COVID-19 (C19-PROTECT), (b) Overall, senior leadership has done a good job helping staff adapt to the changes at the institution brought on by the spread of COVID-19 (C19-HELP), (c) Overall, senior leadership has shown care and concern for staff as they respond to the spread of COVID-19 (C19-CARE), (d) The timeliness of the communication you've received from this institution about its ongoing responses to COVID-19 (C19-TIME), (e) The clarity of the communication you've received from this institution about its ongoing responses to COVID-19 (C19-CLARITY), (f) The support you've received from this institution to help you to revise your classes to a remote format when needed (C19-SUPPORT), (g) The information you've received about how changes in response to COVID-19 will impact the institution's future viability (C19-INFO).</p> <p><i>C19=mean (C19-PROTECT, C19-HELP, C19-CARE, C19-TIME, C19-CLARITY, C19-SUPPORT, C19-INFO)</i></p>
<p>Generation - GENERATION (IV11) Category, Nominal</p>	<p>Self-identified variable from response to item: 1=1928-1945 (Silent Generation) [leftmost circle], 2=1946-1964 (Baby Boomers) [2nd circle from left], 3=1965-1980 (Generation X) [3rd circle from left], 4=1981-1996 (Millennials) [4th circle from left], 5=1997-2012 (Generation Z) [5th circle from left].</p>
<p>Functional Area - FUNCTION (IV12) Category, Nominal</p>	<p>Self-identified variable from response to item: 1= STUDENT SUCCESS: Academic Advising/Career Development/Learning Support Services [leftmost circle], 2= STUDENT ENROLLMENT: Admissions/Enrollment Management/Financial Aid/Registrar [2nd circle from left], 3= STUDENT ENGAGEMENT: Housing & Residence Life/Student Involvement [3rd circle from left], 4= STUDENT SUPPORT: Campus Recreation/Counseling & Health Services/Disability Support Services/Diversity & Inclusion/International Student Services/Veteran's Services [4th circle from left].</p>

Implementation

All members of the research team completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative's *Research Ethics and Compliance Training* in spring of 2019. Using knowledge from this training, the research team followed all human subject standards and protocols mandated by the National Research Act (PL 93-348) and implemented by Federal Regulations (45 CFR 46) as well as the University of Missouri-St. Louis' human

subjects research process (Office of Research Administration, University of Missouri-St. Louis, 2020). The implementation of the study adhered to human subject standards and the processes outlined in this section.

Beta Testing and Institutional Review Board Approval

In advance of receiving Institutional Review Board approval, the research team created a Qualtrics version of the instrument and then beta tested the version by enlisting five student affairs professionals who were acquaintances of the research team and not included in the identified participant pool at Thriving University. The beta testers provided the authors with important information on areas to edit and revise the presentation of the instrument to ensure it was free of any grammatical and spelling errors, flowed well, and that the online survey functioned correctly. They provided additional feedback which helped the research team know if the survey items made sense and any other general thoughts on the experience of the survey instrument. The beta testing process also revealed the amount of time needed for a participant to complete the survey. Feedback about the instrument obtained from the beta testers was used by the research team to make any corrections or edits that were deemed necessary.

After the beta test and any corrections or updates to the survey, the research team sought approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at University of Missouri-St. Louis to launch the study. Once IRB approval from the University of Missouri-St. Louis was received, the research team sought IRB approval from Thriving University to implement the data collection phase of study. While waiting for Thriving University IRB approval, the researchers finalized the participant list. Working with the Institutional Research office at Thriving University and using public directories, the research team

compiled a final list of individuals who were invited to complete the survey, along with the corresponding email address.

Informed Consent

Participants provided consent (Appendix D) and voluntarily participated in this study after being fully informed of the purpose of the research and procedural details. The consent form was referenced in the e-mail invitation to participate in the survey and was embedded at the beginning of the electronic survey. Participants provided consent and were immediately routed to the survey instrument. The title of the research study, names and contact information for the dissertation committee members, and names and contact information of the principal researchers were provided to participants. The consent form also provided contact information for the University of Missouri Saint Louis's Office of Research Administration for any questions or concerns. The consent form provided participants with general information on the length of time the survey would take to complete, how the data was to be secured, and how to enter the drawing to win one of five \$25 Amazon gift cards as a way for the research team to express gratitude for their participation.

Participants were informed that the research study focused on participant experiences as student affairs professionals and their responses to the survey questions were to be kept anonymous. Participants were asked to reflect on their personal experiences in the field of student affairs and then responded to survey items. In the consent form, the researchers indicated that the research team anticipated minimal risk of harm from participation in the study but acknowledged that participants could experience feelings of discomfort or uneasiness while reflecting on their own professional

experiences in the field. Participants who experienced any discomfort during the survey were encouraged to seek assistance from the institutional employee assistance program.

Participants were informed that the research team were to provide the raw and anonymous data of participants to Dr. Laurie Schreiner for use in ongoing research on thriving. Once all data was collected from the survey and saved into an Excel document, the authors provided the data to Dr. Schreiner via email according to the agreement. While the survey was anonymous, participants had an opportunity to enter their name to be placed in the gift card drawing at the conclusion of the survey. The contact information of those who chose to participate in the drawing was kept separate from the data collected. Any identifying information was removed from the data prior to analysis to ensure anonymity of participants.

Data Collection

Data for the TQ-SA was collected via a Qualtrics survey. Participants were identified as 190 student affairs professionals from a public university in a Midwest metropolitan area. This list of student affairs professionals was obtained by the researchers of this study working with the Institutional Research office of Thriving University and using public directories. An introductory e-mail was sent to all potential participants. This email was sent from a known and respected Dean at Thriving University and introduced the study on behalf of the research team (See Appendix E). Later the same day, the research team sent the invitation to the student affairs professionals requesting their participation in the study.

The survey contained a prompt at the beginning which informed participants of the purpose of the study, its intended use for research as part of a doctoral dissertation,

reinforced confidentiality of responses as well as the anticipated length of time to complete the survey. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, with only the researchers seeing the responses of each participant. Respondent information was secured via a password protected Qualtrics account. Survey data was automatically backed up nightly. Participants were provided with a one-time link to access the survey. The survey was available for 30 days to provide adequate time for participants to complete the survey. The targeted response rate for this study was 50%. The authors of this study arrived at a 50% response rate based on Draugalis et al.'s (2008) suggestion that while there was no universally agreed upon acceptable response rate, a base of 50% is typically found to reduce response bias and nonresponse error.

To obtain as many responses as possible, the survey team sent reminders to encourage participants to complete the survey. This reminder was sent from the Qualtrics system and only sent to those participants who had not yet completed the survey. The first reminder e-mail was sent after week one. After two weeks, the second reminder e-mail was sent to participants who had not completed the survey. A final reminder was sent the week that the survey was set to be closed. The survey was closed at the conclusion of the 30-day period with 116 completed responses for a response rate of 61% (116/190).

At the conclusion of the data collection period, the data was downloaded from Qualtrics and securely stored in a password-protected Excel document that was only accessible to the authors of this study. All identifying information of participants was removed and participants were coded with a unique identifier that was used to analyze participant responses in the data analysis software. The survey was removed from

Qualtrics upon defense of dissertation, which deleted the data from the survey software. The data was controlled and owned by the researchers of this study and shared with Dr. Laurie Schreiner within 120 days of the data collection period which ended on March 18, 2021.

Email addresses of participants who chose to be entered into the drawing were downloaded into a separate Excel document. The research team randomly selected the winners of the five \$25 Amazon gift cards. Gift cards were sent to the winning recipients.

Data Analysis

After data was collected, it was downloaded into an Excel document. A total of 116 surveys were downloaded. The research team carefully reviewed and screened the data for missing answers or incomplete survey responses. The TQ-SA was calculated using the responses on the 20 questions distributed across the five PERMA constructs and any missing values from this set of questions had to be examined and discussed by the team. Fortunately, there were no missing values from this set of questions for the 116 respondents.

The goal of this research study was to understand the experience of thriving in student affairs professionals and to identify areas for improved training, supervision, and professional development to enhance thriving. Research questions were created to focus on this goal. Data analysis methods were structured to answer these research questions. Relationships between variables were explored using appropriate statistical techniques which were univariate or multivariate in nature. Based on prior research presented in the literature review, it was assumed that there was a relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables, both individually and collectively. This

assumption informed the selection of data analysis methods and assisted the researchers to identify the strengths and themes found in these relationships.

Data analysis, where appropriate, featured a null hypothesis which helped to clearly identify the significance testing needed to answer the research questions. “Null hypotheses are tested through the application of specific statistical criteria known as significance tests” (Mertler & Reinhart, 2016, p. 10) which was determined by the level of probability (p -value) and the coefficients of determination (β) for the sample. Using a decision rule based on the p -value, a null hypothesis was accepted or rejected to assist in answering the research specific question. The unique methods employed to analyze the data and answer specific research questions are provided in the remainder of this section.

Finally, overall thriving scores were generated for each participant from questions related to the PERMA constructs. These overall thriving scores fell between 1.0 (*Minimum*) and 6.0 (*Maximum*). Since thriving occurred on a continuum, the researchers examined the scores from participants to determine if student affairs professionals were thriving at lower levels or higher levels. An overall thriving score which fell within the range of 1.00 to 3.99 was interpreted as a lower level of thriving. An overall thriving score which fell within 4.00 to 6.00 was interpreted as a higher level of thriving.

Research Questions

Each research question was assessed by a specific data analysis plan guided by the sixth edition of Mertler and Reinhart’s (2016) book titled *Advanced and Multivariate Statistical Methods*. The researchers used Microsoft Excel and SAS studio as data analysis tools for this study. The data analysis plan used for each research question follows.

RQ1: How do student affairs professionals experience thriving?

To explore thriving of student affairs professionals, it was important to obtain a sense of how student affairs in this sample experienced thriving. A thriving mean, referred to as overall thriving, was calculated for each participant using Excel. Overall thriving was the mean of the Likert responses to the 20 questions across the construct categories of positive emotion, engagement, relationship, meaning and accomplishments (PERMA). For this study, overall thriving represented, for each participant, their experience of thriving. Since overall thriving was calculated based on the answers to 20 questions across the PERMA constructs, analysis of each construct will also substantiate the understanding of how student affairs professionals experience thriving. For each construct, a mean score was also calculated based on the questions which fall into that construct. Excel was used to calculate these means which were referred to as scores for each construct. Overall thriving and the means of each construct, which were continuous variables, were analyzed using SAS.

Descriptive statistics were generated, examined, and reported to understand how student affairs professionals in the sample experience thriving. Descriptive statistics reported for each of the analysis variables included mean (average of scores in distribution), median (score that divided the distribution in half), mode (most frequent score in distribution), standard deviation (average score away from the mean to measure variability), range (maximum score in distribution and minimum score in distribution), total responses for each variable, and confidence levels as measures of central tendency (Mertler & Reinhart, 2016).

The presence of a normal distribution for overall thriving and the means of the individual constructs provided additional information for analysis. Using SAS, the distributions were investigated for normality using graphical methods. Comparing the histogram of the data to a normal probability curve and examination of Quantile-Quantile (Q-Q) plots assisted in evaluating normality of the data. SAS also produced a Goodness-of-Fit test for Normal Distribution which assisted in evaluating the normality of the distributions for overall thriving and the means of the individual constructs. For this analysis, null hypotheses reflected that the results for overall thriving and the separate means of the individual constructs are normally distributed. The decision rule was if the probability of D was less than the $\alpha=0.05$ then reject the null hypotheses, otherwise do not reject the null hypotheses.

RQ2: How strongly correlated are the PERMA constructs (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments) with thriving for student affairs professionals?

The research team explored the relationships between the PERMA constructs and the overall thriving for student affairs professionals in research question two. To measure these relationships, a Pearson correlation coefficient (R) was used. Cody (2016) stated that Pearson correlation measures the “strength of the relationship between two variables” (p. 152). While there were several ways to measure these relationships, Cody (2016) stated that Pearson is the most common. One concern with a Pearson correlation coefficient was the presence of outliers (Cody, 2016). The researchers looked for outliers by visually examining the Quantile-Quantile (Q-Q) plots of the results. Extreme outliers

were checked and a decision to leave in or remove was made and reported at the time of data collection.

The null hypothesis for research question two was that no correlation existed between the PERMA constructs and overall thriving for student affairs professionals. The relationship between each PERMA construct and thriving was evaluated and there were a total of five null hypothesis, one for each of the PERMA constructs: (a) there was no correlation between positive emotion and overall thriving for student affairs professionals, (b) there was no correlation between engagement and overall thriving for student affairs professionals, (c) there was no correlation between relationships and overall thriving for student affairs professionals, (d) there was no correlation between meaning and overall thriving for student affairs professionals, and (e) there was no correlation between accomplishment and overall thriving for student affairs professionals.

The researchers used SAS Studio to run this test. A correlation matrix table was produced in order to examine the relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable. The correlation matrix table was used to examine the relationship between each of the independent variables and allow the researchers to identify any particularly strong relationships. Within the correlation matrix table, correlation value and the level of probability (*p*-value) was calculated. The *p*-value was used to verify the significance of the correlation. The correlation values were expected to fall between -1 and +1; which would indicate a positive value indicating a positive relationship between the variables (Cody, 2016). “If the correlation is a perfect predictor between the variables (i.e., $R^2 = +1.00$ or -1.00), the IV contains everything needed to know about the dependent variable” (Mertler & Reinhart, 2016, p. 170). Mertler and Reinhart (2016) note

that when these values were multiplied by 100 then R^2 was the percentage of variance. The coefficient scores for each independent variable were multiplied by 100 to determine the percentage that each independent variable contributed to thriving for this specific sample.

RQ3: What predictors (psychological sense of community, spirituality, institutional integrity, and commitment to staff welfare) significantly impact thriving for student affairs professionals?

The null hypothesis for research question three was that different predictors do not effect thriving in different ways. The relationship between predictor variables and overall thriving amongst student affairs professionals was explored to identify if the predictors impacted overall thriving and, if so, to what degree and strength were the relationships between the predictors and overall thriving. Each predictor had a set of questions that participants answered on the survey. A null hypothesis was determined for each of the four predictors (psychological sense of community, spirituality, institutional integrity, and commitment to staff welfare): (a) there was no relationship between psychological sense of community and thriving amongst student affairs professionals, (b) there was no relationship between spirituality and thriving amongst student affairs professionals, (c) there was no relationship between institutional integrity and thriving amongst student affairs professionals, and (d) there was no relationship between commitment to staff welfare and thriving amongst student affairs professionals.

A multiple linear regression test (MLR) illuminated the relationship between the continuous dependent variable of overall thriving (DV calculated from mean of items represented by IV1 through IV5) and each predictor as continuous independent variables

(IV6, IV7, IV8, and IV9). The MLR model for RQ3 had one intercept (β_0) and four slopes (β_{1-4}): $TB = \beta_0 + \beta_1\text{SoC} + \beta_2\text{Sp} + \beta_3\text{II} + \beta_4\text{C} + \epsilon$. While both positive and negative slopes may have been statistically significant, the positive or negative value indicated the relationship of the IVs impacts the DV. Following the statistical significance measures provided by Mertler and Reinhart (2016), if a coefficient score for each independent variable falls between +1.00 or -1.00 it was viewed as contributing to overall thriving for student affairs professionals. The coefficient scores for each independent variable were multiplied by 100 to determine the percentage that each independent variable contributes to overall thriving for this specific sample.

The multiple linear regression analysis supported identification of which predictors (IVs) that the sample of student affairs professionals are significant and positively correlated to the dependent variable (DV). Using the level of probability (p -value) to verify the significance of the data from the sample, the null hypothesis was rejected or accepted to answer RQ3. Further, the degree of relationship was found using the correlation coefficient percentages to determine the effect that each predictor variable (psychological sense of community (IV6), spirituality (IV7), institutional integrity (IV8), and commitment to staff welfare (IV9)) had on the dependent variable of thriving (DV). To fully answer this research question, the researchers reviewed the data to determine (a) statistical significance and (b) degree of relationship between the multiple independent variables (psychological sense of community, spirituality, institutional integrity, and commitment to staff welfare) in relation to the dependent variable of thriving.

RQ4: How does thriving differ amongst different generations and functional areas of student affairs professionals?

Using research question four, the researchers explored how overall thriving varied amongst the different generations and functional areas within the sample population of student affairs professionals at Thriving University. Two one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests identified the differences that existed between the categorical demographic independent variables (generation (IV11) and functional area of student affairs (IV12)) and their interaction with thriving dependent variable (DV). This test was appropriate because “the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests the significance of group differences between two or more means as it analyzes variation between and within each group” (Mertler & Reinhart, 2016, p. 15). The null hypothesis for research question four was that there were no differences in thriving among the different groups of generations and functional areas of student affairs professionals.

The output of the ANOVA resulted in (a) degrees of freedom, (b) *p*-value, and (c) *F* ratio for data analysis. As noted earlier, the *p*-value indicated a degree of significance would follow the decision rule of if the *p*-value < 0.05, then the independent variable category was significant. In addition, “a *F* ratio value near 1.00 indicates that the differences between the group are roughly the same as would be expected due to change” (Mertler & Reinhart, 2016, p. 73). Degrees of freedom were defined as “the number of values that are “free to vary” in a statistical calculation” (LaFountain & Bartos, 2002, p. 183). To assist with this specific question, degrees of freedom helped to explain the within group variation of the sample if there was any variation detected (Mertler & Reinhart, 2016; LaFountain & Bartos, 2002).

Depending on the outcome of the data, one of two post hoc tests might have been conducted. If the data met the homogeneity of variances, the research team was to

conduct a Tukey's honestly significant difference (HSD) posttest. Abdi and Williams (2010) noted that a significant result from the ANOVA test indicated that at least two groups differ from each other, but do not specifically state which. Implementation of a Tukey test would have provided clarity of the differences between all groups being examined in a study (Abdi & Williams, 2010). Since the ANOVA only provided the research team with overall results, the HSD was to provide the research team with information regarding the relationships or differences between specific variables which were investigated. In contrast, if the data did not meet the homogeneity of variances, then a Games Howell post hoc test was to be conducted. This posttest would have better explained the differences in confidence intervals between variables and determine which, if any, were statistically significant.

The researchers reviewed the data to detect the differences between the different categories. The answer to whether there were differences between the categories of independent variables and thriving was determined by (a) statistical significance and (b) degree of interaction between the multiple independent variables (generations and functional area of student affairs) in relation to the dependent variable of overall thriving.

RQ5: What impact has the COVID-19 global pandemic had on thriving for student affairs professionals?

To better explore the working environment of student affairs professionals, it was important to examine the current global pandemic of COVID 19 impacting everyone's life. The most recent novel coronavirus variant, COVID-19, was declared a global pandemic by The World Health Organization (WHO) in 2020 (Cucinotta & Vanelli, 2020) and disrupted many businesses, operations, and lifestyles – specifically for this

study, student affairs work within higher education. The null hypothesis for the final research question was that the COVID-19 pandemic had not impacted overall thriving. For this research question, two tests assisted the researchers in answering this question. The two tests were (a) bivariate correlation followed by (b) a simple linear regression. Reviewing the results of these two tests clarified the impact between the continuous dependent variable of overall thriving (DV found from mean of items represented by IV1 through IV5) and the continuous COVID-19 global pandemic independent variable (IV10) to answer this research question.

LaFountain and Bartos (2002) shared that the statistical indices that were to be used to indicate either positive or negative directions as well as strength of relationship between variables are called correlation coefficients. Mertler and Reinhart (2016) noted that “the Pearson correlation coefficient, the most commonly used bivariate correlation technique, measures the association between two quantitative variables” (p. 14). In contrast, a bivariate regression was to be used in predicting the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The bivariate correlation was optimal for analysis of this research question. Bivariate correlation allowed for exploration between one quantitative predictor variable (IV10) and a single dependent outcome variable (DV) (Mertler & Reinhart, 2016) and helped to determine the predictive or causal relationship between the variables. The Pearson correlation coefficient quantified the relationship between two continuous variables for data analysis (Cody, 2016).

Once a relationship was established, the researchers anticipated a certain degree of impact between the COVID-19 global pandemic outcome variable on overall thriving for student affairs professionals. A simple linear regression was to be used to determine

the degree or impact between the two variables. The expectation was that differences in the COVID-19 global pandemic variable (IV10) were to result in differences in overall thriving (DV). The output of the bivariate correlation was the Pearson correlation coefficient (R). The output of the simple linear regression was (a) p -value and (b) F ratio for data analysis. As noted earlier, the p -value indicated a degree of significance that followed the decision rule if a p -value < 0.05 , then the independent variable category was significant. The F ratio value “near 1.00 will indicate that the differences between the group are roughly the same as would be expected due to change” (Mertler & Reinhart, 2016, p. 73).

To answer RQ5, the relationship between the COVID-19 global pandemic outcome variable (IV10) and thriving (DV), the Pearson correlation coefficient from the bivariate correlation test was used. Then, a simple linear regression was used to determine the impact between the COVID-19 global pandemic variable (IV10) and overall thriving (DV) for the sample of student affairs professionals. The level of probability explained the significance of the data from the sample. The F ratio was used to determine the degree of interaction between the COVID-19 global pandemic variable (IV10) and overall thriving (DV) to determine if the null hypothesis was to be rejected or accepted.

To fully answer this research question, the researchers reviewed the data to detect the impact the COVID-19 global pandemic has had on thriving for student affairs professionals. The relationship between the two variables was determined by (a) Pearson correlation coefficient and then analyzed for impact to determine (b) statistical significance and (c) degree of interaction in relation to the dependent variable of thriving.

Themes and Improvements

Responses from three supplemental open-ended questions were used to provide insight into the quantitative results for research questions RQ1 and RQ5. The questions were: “What has happened this semester that has shaped your assessment of your own thriving?” (RQ1), “How has your thriving here changed over the past year?” (RQ1), and “How has COVID-19 affected your ability to thrive in your role at this institution?” (RQ5). The results were reviewed for common themes among the responses. The responses were ranked as being “positive,” “negative,” “neutral,” or a “combination” of both positive and negative.

The researchers of the current study examined the concept of thriving to understand more about the conditions under which student affairs professionals thrive, those conditions that did not promote thriving, and to find out where differences were. Ultimately, understanding conditions that affected thriving and the thriving of student affairs professionals was to be used to help managers, leaders, and professional organizations develop work environments that promote thriving as well as assist graduate programs in better preparing future student affairs professionals to thrive. The research questions of this study focused on exploring variables that contributed to overall thriving or may have impacted overall thriving for student affairs professionals. Based on the results found from analyzing the data gained from this study through each research question, a statistical foundation from this research was developed to advance potential improvements to optimize and support overall thriving in the student affairs workforce. It was anticipated that this research would provide a greater understanding of how overall thriving was experienced through constructs, predictors, COVID-19, and demographics

of the student affairs professionals and to improve the student affairs work experience in the future.

Chapter Summary

Research on thriving in the workplace has been based in the positive psychology movement. To explore thriving in student affairs professionals at Thriving University, Seligman's (2011) model of well-being model was used as the conceptual framework to guide this study. This model included positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment all combined to support the ultimate outcome of well-being: flourishing or thriving (Seligman, 2011). As a conceptual framework in which to study the level of thriving in student affairs professionals, Seligman (2011) provided a holistic lens through which thriving was viewed. This model was used by Schreiner (personal communication, October 11, 2020) to develop an instrument to study thriving in faculty and administrators in higher education of which the validated portions were used in this study.

Using Schreiner's Thriving Quotient for Staff and Administrators (TQ-SA) as the instrument, this study explored the research areas to determine how student affairs professionals experience overall thriving, which constructs of Seligman's (2011) well-being model contribute to overall thriving among student affairs professionals, the relationship of predictors to thriving in student affairs professionals, what differences existed in overall thriving among student affairs professionals based on the different generations and functional areas, and the impact which COVID-19 had on overall thriving for student affairs professionals. Results from the instrument were examined using appropriate data analysis techniques and presented for interpretation. It was

anticipated that while some student affairs professionals were not thriving, there had to be some who were thriving providing insight into which areas may be capitalized on to promote thriving in the work environment.

Chapter Four presents results and findings, while Chapter Five presents a discussion of action items to address the problem of practice. Ultimately, understanding conditions that affect the thriving of student affairs professionals can help managers, leaders, and professional organizations develop work environments that promote thriving as well as assist graduate programs in preparing future student affairs professionals to thrive. Supporting a thriving workforce of student affairs professionals was viewed to ensure that those professionals would be active, growing, contributing, and making positive impacts on students and supporting the endeavors of the institution. An exploration of thriving for student affairs professionals was thought to be a benefit to a variety of audiences and support sustainable workplace environments for current and future student affairs professionals.

Chapter Four

Results

Student affairs professionals are employees at colleges or universities who work in offices and divisions which support student learning and development (Long, 2012). They are at the forefront of providing critical services to ensure student success. Student affairs professionals typically include admissions and enrollment management, academic advising, housing and residence life, student activities, athletics, disability services, new student programs, and multicultural student services (Love, 2013). As a result of their work with students and the multitude of roles they play across college and university campuses, some student affairs professionals experience job dissatisfaction and burnout, which results in turnover. While job dissatisfaction and burnout occur among some student affairs professionals, there are those who are thriving as student affairs professionals. In this study, workplace thriving, referred herein as thriving is defined as positive engagement in meaningful work, connecting to others at a deeper level, and being optimistic about one's present and future life (L. Schreiner, personal communication, October 11, 2020).

The purpose of this study is to explore the experience of thriving for student affairs professionals to discover which constructs and predictors are related to their level of thriving. In conjunction with this study's purpose the researchers will examine the following research questions:

RQ1: How do student affairs professionals experience thriving?

RQ2: How strongly correlated are the PERMA constructs (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments) with thriving for student affairs professionals?

RQ3: What predictors (psychological sense of community, spirituality, institutional integrity, and commitment to staff welfare) significantly impact thriving for student affairs professionals?

RQ4: How does thriving differ amongst different generations and functional areas of student affairs professionals?

RQ5: What impact has the COVID-19 global pandemic had on thriving for student affairs professionals?

Data Collection

To examine thriving in student affairs professionals, the research team used a quantitative exploratory methodology. A quantitative research design was appropriate to obtain "quantitative or numeric descriptions of trends, attitudes, or opinions in a population by studying a sample of the population" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 12). The study variables were identified, related to questions, and tested with statistical procedures. A quantitative research design allowed the researchers to identify specific independent variables to thriving and relate those variables for analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Other benefits of a quantitative research design included the replicability of the study, focus on specific information to narrow the focus, and ability to answer research questions. The researchers were able to numerically determine the relationship of the variables to overall thriving. The research team decided to use a

quantitative research design as an existing survey was available and appropriate for use in the study population.

Framework and Instrument

The research team's exploration of thriving was propelled by a multidimensional framework of thriving to provide a more holistic view of the experience of thriving for student affairs professionals. Seligman's (2011) PERMA constructs served as the framework for this research study. In his research on authentic happiness, Seligman (2011) proposed that the constructs of positive emotion (P), engagement (E), relationships (R), meaning (M), and accomplishment (A) support the presence of flourishing, also known as thriving, for individuals. Positive emotion referred to the pursuit of a pleasant life, or overall happiness (Seligman, 2011). Seligman (2011) described the engagement construct as a state of being completely absorbed in an activity and used the term "flow" to describe this feeling. The relationship construct was based on social connectedness, such that those who are thriving have healthy connections to people who listen to them, support them, and spend time with them (Schreiner, 2010c). Meaning was defined by Seligman (2011) as "belonging to and serving something that you believe is bigger than the self" (p. 17). Accomplishment was achieving something for its own sake (Seligman, 2011). A sense of accomplishment could be a factor supporting thriving or flourishing in the work environment since employees were accomplishing tasks and experiencing successes at work.

The researchers obtained approval to use the Thriving Quotient for Staff and Administrators (TQ-SA) (Appendix C) from the instrument's author, Dr. Laurie Schreiner. Dr. Schreiner created the TQ-SA after researching thriving undergraduate,

graduate, and faculty in the higher education setting. The TQ-SA incorporated Seligman's (2011) PERMA constructs to investigate thriving, identified predictor variables for thriving specific to staff and administrators, and an outcome variable based on the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Schreiner's past and ongoing research on thriving can be found in higher education professional journals, publications, and presentations (<https://www.thrivingincollege.org/>).

For this study, the TQ-SA (Appendix A) consisted of questions that aligned to the following sections: (a) demographics, (b) PERMA constructs of thriving, (c) Schreiner's identified predictors of thriving, (d) Schreiner's identified outcome of thriving as impacted by COVID-19, and (e) supplemental information. The TQ-SA contained a total of 54 items. Demographic questions asked characteristics of each respondent including generation and functional area. The generations consisted of the Silent Generation, Baby Boomer, Generation X, Millennials and Generation Z. Student affairs professionals ranged across four functional areas which were clustered by similar work areas into student success, student enrollment, student engagement and student support.

Of the 54 items on the TQ-SA survey tool, 20 survey questions were distributed among the five PERMA constructs (four questions each): positive emotion (P), engagement (E), relationships (R), meaning (M), and accomplishment (A). Questions on the survey that measured the PERMA constructs include: (P) "I look for the best in situations, even when things seem hopeless," (E) "I feel energized by my work at this institution," (R) "My immediate supervisor cares about me as a person," (M) "I feel valued by my colleagues," and (A) "I am able to do what I love much of the time at this institution." The questions for each construct were rated on a 6-point Likert scale which

included: 1 (*strongly disagree*), 2 (*disagree*), 3 (*somewhat disagree*), 4 (*somewhat agree*), 5 (*agree*), or 6 (*strongly agree*). The scores from the questions for each construct were combined into a mean for each PERMA construct. The mean of the five PERMA constructs also provided the overall thriving.

Thriving occurs on a continuum, therefore overall thriving represented a range in which an individual thrives rather than the conclusion that an individual is thriving or not. In this study, thriving was neither on nor off but occurred on a spectrum. Furthermore, there was no level of thriving which represented a minimum desired level of thriving, but a higher overall thriving score would indicate someone was experiencing higher levels of thriving while a lower overall thriving score would indicate an individual was experiencing a lower level of thriving. It would be preferable for an individual to experience a higher level of thriving than a lower level of thriving. By examining the overall concept of thriving measured by the combination of the constructs, the researchers were able to identify specific constructs that were contributing to thriving or not and how to support student affairs professionals in these areas.

To explore four potential predictors of thriving, 18 survey questions were distributed across the different areas: psychological sense of community (8 questions), spirituality (3 questions), institutional integrity (3 questions), and staff welfare (4 questions). A 6-point Likert scale was also used for the participants to indicate if they 1 (*strongly disagree*), 2 (*disagree*), 3 (*somewhat disagree*), 4 (*somewhat agree*), 5 (*agree*), or 6 (*strongly agree*) with the survey question prompt. Participants responded to the randomly ordered predictor items which included statements such as “I feel like I belong here,” “My spiritual or religious beliefs provide me with a sense of strength when life is

difficult,” “This institution was accurately portrayed to me during the hiring process,” and “Diverse perspectives are valued within this institution.” These questions aimed to help the research team to understand the respondent’s emotional experiences as a student affairs professional. The researchers calculated a mean score for each predictor variable using the responses to the questions for each of these variables during the data analysis phase of the study.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was explored through seven survey questions in which participants provided their perspectives on how Thriving University had responded to the crisis. Participants responded to items such as “Overall, senior leadership has done a good job helping staff adapt to the changes at the institution brought on by the spread of COVID-19.” Participants were asked three supplemental questions to explore how they felt regarding their work life and one survey question was asked to discover how participants viewed their experience of thriving based on the specific definition of thriving which incorporated PERMA. Finally, to gather additional information about their experience of thriving during the COVID-19 pandemic, study participants were asked to respond to three open-ended questions.

Procedure

Utilizing a quantitative, exploratory study, the research team sent survey invitations to 190 student affairs professionals at a public university in the Midwest, referred to in this study as Thriving University. The survey included the Thriving Quotient for Student Affairs Professionals (TQ-SA) as well as demographic questions specific to this study. Additional predictors which may impact thriving were also

measured based on experiences of student affairs professionals while the COVID-19 global pandemic was occurring.

Before beginning data collection, the research team received approval from the Institutional Research Board (IRB) at the University of Missouri – St. Louis and Thriving University. A copy of IRB approval is included in Appendix F. The survey, including the TQ-SA questions, was administered via a Qualtrics electronic survey. A copy of the survey may be found in Appendix A. The survey contained informed consent prompts at the beginning to remind participants of the purpose of the study and intended use for research as part of a co-authored doctoral dissertation. The research team also reinforced confidentiality of responses as well as expectations for length of time to complete the survey. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, with only the researchers seeing the responses of each participant. The anonymous results were also shared with Dr. Schreiner. Respondent information was secured via a password protected Qualtrics account. Survey data was automatically backed up nightly. The data was controlled by the researchers of this study. Compiled data was downloaded from Qualtrics and securely stored in a password-protected Excel document that was only accessible to the authors of this study. All identifying information was removed once data was compiled. Participants were individually coded with a unique identifier that was used to analyze participant responses in the data analysis software. The survey and all respondent data were deleted upon completion of dissertation defense.

Potential participants were initially contacted in the morning of February 17, 2021 by a respected dean at Thriving University informing them of the project and encouraging participants to watch for the invitation email (Appendix E). Participants then

received the official invitation via email in the afternoon on February 17, 2021, with a link to the survey (Appendix E). The invitation email was sent to 190 potential participants, and two reminder emails were sent at week two and three of data collection. The survey was open and available to participants to complete for 30 days to provide adequate time to complete the survey. The survey closed on March 18, 2021. A total of 116 out of 190 student affairs professionals invited to participate in the study, completed the survey for a response rate of 61%. The responses to the survey were downloaded from Qualtrics and analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SAS Studio.

Participants

Thriving University was selected as the research site due to convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is used when participants are “available and willing to take the survey” (Fink, 2017, p. 94). Several members of the research team have working knowledge of the university and access to the sample population. Participants were currently employed at Thriving University and were identified by their role in a student affairs functional area holding a position that was considered entry-level or higher and required a bachelor’s degree or higher. Participants were from three generations: Baby Boomer (1946-1964), Generation X (1965-1980) and Millennial (1981-1996) generation. Most (87.1%) of the participants were from the Generation X (46.6%) or the Millennial generation (40.5%). No participants from the Silent Generation (1928-1945) and Generation Z (1997-2012) responded to the survey. Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) for the generations are shown in Table 2 and functional areas in Table 3.

Table 2*Generations*

Generation	Frequency	Percent
Baby Boomer (1946-1964)	15	12.9
Generation X (1965-1980)	54	46.6
Millennials (1981-1996)	47	40.5
Total	116	100.0

The functional areas for the 116 survey participants consisted of student success (academic advising, career development, learning support services), student enrollment (admissions, enrollment management, financial aid, registration), student engagement (housing and residence life, student involvement) and student support (campus recreation, counseling and health services, disability support services, diversity and inclusion, international student services, and veteran's services). Nearly half (46.6%) of the student affairs professionals who participated in the survey, belonged to the student success functional area.

Table 3*Functional Areas*

Functional Areas	Frequency	Percent
Student Success	54	46.6
Student Enrollment	24	20.7
Student Engagement	15	12.9
Student Support	23	19.8
Total	116	100.0

Preliminary Analysis

For this study a variety of variables were measured in order to explore thriving in student affairs professionals and to specifically answer the research questions. The

dependent variable was the overall thriving (DV) which was a calculated mean using the responses to the questions in the five PERMA constructs. One group of independent variables were the five PERMA constructs that support overall thriving: positive emotion (IV1), engagement (IV2), relationships (IV3), meaning (IV4), and accomplishments (IV5). This data from this group of independent variables, along with the data from the dependent variable, were used to answer the first and second research questions.

The second group of independent variables included the four predictor variables identified by Schreiner: psychological sense of community (IV6), spirituality (IV7), institutional integrity (IV8), and commitment to staff welfare (IV9). It was thought that these independent variables might be important predictors of overall thriving and would be considered predictor variables because they “predict an outcome of interest” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 51). This data from this group of independent variables, along with the dependent variable, were used to answer the third research question.

Two demographic independent variables were generation (IV11) and functional area (IV12) of student affairs professionals. The categorical data from these two variables along with the data from the dependent variable were used to answer research question four. The last independent variable was the COVID-19 global pandemic outcome (IV10). This variable along with the dependent variable were used to answer research question five. Additional data was collected from the supplemental questions and while the responses were not used to answer any of the research questions, the data provided some additional information about the experience of thriving of student affairs professionals during a pandemic.

Schreiner (personal communication, October 11, 2020) provided validation and reliability statistical analysis for the TQ for faculty which was closest to the TQ-SA instrument used in this research study. Since only small language changes were made to the instrument to administer to student affairs professionals, the researchers benchmarked the reliability and validity found from the TQ for faculty with the TQ-SA. Although TQ-SA is a new tool, we compared the Cronbach alpha from the TQ for faculty of 0.94 (personal communication, October 11, 2020). This score represented a reliable coefficient for optimal internal consistency (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). For this study, the Cronbach alpha of the TQ-SA was found to be 0.96. Table 4 shows the Cronbach alpha scores for each variable or item generated from more than one question within the TQ-SA. Of note, there were four questions within the supplemental section that were measured on 6-point Likert scales. These supplemental items were included in the overall instrument Cronbach alpha calculation; however, the thriving self-reported question is not included in Table 4 since it was a score generated from a single question and the Cronbach alpha cannot be calculated for a single question. The three remaining questions, the supplemental positivity questions, are included for review but not specific to the research questions of the study. Based on the 0.96 Cronbach alpha score, the TQ-SA instrument was found to be reliable for the study.

Table 4*Cronbach Alpha of TQ-SA*

Variable	Statistic (α)
Overall TQ-SA	.96
Positive Emotion (IV)	.65
Engagement (IV)	.67
Relationships (IV)	.69
Meaning (IV)	.74
Accomplishments (IV)	.63
Sense of Community (IV)	.89
Spirituality (IV)	.94
Institutional Integrity (IV)	.84
Commitment to Staff Welfare (IV)	.88
COVID-19 (IV)	.92
Supplemental Positivity Questions	.90

Note. 49 items in TQ-SA with 6-point Likert scales

The researchers considered if the interval data fields were normally distributed by running a Goodness-of-Fit test (Kolmogorov-Smirnov). A Goodness-of-Fit test is used to assess the normality of the distributions of the overall thriving and means of the PERMA constructs. Goodness-of-Fit is expressed as the probability of D (the KS test statistic). If the probability of D was less than alpha (p) = 0.05, then we rejected the null hypothesis (H_0). Since for all the variables, $p = 0.01$, which is less than $p = 0.05$, then we failed to reject H_0 and concluded the variables were not normally distributed, as noted in Table 5.

Table 5*Goodness-of-Fit Tests for Normal Distribution, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test*

Variable	Statistic (D)
Overall Thriving (DV)	.16*
Positive Emotion (IV)	.18*
Engagement (IV)	.14*
Relationships (IV)	.14*
Meaning (IV)	.18*
Accomplishments (IV)	.17*
Sense of Community (IV)	.11*
Spirituality (IV)	.16*
Institutional Integrity (IV)	.21*
Commitment to Staff Welfare (IV)	.15*
COVID-19 (IV)	.14*

Note. $N = 116$, * p -value < 0.01

Research Question Results

For each research question, a series of statistical tests were conducted. The results for each research question are provided in the next section of this chapter.

Research Question One Results

The first research question (RQ1) was “How do student affairs professionals experience thriving?” Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were utilized to address research question one. Analysis of each PERMA (positive emotion, engagement, relationship, meaning and accomplishments) construct was used to substantiate the understanding of how student affairs professionals experience thriving. Each construct was rated on a 6-point Likert scale and a mean score was calculated based on the questions which fell into each construct. Additionally, overall thriving was determined based on the mean of the Likert responses to the 20 questions across the

PERMA constructs. Overall thriving and the means of each PERMA construct, which are continuous variables, were analyzed using SAS Studio.

For the purpose of this study, thriving was interpreted based on the overall thriving mean score calculated for each participant. The overall thriving scores were generated from the PERMA questions throughout the TQ-SA. Each participant received an overall thriving score that fell between 1.0 (*Minimum*) and 6.0 (*Maximum*). Following this model, the researchers reviewed the data collected from participants to determine if student affairs professionals were thriving at lower levels or higher levels based on their overall thriving scores. An overall thriving score which fell within the range of 1.00 to 3.99 was interpreted as a lower level of thriving. An overall thriving score which fell within 4.00 to 6.00 was interpreted as a higher level of thriving. The results of this study found that 88% ($n = 102$) of participants are experiencing thriving on a higher level and 12% ($n = 14$) of participants are experiencing thriving at a lower level (Table 6).

Table 6

Overall Thriving Statistics

Thriving Scores	<i>n</i>	Frequency	Level of Thriving
Between 1.00 and 3.99	14	12%	Lower
Between 4.00 and 6.00	102	88%	Higher

Note. $N = 116$

The mean score of the overall thriving for participants in the study was 4.76 ($SD = 0.67$) out of 6.0. The mean scores for each construct were calculated based on responses to the 6-point Likert scale questions that measured each construct (Table 7). Mean scores for each PERMA construct ranged from the lowest variable average of engagement (IV2)

with 4.43 to the highest of accomplishments (IV5) with 4.90, which fell within the “very high” score range.

Table 7

PERMA Constructs and Overall Thriving Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	SD	Mode	Min	Max	Median
Positive Emotion	4.77	0.71	4.75	2.50	6.00	4.75
Engagement	4.43	0.83	4.50	2.00	5.75	4.50
Relationship	4.80	0.84	5.25	2.50	6.00	5.00
Meaning	4.89	0.77	4.75	1.75	6.00	5.00
Accomplishment	4.90	0.70	5.00	3.00	6.00	5.00
Overall Thriving	4.75	0.66	5.15	2.80	5.95	4.85

Note. $N = 116$

The open-ended questions in the supplemental section helped to better understand the context of this research question. The results were reviewed for common themes among the responses. The responses were ranked as being “positive,” “negative,” “neutral,” or a “combination” of both positive and negative. The first open-ended question was “What has happened this semester that has shaped your assessment of your own thriving?” There were 95 participants who responded to this question. Of the responses, 25% ($n = 17$) leaned towards a negative response, indicating lower thriving and 62% ($n = 43$) leaned towards a positive response, indicating a higher level of thriving. The responses were codified in themes but even within similar themes, there was a mix of positive and negative. For example, many participants listed remote work as a factor impacting their level of thriving. Some saw it as a positive aspect of thriving as it improved work/life balance and created more flexibility and freedom. Others, however,

saw the inequity of remote work situations as a negative aspect of their thriving. Other prominent themes and example quotes are provided in Appendix G.

The second open-ended question in the supplemental section was “How has your thriving here changed over the past year?” There were 92 participants who responded to this question. The responses to this question were also ranked as being “positive,” “negative,” “neutral,” or a “combination” of both positive and negative. Of the responses, 48% ($n = 42$) leaned towards a negative view of thriving while 36% ($n = 32$) leaned towards the positive. Some recurring themes were a lack of connections/relationships, a sense of unfair work distribution with some employees working in a remote format and others required to be on campus and both positive and negative aspects of work from home. Some example quotes are provided in Appendix H. It is clear from the responses that most participants who responded about a remote working environment had found ways to thrive in that environment.

Research Question Two Results

Research question two was “How strongly correlated are the PERMA constructs (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments) with thriving for student affairs professionals?” In research question two the research team used a Pearson correlation coefficient (r) to explore the relationships between the PERMA constructs and overall thriving for student affairs professionals. Cody (2016) stated that the Pearson correlation coefficient measures the “strength of the relationship between two variables” (p. 152). While there are several ways to measure these relationships, Cody (2016) stated that Pearson is the most common. One concern with a Pearson correlation coefficient was the presence of outliers (Cody, 2016). Based on the

box and whisker plots produced in the descriptive statistics, there were outliers in the overall thriving and the PERMA constructs. Since these outliers in this study were a natural part of the population response, they were not removed.

The null hypothesis for research question two was that there would be no correlation between the PERMA constructs and thriving for student affairs professionals. A correlation matrix table was produced showing the relationship for each independent variable and the dependent variable. The correlation matrix table showed the relationship between each of the independent variables and allowed the researchers to identify any particularly strong relationships. Within the correlation matrix table, correlation value and the level of probability (*p*-value) was calculated. The *p*-value verified the significance of the correlation. The correlation coefficient is expected to range from +1.00 to -1.00 (Mertler & Reinhard, 2016). Pearson correlation analysis determined a strong positive relationship between all the individual PERMA constructs of positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishments to overall thriving. A positive value (greater than zero) indicated a positive relationship between the variables (Cody, 2016). This meant that as the independent variables increased, so did the dependent variable. A correlation coefficient less than 0.35 was considered a weak correlation, 0.36 to 0.67 was considered a modest correlation, 0.68 to 1.0 was considered a high correlation (Taylor, 1990). A correlation coefficient greater than 0.90 was considered a very high correlation (Taylor, 1990). The correlation coefficients of each independent variable to the dependent variable of overall thriving are shown in Table 8.

Table 8*Pearson Correlation Analysis Between the PERMA Constructs and Overall Thriving*

PERMA Constructs	<i>r</i> -value
Positive Emotion	.84*
Engagement	.89*
Relationships	.85*
Meaning	.90*
Accomplishment	.84*

Note. $N = 116$, $*p < 0.001$

Based on the correlation values of .84 to .90, there was a high correlation between all the individual constructs and overall thriving. Based on a Pearson correlation coefficient, the relationship with the highest correlation ($r = .90$) was between the meaning construct (IV4) and overall thriving (DV). Also, based on a Pearson's correlation coefficient, the relationships with the lowest correlation with overall thriving (DV) were the positive emotion (IV1) and accomplishment (IV5) constructs ($r = .84$). Multiplying each squared coefficient score (R^2) by 100 produced the percentage of variances and indicated the percentage that each independent variable contributed to overall thriving for this sample (Mertler & Reinhard, 2016). Positive emotion contributed 71% to overall thriving, engagement contributed 79% to overall thriving, relationships contributed 72% to overall thriving, meaning contributed 81% to overall thriving, and accomplishment contributed 71% to overall thriving in this sample.

A person with a higher score of overall thriving would be likely to have a higher score on each of the individual constructs within PERMA. Given this interpretation, it seems likely that an average participant would look for the best in situations, even when things seem hopeless (one question in positive emotion), feel energized by the work at this institution (one question in engagement), have good friends at the institution (one

question in relationships), believe they make a difference in the life of students at (one question in meaning) and tend to achieve the meaningful goals they set for themselves (one question in accomplishment).

Research Question Three Results

Research question three (RQ3) was “What predictors (psychological sense of community, spirituality, institutional integrity, and commitment to staff welfare) significantly impact thriving for student affairs professionals?” To determine the relationship between the continuous dependent variable of overall thriving (DV) and each of the independent variable predictors, a multiple linear regression was conducted. The predictors were psychological sense of community (IV6), spirituality (IV7), institutional integrity (IV8), and commitment to staff welfare (IV9). The null hypothesis determined for each of these predictors was that there was no relationship between the predictors and overall thriving of student affairs professionals.

As part of the multiple regression analysis Root Mean Square Error (RMSE), R -square (R^2), and Parameter Estimates were conducted. Root mean square error (RMSE) was used as a measure of model precision for multiple linear regression. Higher values equal lower precision and lower values equal higher precision (Cody, 2016). The results for this population were a RMSE of 0.39 for overall thriving (DV) which meant that the model for this study was more accurate and precise. The R^2 score measures the amount of variability in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables. A higher R^2 score is used to better explain differences and changes in the dependent variable. (Cohen, 1988; Cohen, 1992). Results of the multiple regression (Table 9) found that the four predictors accounted for 66% of the variance ($R^2 = .6601$, $F(4, 111) = 53.9$, $p < .0001$).

For this analysis, the R^2 was found to be high (adjusted $R^2 = 0.66$ or about 66%) for the variability in average overall thriving explained by psychological sense of community, spirituality, institutional integrity, and commitment to staff welfare. In this case, adjusted R^2 (0.65) is not considerably different than R^2 (0.66). The overall null hypothesis stated that overall thriving had no relationship with the predictors psychological sense of community, spirituality, institutional integrity, or commitment to staff welfare. The decision rule stated that if $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis would be rejected. Since for the multiple regression $p < 0.05$, the researchers rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that a relationship between overall thriving and the four predictors existed.

Table 9

Predictors of Overall Thriving

Measure	Psychological Sense of Community		Spirituality		Institutional Integrity		Commitment to Staff Welfare		$F(4,111)$	η^2
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Overall Thriving	4.05	0.95	3.90	1.64	4.38	1.07	4.13	1.11	53.9	0.66

Note. $N = 116$

Parameter estimates were conducted to determine the specific impact each predictor variable had on overall thriving. In the parameter estimates there was one intercept and four slopes (Table 10). A null hypothesis was created for the intercept (β_0) and each of the independent variables (β_1 - β_4). For the intercept, the null hypothesis stated if the p -value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis would be rejected. It was concluded that since $p < .0001$, which is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. Parameter estimates indicated a significant impact of the individual predictors of psychological sense of community ($t = 5.33, p < .0001$), spirituality ($t = 2.50, p = 0.0139$) and

institutional integrity ($t = 3.07, p = .0027$) on overall thriving of student affairs professionals.

For the predictor of psychological sense of community (β_1) since $p < .0001$, which is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected, and psychological sense of community was determined to be a significant predictor of overall thriving among student affairs professionals. For the predictor of spirituality (β_2) since $p = 0.0001$, which is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected, and spirituality was determined to be a significant predictor of overall thriving among student affairs professionals. For the predictor of institutional integrity (β_3) since $p = 0.003$, which is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected, and institutional integrity was determined to be a significant predictor of overall thriving among student affairs professionals. For the predictor of commitment to staff welfare (β_4) since $p = 0.37$, which is not less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was accepted, and commitment to staff welfare was determined to *not* be a significant predictor of overall thriving among student affairs professionals.

Table 10

Parameter Estimates, Predictors

Variable	Parameter Estimate		Standard Error	t-Value	Sig
	DF	E			
Intercept	1	2.23	0.18	12.05	<0.0001*
Sense of Community	1	0.42	0.07	5.33	<0.0001*
Spirituality	1	0.05	0.02	2.50	0.0139*
Institutional Integrity	1	0.18	0.06	3.07	0.0027*
Commitment to Staff Welfare	1	-0.05	0.06	-0.90	0.3727

Note. $N = 116$. * $p < .05$

Research Question Four Results

Research question four (RQ4) explored “How does thriving differ amongst different generations and functional areas of student affairs professionals?” Two one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests were used for this examination. The “one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests the significance of group differences between two or more means as it analyzes variation between and within each group” (Mertler & Reinhard, 2016, p.15). The null hypothesis for research question four was that there would be no differences in overall thriving among the different groups of generations and functional areas of student affairs professionals would be detected. The output of each ANOVA provided (a) degrees of freedom, (b) *p*-value, and (c) *F* ratio for data analysis. The *p*-value indicates a degree of significance. In each analysis, the decision rule used was if the *p*-value < 0.05, then the independent variable category is significant. In addition, “a *F* ratio value near 1.00 indicates that the differences between the group are roughly the same as would be expected due to change” (Mertler & Reinhard, 2016, p. 73). Degrees of freedom are defined as “the number of values that are “free to vary” in a statistical calculation” (LaFountain & Bartos, 2002, p. 183). To assist with this specific question, degrees of freedom will help explain the within group variation of the sample (Mertler & Reinhard, 2016; LaFountain & Bartos, 2002).

For the first part of research question four (RQ4A) which examined the relationship between generation and overall thriving, of the 116 participants, 15 belonged to the Baby Boomer generation, 54 to Generation X, and 47 belonged to the Millennial generation. There were no respondents from the Silent Generation or Generation Z. While overall thriving was determined to not be normally distributed in each of the

generations and there were several outliers present in the data, it was determined that the variances were homogenous. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of generation (IV11) on the overall thriving (DV). The analysis of variance (Table 11) results substantiated the conclusion that the effect of generations (IV11) on the overall thriving (DV) was not significant, $F(2,113) = 2.23, p = 0.11$. Since the p -value is greater than 0.05, then the null hypothesis cannot be rejected indicating that there is no difference in overall thriving from one generation to another. Since the results of the ANOVA were not significant, no post hoc analysis was conducted.

Table 11

Means, Standard Deviations, and One-Way Analysis of Variance in Overall Thriving by Generation

Measure	Baby Boomers <i>n</i> = 15		Generation X <i>n</i> = 54		Millennial <i>n</i> = 47		<i>F</i> (2,113)	η^2
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
	Overall Thriving	5.09	0.46	4.73	0.69	4.68		

Note. $N = 116, *p = 0.11$

For the second part of research question four (RQ4B) the research team examined differences in overall thriving (DV) based on the functional area in which respondents worked (IV12). The student affairs functions were clustered into the following areas and respondents selected the functional area cluster in which they worked: student success ($n = 54$); student enrollment ($n = 24$); student engagement ($n = 15$); and student support ($n = 23$). While the overall thriving was determined to not be normally distributed and that there were several outliers present in the data, it was determined that the variances were

homogenous. With the understanding that the normality distribution was in question and the variances appear homogenous, a one-way ANOVA was employed to objectively answer the second part of research question four. Results from the analysis of variance (Table 12) supported the conclusion that the effect of generations on overall thriving was not significant, $F(3,112) = 1.46, p = 0.23$. Since the p -value is greater than 0.05, then the null hypothesis cannot be rejected indicating that there is no difference in overall thriving from one functional area to another. Since the results of the ANOVA were *not* significant, no post hoc analysis was conducted.

Table 12

Means, Standard Deviations, and One-Way Analysis of Variance in Overall Thriving by Functional Area

Measure	Student Success <i>n</i> = 54		Student Enrollment <i>n</i> = 24		Student Engagement <i>n</i> = 15		Student Support <i>n</i> = 23		<i>F</i> (3,115)	η^2
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Overall Thriving	4.88	0.60	4.68	0.76	4.49	0.74	4.74	0.63	1.46*	0.037

Note. *N* = 116. * p = 0.23

Research Question Five Results

Research question five (RQ5) was “What impact the COVID-19 global pandemic had on overall thriving for student affairs professionals?” The most recent novel coronavirus variant, COVID-19, was declared a global pandemic by The World Health Organization (WHO) in 2020 (Cucinotta & Vanelli, 2020) and disrupted many businesses, operations, and lifestyles – specifically for this study, student affairs work within higher education. Due to the onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic in March of

2020, the TQ-SA instrument was edited to include seven questions measured on two different 6-point Likert scales.

For the first three COVID-19 questions, participants were asked to rank their thoughts and feelings through Likert style scales from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 6 (*Strongly Agree*). For the next four questions in the COVID section, participants were asked to rank their thoughts and feelings through Likert style scales from 1 (*Very Dissatisfied*) to 6 (*Very Satisfied*). The researchers combined these two scales into one quantitative measure for the COVID-19 global pandemic variable (IV10) because each scale followed parallel low to high values on the 6-point Likert scale. In addition, this scoring approach aligned with the data analysis established by all other variables of the TQ-SA. This allowed for consistent scoring throughout the TQ-SA instrument.

A COVID-19 score for each participant was created from the seven questions related to the COVID-19 global pandemic variable (IV10). The scores on these questions were averaged to create a quantitative measure for the COVID-19 global pandemic analysis variable (IV10) to be compared to overall thriving (DV). To answer RQ5, a bivariate correlation coefficient test identified if a relationship, or correlation, was found between the COVID-19 global pandemic variable (IV10) and overall thriving (DV) (Mertler & Reinhard, 2016). Then, a simple linear regression was run to determine to what degree the COVID-19 global pandemic variable (IV10) impacted overall thriving (DV) (Cody, 2016). The results from the Pearson correlation coefficient and simple linear regression are presented in Table 13.

Table 13*Relationship Between COVID-19 Variable and Thriving*

Variable	Pearson	Overall Thriving		Parameter Estimate		R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Standard Error	t-Value	Pr > t
	Correlation Coefficients	p-value (Pr(F))	F-value	DF	E					
	(r)									
COVID-19	0.52	<.0001	42.15	1	0.34	0.27	0.26	0.05	6.49	<.0001

Note. $N = 116$.

The researchers expected that the COVID-19 global pandemic variable (IV10) would result in differences in overall thriving (DV). This expectation was supported by the data. A moderate correlation relationship was found between the COVID-19 global pandemic variable (IV10) and thriving (DV) by the Pearson correlation coefficient (r -value of 0.52) from the bivariate correlation test. A correlation coefficient less than 0.35 was considered a weak correlation, 0.36 to 0.67 was considered a modest correlation, 0.68 to 1.0 was considered a high correlation (Taylor, 1990).

The parameter estimate helped to determine the specific impact that the COVID-19 global pandemic variable (IV10) had on overall thriving (DV). There was one intercept (3.19) and one slope (0.34) for the testing of RQ5. It was determined that the slope is non-zero, which indicated for each unit of the COVID-19 global pandemic variable (IV10) there was a 0.34 increase to overall thriving (DV). A null hypothesis was created for the intercept (β_0) and the independent variable (β_1). The null hypothesis stated if the p -value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. The null hypothesis was rejected because $p < .0001$ was less than 0.05. Parameter estimates indicated a significant relationship between the COVID-19 global pandemic variable ($t = 6.49, p < .0001$) and overall thriving (DV) of student affairs professionals.

Since the Pearson correlation coefficient was statistically significant, the researchers then conducted a simple linear regression. Results of the simple linear regression revealed that the COVID-19 global pandemic variable (IV10) accounted for 26.99% of the variance. For this analysis, the adjusted R^2 was also found to be low (adjusted $R^2 = 0.2635$ or about 26.4%) for the variability in average overall thriving (DV) explained by the COVID-19 global pandemic variable (IV10). Therefore, the adjusted R^2 found that the regression model accounted for 26% of the of the variance in responses. While some research studies may seek a higher R^2 value to indicate less variance and broader applicability; this study focused on human behavior which lends itself to more variation. Using the knowledge about variation statistics gained from Cohen (1988, 1992) and the awareness that this is the first study to utilize the TQ-SA, the researchers believed that the R^2 value of 0.26 is justified based on how student affairs professionals have and continue to navigate the current environment of higher education which continues to navigate the COVID-19 global pandemic (IV10) at the time of publication.

Based on the simple linear regression there was a strong relationship ($F(1,114) = 42.15, p < 0.0001$) between the COVID-19 global pandemic variable (IV10) and overall thriving (DV) for the student affairs professional participants. A significant relationship was found between the COVID-19 global pandemic outcome variable ($M = 4.63, SD = 1.02$) and overall thriving ($M = 4.76, SD = 0.66$) for the sample ($N = 116$). It was determined that a significant relationship was present between the COVID-19 global pandemic outcome variable (IV10) and overall thriving (DV) based on the p -value of less than 0.0001 falling lower than the threshold of p -value = 0.05. The regression model was

found to be statistically significant between the COVID-19 global pandemic outcome variable (IV10) related to student affairs professional's level of overall thriving (DV).

The COVID-19 global pandemic caused many employers and student affairs professionals to navigate their work through increased safety protocols onsite and virtual and remote operations. The responses to the supplemental questions that referenced the COVID-19 global pandemic provided further insights into the experiences of student affairs professionals at this time. Therefore, the final question in the survey within the supplemental section asked, "How has COVID-19 affected your ability to thrive in your role at this institution?" A total of 99 participants responded to this question. The responses indicated that 48% ($n = 45$) of responses leaned towards a negative view of thriving and 28% ($n = 27$) leaned towards a positive view. While some participants have found the work from home approach to be more beneficial for work/life balance and safety, other participants expressed feeling isolation and disconnection from colleagues and the institution. The recurring themes included feelings of isolation, lack of connections/relationships, a sense of unfair work distribution with some employees working in a remote format and others required to be on campus, and both positive and negative aspects of work from home. Example quotes are provided in Appendix I. Some of the responses were aimed at administrative decisions resulting from COVID, such as "The lack of support I felt from direct leadership specifically in the beginning of the pandemic has caused me to feel my work is undervalued" and "It does seem that [Thriving University] could have provided greater resources for success working remotely." Further, other responses focused on the emotional burden felt since the beginning of the pandemic, such as "I am dreading returning to "business as usual", if I

am honest,” or “Thriving is not an option right now. Surviving is all I can get to,” and “I am also concerned that there is going to be this immediate expectation "when things are back to normal" to immediately shift back to everyone "as it was" which will cause significant stress for employees.” Other example responses are provided in Appendix I.

In summary, RQ5 answered what impact the COVID-19 global pandemic had on overall thriving for student affairs professionals by finding that a moderate correlation in a linear pattern that was statistically significant was found between the COVID-19 global pandemic outcome variable (IV10) and overall thriving (DV) for the student affairs professional participants. By calculating the effect size by dividing the parameter estimate by the standard deviation ($0.34/0.66$), the researchers found as the COVID-19 global pandemic outcome variable (IV10) scores increased; the overall thriving (DV) increased by 0.52. While a significant relationship was found between these variables at the time of this study, it should be noted that the COVID-19 global pandemic is still occurring. This experience may have impacted how respondents answered the survey based on the time it was distributed. The significant relationship between the COVID-19 global pandemic and student affairs professionals overall thriving was mentioned often within the open-ended supplemental questions. The supplemental question responses allowed the researchers to infer that there has been inequity in work expectations and operations, varying levels of support from leadership or unions, and that no one experience was consistent between functional areas or participants. Most participants who responded to the open-ended supplemental questions did use similar language and terms that the researchers connected to the PERMA constructs and predictors of thriving, indicating more positive overall thriving for student affairs professionals. One respondent

commented, “Although we all have had challenges presented to us having to work remotely, I believe we are more tolerant of each other and patient with each other than pre-COVID times. This past year has brought more compassion towards each other.”

Supplemental Question Results

From the supplemental research questions, the researchers used data gathered from student affairs professionals’ experiences to promote changes to the onboarding, training, and overall retention of student affairs professionals. These questions were included on the survey at Dr. Schreiner’s request but did not contribute to the research questions of this study. There was a total of seven supplemental questions (three open-ended questions and four Likert scale questions) included in the survey. Responses from the open-ended questions were included within the results of RQ1 and RQ5. The data for the remaining four supplemental questions was analyzed briefly to add context to the overall results of the study. The descriptive statistics for these questions are displayed in Table 14.

There were three quantitative questions that asked about the emotions the participants felt towards work and one quantitative question that assessed overall thriving. The first three supplemental questions asked participants if they “Feel joyful about work,” “Feel positive emotions when you are at work,” and “Enjoy coming to work.” These were measured on a 6-point Likert style scales from 1 (*never*) to 6 (*always*).

The results showed that participants felt joyful when coming to work ($M = 4.14$). While the mean indicated that participants felt these emotions often to frequently, 6.7% ($n = 8$) of the participants indicated they felt joyful rarely, and 21% ($n = 25$) felt joyful

only occasionally. On the other end of the scale, 6% ($n = 7$) of participants indicated they felt joyful always.

Overall, participants felt positive emotion at work ($M = 4.31$). While the mean score indicated that participants felt positive emotion at work, 2.5% ($n = 3$) of participants responded that they felt positive emotion rarely, and 16% ($n = 19$) felt positive emotion only occasionally. There were 5% ($n = 6$) of participants who reported feeling positive emotion always. The question about feeling positive emotion at work was related to the positive emotion construct. The positive emotion construct ($M = 4.77$) was slightly higher than the response to this question (mean 4.31). One interpretation would be elements that comprise the positive emotion construct were more powerful than just the feeling of having positive emotion at work.

The participants also enjoyed work ($M = 4.30$). However, 1.7% ($n = 2$) of participants indicated they never enjoyed work, 3% ($n = 4$) rarely enjoy work, and 15.5% ($n = 18$) only occasionally enjoy work. Despite a mean that indicated most participants in this study enjoyed work, 20% ($n = 24$) of participants did not enjoy work. On the higher end of the scale, 9% ($n = 11$) of participants reported always enjoying work.

The last Likert scale question was measured on a 6-point Likert style scale from 1 (*Not Even Surviving*), 2 (*Barely Surviving*), 3 (*Surviving*), 4 (*Somewhat Thriving*), 5 (*Mostly Thriving*), and 6 (*Consistently Thriving*) asked participants:

Thriving is defined as positive engagement in meaningful work, connecting to others at a deeper level, and being optimistic about one's present and future life. Using that definition, how would you rate your own level of thriving in your role at this institution?

When asked to rate one's own level of thriving, the participants were thriving ($M = 4.42$). This self-reported thriving score was slightly lower than the calculated score of overall thriving (DV) based on the PERMA constructs ($M = 4.75$). One interpretation would be that participants felt a lowered sense of overall thriving when considering thriving apart from the PERMA constructs.

Table 14

Supplemental Questions Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	SD	Mode	Min	Max	Median
Joyful	4.14	1.05	5.00	2.00	6.00	4.00
Positive Emotion	4.31	0.89	5.00	2.00	6.00	4.00
Enjoy Work	4.30	1.07	5.00	1.00	6.00	4.00
Thriving	4.42	1.08	5.00	2.00	6.00	5.00

Note. $N = 116$

The last questions were open-ended questions: “What has happened this semester that has shaped your assessment of your own thriving,” “How has your thriving here changed over the past year,” and “How has COVID-19 affected your ability to thrive in your role at this institution?” The open-ended questions allowed participants to contribute lived experiences from the past year.

Chapter Summary

Based on the result of the data analysis for this sample of participants, student affairs were thriving at higher levels (RQ1) regardless of generation and functional area (RQ4). A moderate correlation with significance was found between thriving and the COVID-19 global pandemic which may be attributed to navigating a collective challenging experience to produce innovative and intentional work during remote and

limited in-person experiences on limited budgets as a collaborative (RQ5). Diving deeper into the results, individual participants may define and connect their own thriving to many factors of their experiences-referred to as constructs or predictors in this study. Based on prior research and literature review, the PERMA constructs were tested to determine which had the strongest correlations on overall thriving (RQ2), followed by exploring which predictors significantly impacted overall thriving (RQ3). For student affairs professionals, the PERMA constructs contributing most to overall thriving (DV) in order, were meaning (IV4, r -value = 0.90), engagement (IV2, r -value = 0.89), relationships (IV3, r -value = 0.85), with equal correlation scores for positive emotion (IV1, r -value = 0.84) and accomplishments (IV5, r -value = 0.84). For student affairs professionals, overall thriving was significantly impacted by the predictors of psychological sense of community (IV6), spirituality (IV7), and institutional integrity (IV8). Surprisingly, the commitment to staff welfare (IV9) was not found to be a significant predictor on student affairs professionals overall thriving.

The results of the study presented in Chapter Four provided new information about thriving in student affairs professionals at Thriving University. A discussion of the findings, as well as a plan to address the problem of practice are presented in Chapter Five. Recommendations for practice specifically targeted executive administrators, supervisors, and managers as well as graduate programs and professional organizations. Finally, future research threads are introduced. Ultimately, these recommendations supported the current workforce of student affairs professionals and developed upcoming student affairs professionals aiming to thrive in the important work that they do with students. Supporting a thriving workforce of student affairs professionals was a way to

ensure that professionals were active, growing, contributing, and making positive impacts on students and supporting the endeavors of the institution.

Chapter Five

Action Plan and Recommendations for Practice

Kawanna is a student affairs manager who is tired after a long Spring 2020 semester spent working in higher education while responding to the COVID-19 global pandemic and supporting her staff. Even before the pandemic, Kawanna had growing concerns about the student affairs professionals on her campus. She began noticing that some of her staff displayed positive emotion, were engaged in their work, relied on a strong network of both professional and personal relationships, found meaning in their work and took pride in their accomplishments. Kawanna also had staff members who struggled with positive emotion, were less engaged, had few relationships, were not finding meaning in their work and had a difficult time accomplishing their work.

As Kawanna met with other colleagues during a virtual professional conference, she found that they too shared these concerns about student affairs professionals at their institutions. In her conversations with colleagues, all had examples of student affairs professionals who had left the field and others who had been in the field for a long time and continued to be motivated. They realized the conversations about student affairs professionals were much like ones they had about students. Just like students, some student affairs professionals appeared to be high in thriving while others were low in thriving. These conversations led the group to further discuss thriving and the constructs that supported thriving for student affairs professionals.

Thriving is a concept that has been studied extensively and can be applied to many situations in which positive gains may be observed. Interest in studying human thriving began appearing in the latter part of the 20th century, but the scholarly literature which has been produced is divergent and lacks agreed upon definitions and concepts

(Brown et al., 2017). While a variety of definitions of thriving have appeared (Brown et al., 2017), thriving, in this study, was defined as positive engagement in meaningful work, connecting to others at a deeper level, and being optimistic about one's present and future life (L. Schreiner, personal communication, October 11, 2020).

Purpose and Research Questions

Student affairs professionals are employees at colleges or universities who work in offices and divisions which support student learning and development (Long, 2012). Student affairs professionals are at the forefront providing critical services and support to ensure student success. While job dissatisfaction and burnout can occur in this group (Marshall et al., 2016; Mullen et al., 2018; Tull, 2006), there are those who are thriving as student affairs professionals. The purpose of this study is to explore the experience of thriving for student affairs professionals to discover which constructs and predictors are related to their level of thriving. This study explored the following research questions about student affairs professionals' thriving in the workforce:

RQ1: How do student affairs professionals experience thriving?

RQ2: How strongly correlated are the PERMA constructs (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments) with thriving for student affairs professionals?

RQ3: What predictors (psychological sense of community, spirituality, institutional integrity, and commitment to staff welfare) significantly impact thriving for student affairs professionals?

RQ4: How does thriving differ amongst different generations and functional areas of student affairs professionals?

RQ5: What impact has the COVID-19 global pandemic had on thriving for student affairs professionals?

Study Overview

As higher education continues to evolve, student affairs professionals face an ever-growing number of challenges and responsibilities within their specific roles. The increase in demands of work can lead to increased feelings of job dissatisfaction, burnout, and job turnover, which are typical in those who are low in thriving. This study set out to identify what constructs and predictors were associated with overall thriving among student affairs professionals. By understanding what contributes to thriving among student affairs professionals and what does not, the researchers wanted to use this knowledge to propose improvement processes at the institutional, graduate school and professional association levels to promote onboarding, training, development, and retention of student affairs professionals.

Conceptual Framework and Instrument

A conceptual framework provides the lens or context for a study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Seligman's (2011) PERMA model of well-being was utilized as the conceptual framework for this study. This framework evolved from Seligman's previous research that focused on what Seligman referred to as well-being or flourishing, which we refer to in this study as thriving. The acronym PERMA encompasses the elements of the model: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement. According to Seligman (2011), positive emotion is the pursuit of a pleasant life, or overall happiness, while engagement is a state of being completely absorbed in an activity. Seligman described relationships via social connectedness as "belonging to and

serving something that you believe is bigger than the self” (p. 17), while accomplishment is achieving something for its own sake (2011). In his research, Seligman stated that well-being consisted of different core elements that contributed to one’s overall sense of well-being, but no single element could define well-being alone. In short, these elements combine to contribute to an overall sense of well-being and flourishing in life. Seligman’s framework was selected for this study because it can be applied to the holistic concept of well-being in student affair professionals.

The instrument used in this study was the Thriving Quotient for Student Affairs Professionals (TQ-SA) survey (Appendix A). The TQ-SA was based off Schreiner’s (2010a) Thriving Quotient (TQ) and Thriving Quotient for Faculty, which used Seligman’s (2011) PERMA model of well-being as the framework. The Thriving Quotient examined student thriving in college, while the Thriving Quotient for Faculty examined thriving in faculty in higher education. Participants were asked to reflect on their individual, professional experiences and responded to items that measured positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. The research team met with Dr. Schreiner and received input and guidance on how to adapt the surveys to focus on student affairs professionals. In addition to the PERMA constructs, the TQ-SA incorporated four predictors that were introduced by Dr. Schreiner: psychological sense of community, spirituality, institutional integrity, and commitment to staff welfare. Where the thriving constructs were defined by Seligman (2011) as contributing to a holistic framework of thriving, the predictors introduced by Schreiner were additional measures that have been found to also impact thriving (L. Schreiner, personal communication, October 11, 2020). The psychological sense of community predictor is a

sense of belonging and a connectivity with the institution (Schreiner, 2016). Spirituality is the basic feeling that connects employees with a higher power. Institutional integrity is how the various participants in a university are treated (Barr, 1987). Commitment to staff welfare extended beyond a commitment to care but also served as a responsibility for employers to create safe work environments (Abbas et al., 2019).

Participants in the current study were identified by demographic factors including generational cohort and the functional area to which they belonged in student affairs. Lastly, the TQ-SA incorporated questions about the COVID-19 global pandemic where participants were asked to reflect on their experiences during this time and how it affected their ability to thrive as student affairs professionals. The TQ-SA survey (Appendix A) contained a total of 54 items. The demographics section of the survey contained two questions: generation and functional area. The PERMA constructs section contained 20 questions. The predictors of thriving contained 18 questions. The COVID-19 questions were contained in seven questions. There were an additional seven supplemental questions, of which three were open-ended. Within the survey instrument, participants responded to a randomized series of questions on a 6-point Likert-scale. The meaning of the scale varied according to the section of the TQ-SA survey. For instance, 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*) or 1 (*never*) to 6 (*always*).

Questions on the survey that measured the PERMA constructs include: (P) “I look for the best in situations, even when things seem hopeless,” (E) “I feel energized by my work at this institution,” (R) “My immediate supervisor cares about me as a person,” (M) “I feel valued by my colleagues,” and (A) “I am able to do what I love much of the time at this institution.” Examples of questions for the predictor variables noted by Schreiner

(2010a) included, “I feel energized by the ideas I am learning in most of my classes”, “I am confident I will reach my educational goals”, and “It’s important to me to make a contribution to my community.” The three supplemental open-ended questions were “What has happened this semester that has shaped your assessment of your own thriving?,” “How has your thriving here changed over the past year?,” and “How has COVID-19 affected your ability to thrive in your role at this institution?”

Participants

The participants in this study were 116 student affairs professionals at a four-year midwestern public university, which we refer to as Thriving University. It was anticipated that the participant characteristics would mirror those of the entire employee population at Thriving University. The sample was expected to be largely female (60%) and white (77%). To ensure anonymity of the participants, other than generation and functional area, further demographics were not collected, as cross-tabulations or combining of demographics such as race and gender could clearly identify specific employees who participated in the study. The participants in this study were from three generations: 12.9% were classified as Baby Boomers (1946-1964), 46.6% were classified as Generation X (1965-1980) and 40.5% were classified as Millennial (1981-1996) generation. Participants were grouped into four functional areas: student success, student enrollment, student engagement and student support. Nearly half (46.6%) of the student affairs professionals who participated in the survey belonged to the student success functional area (Table 15).

Table 15*Student Affairs Professionals by Functional Areas*

Functional Areas	Frequency	Percent	Student Affairs Specific Functional Area
Student Success	54	46.6	academic advising, career development, learning support services
Student Enrollment	24	20.7	admissions, enrollment management, financial aid, registration
Student Engagement	15	12.9	housing and residence life, student involvement
Student Support	23	19.8	campus recreation, counseling and health services, disability support services, diversity and inclusion, international student services, and veteran's services
Total	116	100.0	

Data Collection and Analysis Overview

Data was collected through a Qualtrics survey that was emailed to participants who worked at Thriving University. Each participant was a member of an area of student affairs at the institution. This study incorporated a variety of different methods to analyze the data collected from participants. Each of the five research questions were analyzed by applying a specific analytical method to the corresponding data collected to measure each research question. Research question one focused primarily on collecting and reporting descriptive statistics for overall thriving as well as each of the PERMA constructs and predictors of thriving. Research question two examined the relationships between the PERMA constructs and overall thriving. A correlational analysis was conducted to examine these relationships. Research question three examined relationships between each of the predictors and overall thriving. A multiple linear regression was used to analyze the corresponding data. Research question four explored the differences in thriving among the different generational groups (silent generation, baby boomers,

generation X, millennials, and generation Z) and functional clusters of student affairs professionals (student success, student enrollment, student engagement, and student support). Two one-way analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA) were used to examine the differences between these groups and overall thriving. Research question five focused on how the COVID-19 global pandemic affected overall thriving among student affairs professionals. A correlational analysis and SLR were implemented to identify whether COVID-19 global pandemic impacted student affairs professionals' ability to thrive during this time.

Summary of Results and Study Conclusions

Thriving was determined based on the overall thriving score which was the average from the PERMA questions throughout the TQ-SA. Each participant received an overall thriving score that fell between 1.0 and 6.0. An overall thriving score which fell within the range of 1.00 to 3.99 was interpreted as a lower level of thriving. An overall thriving score which fell within 4.00 to 6.00 was interpreted as a higher level of thriving. The researchers found that 88% ($n = 102$) of the student affairs professionals in this study experienced a higher level of thriving, while 12% (14) experienced a lower level of thriving.

Since a majority (88%) of the student affairs professionals in this study experienced higher levels of thriving, we concluded that the participants were thriving (RQ1). Student affairs professionals are thriving in relation to the PERMA constructs (RQ2) and most of the predictors (excluding commitment to staff welfare) (RQ3) while currently navigating the COVID-19 global pandemic (RQ5). Student affairs professionals were thriving regardless of generations and functional areas (RQ4). Given the COVID-19

global pandemic that changed much about the work environment, higher education, and the job functions for student affairs professionals over the past year, the researchers were somewhat surprised by this finding.

The relationships between overall thriving and the PERMA constructs were tested to determine which had the strongest correlations to overall thriving (RQ2), followed by exploring which predictors significantly impacted overall thriving (RQ3). Relationships with and differences between variables were considered statistically significant if the alpha value was $p = .05$ or less. Correlations were measured using Pearson correlation coefficient. The correlation coefficient is expected to range from +1.00 to -1.00 (Mertler & Reinhard, 2016). A correlation coefficient less than 0.35 was considered a weak correlation, 0.36 to 0.67 was considered a modest correlation, 0.68 to 1.0 was considered a high correlation (Taylor, 1990). All the PERMA constructs significantly contributed to overall thriving (Table 8) at $p < 0.001$. The PERMA constructs contributing most to overall thriving (DV) in order were meaning (IV4, r -value = 0.90), engagement (IV2, r -value = 0.89), relationships (IV3, r -value = 0.85), with equal correlation scores for positive emotion (IV1, r -value = 0.84) and accomplishments (IV5, r -value = 0.84). According to the results of the multiple regression (Table 10), overall thriving was significantly impacted by the predictors: psychological sense of community (IV6, $t = 5.33$, $p < 0.0001$), spirituality (IV7, $t = 2.50$, $p < 0.0139$), and institutional integrity (IV8, $t = 3.07$, $p < 0.0027$). Surprisingly, the commitment to staff welfare (IV9, $t = -0.90$, $p = 0.3727$) was not found to be a significant predictor on student affairs professionals overall thriving. The researchers found that thriving did not significantly vary across the different

generations ($p = 0.11$, Table 11) and functional areas ($p = 0.23$, Table 12) in which student affairs professionals worked (RQ4).

The COVID-19 global pandemic (IV10) was found to be moderately correlated (RQ5) to overall thriving for student affairs professionals and the relationship was significant (r -value = 0.52, $p < 0.0001$, Table 13). As the COVID-19 global pandemic variable (IV10) increased, so did student affairs professionals' overall thriving (DV). No prior research was found on student affairs professionals' ability to thrive during a global pandemic; however, the researchers can infer based on the results of this study that navigating this challenge has provided opportunities for personal or professional growth and perseverance. As working professionals who are also researchers, anecdotally we have created new ways to provide functional assistance to the students we serve, in a virtual learning environment, developed teams and collaboration while working remotely, and cultivated new ways to balance and seek clarity to maintain well-being in the workplace.

Recommendations for Practice

Within the last year and a half, much of the world changed in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic. The researchers believe the data collected in this study about thriving in student affairs professionals during this time provides insight into a collective challenge faced in the world. While some communities were disenfranchised and some institutional operations shut down, positive emotion and relationships could be variables that student affairs professionals rally around. The collective sense of community or spirituality could have motivated engagement in new ideas or inspired new meaning in work that had become stagnant for student affairs professionals as they

grappled with the new needs which emerged for students. Perhaps a sense of accomplishment is felt by student affairs professionals when they survive a day balancing home care for their children while providing virtual advising appointments to students. Or maybe receiving a supportive message from their institution helped student affairs professionals. Overall, the researchers' concluded that student affairs professionals at Thriving University are currently thriving. This is demonstrated by the significant correlations of PERMA constructs, significant correlations with additional predictors (excluding staff welfare predictor), and a significant correlation with the COVID-19 global pandemic variable.

Recommendations for Administrators

One goal of this analysis was to provide Thriving University's top administrators with actionable items, based on past research and survey findings, to further develop as well as sustain and encourage thriving their student affairs professional workforce. The researchers hope the administration will find this analysis helpful to both improve employee morale and overall thriving of student affairs professionals and recognize that a thriving workforce is essential for supporting students, especially as institutions try to find the "new normal" of post-COVID-19.

While student affairs professionals' overall thriving was shown to be high in this study, administrators at Thriving University will want to look for ways to ensure it stays high. A strong, thriving student affairs professional workforce will continue to enhance the student experience. To ensure future thriving of their student affairs professionals, administrators are encouraged to explore actions that support current areas of high thriving constructs and bolster construct areas where the rates were somewhat lower.

Overall, it appears there is a strong sense of community at this institution. Student affairs professionals ranked the constructs of relationships and engagement as high and the predictors of institutional integrity and sense of community as high in their contribution to overall thriving.

During the past year, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, some student affairs professionals experienced higher levels of thriving. The direct comments (see examples in Appendices G, H, and I) by student affairs professionals demonstrated contributing factors to their ability to thrive during the past year. Student affairs professionals expressed appreciation for the concern from the university and individual departments for their well-being during the pandemic. Some staff expressed appreciation for the ability to continue working from home and that the university provided the equipment and infrastructure to make remote work possible. Other student affairs professionals were energized by positive engagement with students and their colleagues reinforcing the importance of relationships in overall thriving. Finally, some respondents mentioned that individual resourcefulness and the autonomy needed to continue working through the pandemic supported some staff members' ability to thrive over the course of the past year. Administrators could better understand and then capitalize on these positive experiences of staff members during the mandatory remote work period by purposefully maintaining the structure to express care and concern for staff members, being flexible when situations require abrupt changes to university operations and developing a more supportive sense of community. These administrative level tactics would serve to support higher levels of thriving.

Additional themes that support recommendations for practice were found within the supplemental question open-ended responses. A repeated theme was the increased access to professional development opportunities and ability to engage more with professional organizations. During COVID-19, most professional development activities were offered in an online format. Without the additional expense and inconvenience of travel, it appeared that increased numbers of student affairs professionals took advantage of professional development opportunities, which is an indication of a growth mindset.

From the results of this study administrators are encouraged to find ways to ensure student affairs professionals can continue a high level of professional development involvement opportunities once they transition back to an in-person format. Dweck (2006) explored a growth mindset and found that mindset is a powerful way to shape goals, attitudes, work, and relationships as well as promote success. It appeared that student affairs professionals, intentionally or unintentionally, engaged in growth mindset activities throughout the pandemic, potentially to cope or share in community and relationships. Thriving University has a robust faculty development center and might consider a complementary staff professional development center. It is recommended that the institution establish fair and equitable distribution of resources to allow staff, including student affairs professionals equitable access to professional development activities in the future. By doing so, administrators would promote a sense of institutional investment and professional growth among student affairs professionals. In return, student affairs staff can engage with professionals from across the region or country, learn new skills from others, and elevate ways of providing services to students.

Another theme repeated in the supplemental open-ended questions which may have impacted responses to quantitative variables for participants revolved around the remote work environment. Respondents commented on the ability to set a schedule that best works with their productivity, the relief of being away from negativity of their office, reduced commuting time and expenses, and the ability to get tasks done with fewer interruptions. There were several comments that indicated student affairs professionals were having improved interactions with students in the remote environment.

Administrators could consider looking at the long-term benefits of remote or flexible work schedules and the office environment. The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way many student affairs professionals handled day-to-day operations in their respective functional areas. Similarly, students became accustomed to distance and virtual services, which offered a level of flexibility and convenience. Student affairs professionals had the opportunity to meet students where they were—often quite literally—in virtual meetings facilitated by newer video technology. New modalities of services developed, ushering in a new era of how student affairs professionals serve students and institution. Instead of doing away with these new modalities, it is recommended that administrators reexamine how these services have been implemented and the larger goals behind offering support to students to find ways and modalities that benefit students, student affairs professionals, and the goals of the institution. As this pandemic has shown, it would be in the best interest of the university to be prepared for future disruptions of traditional work. The establishment of remote work and innovative service delivery methods, without compromising the integrity of the student experience, would serve the institution well to be better positioned for a future disruption.

A few other common themes which emerged from the open-ended questions were the lack of connection that student affairs professionals at Thriving University were feeling during the COVID-19 pandemic. The direct comments (see Appendices G, H and I) by student affairs professionals demonstrated the underlying struggles more than the responses to the survey questions. For instance, communication from the university, feelings of isolation while working remotely, and work distribution were mentioned by respondents as items they perceived as impacting their thriving.

Respondents expressed mixed views on communication from the university administration, which was praised for the effectiveness of the communication, versus the communication from their departments, which was criticized for being less effective as well as absent. Respondents also mentioned in their written responses the disconnection from others they felt when working remotely as well as the lack of support from supervisors and colleagues. Others found work overwhelming and struggled to maintain their connections even to the students with and for whom they work. These examples contrast with comments from other student affairs professionals who found some solace in working from home as well as a respite from the issues in the office environment.

Additionally, some participants shared that there was also a perceived unfair distribution of work with some student affairs professionals were required to be in person while others were not. This was further interpreted as inequitable when participants received inconsistent messaging from supervisors. Generally, as a result of these inconsistencies in communication and work distribution or when workloads and responsibilities were shifted, participants shared a feeling of being overwhelmed. All of these could be connected to the commitment to staff welfare predictor, which was found

to not correlate with overall thriving. This is an area in which the institution may want to focus. Du Plessis et al. (2016) discovered that the more an organization provided support to the well-being of their staff, the harder staff worked and had increased levels of motivation. As institutions transition into post-pandemic life, administrators must consider ways to re-engage student affairs professionals in innovative practices that help foster trust and collaboration across campus. Administrators could do this by developing clear, honest, and consistent communication channels as well as equitable workloads by reviewing the role capacity of student affairs professional positions, reviewing and maintaining clear work expectations, and establishing common standard operating procedures that are consistent and equitable.

Another recommendation is that administrators consider examining and refining management training to help managers and supervisors improve their skills in relation to the thriving constructs and predictors. There is value to employers combining both formal and informal learning opportunities to engage employees and increase on-the-job learning (Manuti et al., 2015, Lovell & Kosten, 2000, Billet, 1995). Management training for student affairs professionals can enhance the meaning, accomplishments, and relationships within their teams which would boost positive emotions and engagement. This can be done with online or virtual training plans, coordinated leadership development sessions for both individual, team, and organizational growth, and values alignment between the institution and the employees. A way to offer this management training would be to establish a repository of classes and sessions housed within Human Resources that managers and student affairs professionals can complete as part of their professional development. Another way of providing this training to managers and to

other staff could be a subscription to an online tool such as LinkedIn Learning, which offers on demand professional development trainings.

Additionally, administrators would benefit by expanding the use of career ladders to acknowledge and support career advancement for entry-level student affairs professionals. While career ladders were not specifically mentioned by the respondents in their written responses, these career ladders can be key strategies in retaining student affairs professionals. Winston and Creamer (1998) specifically articulate that student affairs professionals, as staff members, often anticipate that their institution will support their professional development and career advancement: career ladders are one method to accomplish both. When the opportunities to advance are not available at one institution, student affairs professionals may often seek opportunities elsewhere. We further recommend performance evaluations and career assessments be implemented for individual student affairs professionals to create a learning plan for success in their current role that elevates their aptitude for future positions, promotion opportunities, and career growth within a career ladder structure. Career ladders, in coordination with management training to support staff growth and potential advancement opportunities to further enhance their commitment to the institution, may serve to increase employee retention.

In summary, the recommendations for practice for administrators as a result of this study include:

- Increase access to professional development for student affairs professionals.
- Establish a professional development center for staff, such as student affairs professionals, to complement the faculty development center.

- Explore best practices in remote work and the offering of programs that meet the needs of students while providing positive benefits and flexible scheduling to student affairs professionals.
- Review workload distribution and establish clear and consistent expectations across departments.
- Develop management training to ensure professional growth, clear communication and equitable standards across the student affairs workforce.
- Promote career ladders and learning plans that bolster employee promotions and retention.
- Utilize the constructs and predictors of thriving to develop training sessions which can improve manager and supervisor skills.

Recommendations for Supervisors and Managers

Managers and supervisors have the most immediate and constant impact on student affairs professionals. The relationship between the supervisors and their subordinates begins as early as the search process to hire incoming student affairs professionals. It is up to managers and supervisors to select, orient, onboard, train, monitor, coach, support, and, as necessary, correct or discipline. Managers and supervisors need appropriate and substantial training to carry out their managerial tasks beyond the routine expectations from institutional human resources offices or their organizational structure. Training for managers and supervisors should include development of knowledge and skills to support their various staff members to achieve higher levels in the constructs of thriving as well as experience a sense of community, an

institution which exhibits integrity to its staff members, and an environment in which their spirituality can continue to support their work with students.

Institutional integrity was found to be correlated with overall thriving in this study. Institutional integrity is how the various participants in a university are treated (Barr, 1987). Institutional integrity is revealed in early interactions between the institution and individuals, quite possibly as early as the job application and interview processes. Within the institutional integrity set of survey questions in this study, one question asked the survey respondents to reflect on the statement “this institution was accurately portrayed to me during the hiring process.” Of the 116 respondents, 20 (17%) indicated that they somewhat disagreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with this statement and 17 (16%) only somewhat agreed with the statement. One might observe that while the majority of the respondents agreed (46%) or strongly agreed (21%) with the statement, there was a portion of student affairs professionals who had a different experience during the interview and hiring process. While this is one contributing element to the institutional integrity score, it is an important element. In the early interactions at the interview and hiring stages relationships might begin to form. Initial contact between a supervisor and student affairs professional often occurs at the interview stage. While the formal relationship is not solidified until a person begins their first day of work, candidates for positions often encounter information and form impressions about the institution, the work environment and how they envision themselves as a member of the institution.

It is crucial that managers and supervisors accurately reflect the work environment, expectations, and their supervisory approach throughout the search process.

The search process should also include interactions with future immediate colleagues as well as representatives from campus partner offices and functions. This robust search process represents an initial investment in communicating the strengths of the institution and how well student affairs professionals are supported in their work with students.

While search processes may be the opportunity for managers and supervisors to showcase their positive approaches to staff support, those processes must also ensure a transparency to candidates. The institutional integrity to deliver on what it represents in that search process is critical. It can become a disaster for an institution to overpromise then under-deliver to staff members. When the campus climate for employees is accurately reflected in search processes then the successful candidates enter with a better understanding of the institution.

Relationships and engagement, two of the constructs of PERMA, were highly correlated with overall thriving in this study. Relationships and engagement are important contributors to a staff member's ability to thrive. Once student affairs professionals join an institution, managers and supervisors are responsible for welcoming, training and supporting their development. Managers and supervisors could make this experience meaningful for new employees. Researchers who focused on supervision in student affairs specifically (Tull, 2006; Winston & Creamer, 1998) found that synergistic supervision was connected to higher levels of job satisfaction. Careful attention to constructing enriched onboarding and professional development activities using PERMA as guiding principles can ensure that student professionals can thrive. Current onboarding practices might tend to be focused on learning the nuances of a very specific job and may lack activities and experiences to build relationships, engage in the campus community,

develop meaning, and celebrate accomplishments. A well-planned and executed program of onboarding and continuous professional development structured around PERMA constructs can support student affairs professionals' ability to thrive.

Beyond initial onboarding and continued professional development for student affairs professionals, managers and supervisors can continue supporting thriving for their staff members by using the constructs of PERMA to monitor performance. Recognizing when a staff member is not thriving is an important step in supporting student affairs professionals. If a staff member is not engaged in or has negative perspectives about their work, managers and supervisors can deploy strategies to support the staff member. Those student affairs professionals who have not established relationships within their immediate work area or throughout campus or who do not find their work meaningful can be coached to become more connected to campus through establishing relationships. Furthermore, meaning and accomplishment can be realized through very deliberate dissection of work performed and discussions with managers and supervisors.

While managers and supervisors are not the only responsible party for developing thriving in student affairs professionals, they are oftentimes the most impactful. Innovative approaches for supporting student affairs professionals can contribute to sustaining thriving for this segment of staff throughout their tenure at an institution. Using PERMA as a strategic approach when selecting, onboarding, developing, and coaching student affairs professionals can be an innovative and dynamic approach to attract and retain student affairs professionals.

In summary, the recommendations for practice for supervisors and managers as a result of this study include:

- Train hiring managers to ensure that search processes accurately portray the work environment, expectations, and the manager's supervisory approach, along with including interactions with future immediate colleagues as well as representatives from campus partner offices and functions.
- Develop onboarding for new student affairs professionals and professional development for current student affairs professionals that introduces and cultivates proactive and effective ways to connect with the constructs and predictors that support thriving.
- Use the constructs and predictors that support thriving to monitor student affairs professionals' performance and career growth.

Recommendations for Graduate Programs and Professional Associations

While upper-level administrators, managers and supervisors play pivotal roles in thriving for the student affairs professionals at their institutions, two stakeholders outside immediate work environments, graduate programs and professional associations, can contribute to thriving for student affairs professionals. Graduate programs prepare students for entering student affairs work and they often shape perspectives as well as expectations of entry-level staff members. Knowledge and skills needed by student affairs professionals to support students are often the hallmarks of graduate programs in student affairs administration, higher education administration, or college student personnel. What may be lacking in some graduate programs are additional tools which student affairs professionals can use to support their own capacity to thrive in full-time professional student affairs positions.

Prior to selecting students for entry to a degree program which may lead to entry-level work in student affairs, graduate program faculty and staff can provide transparent information about their programs as well as the career field of student affairs. Many students who enter programs to prepare for student affairs careers may not be fully aware of the scope of the career field or what a long-term career in student affairs might entail for them. Graduate programs can preview the career path for student affairs professionals and the variety of functional areas in which student affairs professionals can work.

Once students begin graduate programs, there should be opportunities arranged by the graduate program faculty for students to engage with practitioners across a wide variety of functions and generations to better understand the work world of student affairs professionals. That engagement can focus on understanding the complete experience of student affairs professionals and how they have individually navigated their careers in student affairs. As a result of this engagement, graduate students would better understand the expectations of the work world for student affairs professionals and how seasoned student affairs professionals have sustained their careers. The engagement between graduate students and student affairs professionals would be deliberate and structured around the constructs of PERMA. Through this engagement, graduate students would be equipped with knowledge of thriving (PERMA) and skills to thrive.

Finally, graduate programs can take on the role to widely educate college and university administrative staff about student affairs professionals and issues they may face, burnout and stress for example, and identify methods which managers and supervisors can use to better support student affairs professionals. Not all college and university campuses have graduate programs to prepare students to enter careers in

student affairs, so it is incumbent upon existing graduate programs to develop relationships with colleges and universities without such programs so that the profession of student affairs is better understood by upper-level administrators. In particular, the unique role which student affairs professionals play in colleges and universities to support students must be championed by graduate programs who prepare future student affairs professionals.

Professional associations hold unique advantages as a stakeholder since they operate independently of colleges and universities but are crucial in supporting student affairs professionals' potential to thrive. Professional associations can provide ongoing advocacy for their members to reframe their perspectives on their careers by embracing a commitment to seek thriving as one of their long-term professional development goals. Ongoing research into the career experiences of student affairs professionals can be enlightening to a variety of stakeholders and professional organizations can propel such research through research grant funding. The supported research should include inquiry into how student affairs professionals experience thriving as well as methods which managers and supervisors use to support their staff members. Finally, professional organizations can support targeted programs and forums where supervisors and managers of student affairs professionals can network and renew their knowledge and skills about student affairs and how to best support their staff to thrive in their work with students.

In summary, the recommendations for practice for graduate programs and professional associations as a result of this study include:

- Ensure graduate programs include self-efficacy tools designed around the constructs and predictors of thriving that allow emerging graduate students

and entry-level professionals to develop thriving mindset and behaviors as they enter the profession.

- Provide upfront and transparent career information and pathways to the field of student affairs by building relationships and engagement opportunities between graduate programs and professional organizations as well as employed student affairs professionals.
- Widely educate college and university administrative staff about student affairs professionals and issues they may face, burnout and stress for example, and identify methods which managers and supervisors can use to better support student affairs professionals.
- Professional organizations could advocate for thriving throughout the field of student affairs by framing engagement and training opportunities around the constructs and predictors that support thriving.

Recommendations for Future Research Opportunities

The findings from this study demonstrate that students affairs professionals are currently thriving in the current remote and hybrid work models developed during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there is a need to recognize several limits within this study. The study was limited to a single metropolitan Midwest public institution. The sample was limited to student affairs professionals rather than examining thriving levels of faculty and staff outside of student affairs. Due to the limits of this study and the importance of thriving employees, there are many opportunities for future research to explore the concept of thriving further within higher education settings.

Future research could explore a broader sample of student affairs professionals at different types of institutions such as community colleges in comparison to four-year institutions and public versus private universities. Additionally, administering the survey at a different time of year once staff are back to more in person operations could net additional findings around the importance of workplace environments, relationships, or meaning in the work being provided. Comparing current or future levels of thriving to perceived past levels of thriving could also yield some important information to provide a better understanding of student affairs professionals. The current study did not include questions about as race or gender. Additional research might focus on differences in thriving among those identities or other identities. If including those factors, it is recommended that future researchers conduct a study involving multiple institutions, to ensure the anonymity of participants when cross-tabulating these data points. A qualitative research study is also recommended to understand the meaning of the views of student affairs professionals more deeply. Conducting focus groups and interviews could provide participants the chance to share inside perspectives about their experiences and what impacts their levels of thriving.

Specific to this institution and consistent with the results found in RQ3, additional research could be conducted on the commitment to staff welfare variable as it relates to overall thriving, as it was the only variable that did not show a correlation to overall thriving. It would be important to determine if student affairs professionals generally feel a lack of commitment to staff welfare by the institution or if the results were influenced by the current pandemic. Another potential future research recommendation for this institution is to look at how the work environment may change as the pandemic

progresses and how that changing work environment might affect thriving in student affairs professionals.

There are various frameworks on the concept of thriving within the workplace, which is often known as workplace thriving (Seligman, 2011; Spreitzer et al., 2005). Ultimately, the research team concluded that thriving is an important concept for student affairs professionals' well-being, connection to their workplace, and ability to positively impact the organization even during a pandemic. However, as our research was limited, further research is needed around the concept of thriving in student affairs and higher education professionals.

Chapter Summary

This study examined the concept of thriving among student affairs professionals, which PERMA constructs (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments) contributed to thriving among these professionals, which predictors (psychological sense of community, spirituality, institutional integrity, and commitment to staff welfare) contributed to thriving, and how the COVID-19 pandemic affected thriving amongst student affairs professionals. Ultimately, it was discovered that overall, student affairs professionals were high in overall thriving, and all five PERMA constructs significantly contributed to overall thriving among student affairs professionals. Three out of the four predictors (psychological sense of community, spirituality, and institutional integrity) were found to have significantly impacted thriving among the study participants. The COVID-19 pandemic was also found to have significantly impacted thriving.

The researchers of this study presented recommendations for suggested courses of action for higher education administrators, supervisors and managers, graduate programs, and professional organizations. Recommendations for administrators included making commitments to the ongoing professional development of student affairs professionals, implementing career ladders as an incentive to advance within an institution, and creating an equitable work environment across campus. This can be achieved by allocating financial resources to student affairs offices. In turn, these individuals can continue to grow as professionals, take on new roles within their respective offices, learn new skills and develop existing ones, and collaborate with other professionals in the field to gain new perspectives on how to best serve college students.

Recommendations for supervisors and managers included participation in ongoing management training, implementing a comprehensive onboarding and training program for new student affairs professionals, and highlighting the institution, campus culture, and staff support. These strategies promote a sense of institutional integrity and provide prospective student affairs professionals with an accurate glimpse into the institution prior to their hiring. Recommendations for graduate programs included ensuring that foundational student affairs-related knowledge and experiences were incorporated into graduate programs designed to educate the next wave of student affairs professionals. This allows for future practitioners to fully understand the scope, expectations, and essential characteristics that are required for entry into the field of student affairs. Recommendations for professional organizations included ongoing advocacy and representation of student affairs professionals to promote professionalization of focus areas within the field. Additionally, professional organizations can maintain this

advocacy and representation by conducting ongoing research into how student affairs professionals are thriving, providing professional development opportunities for both staff and supervisors.

The researchers identified areas of future research that could further expand upon the literature involving thriving among student affairs professionals in higher education. They noted that this individual study was limited to a single four-year public institution in the Midwest. It was recommended that future research examine thriving among student affairs professionals at both public and private institutions as well as other four-year institutions and community colleges. This would provide richer depth and context to thriving among student affairs professionals in higher education. It was recommended that future investigation of how gender, race, and other key demographics may impact perceived levels of thriving among professionals. Lastly, qualitative research was recommended for future research in thriving, as it would provide additional context, insight, and personal experiences with thriving student affairs professionals.

References

- Abdi, H., & Williams, L. J. (2010). Newman-keuls test and tukey test. In N. J. Salkind. *Encyclopedia of Research Design*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
<https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412961288>
- Abbas, I., Salle, S., & Djanggih, H. (2019). Corporate responsibility towards employees' welfare. *Yuridika*, 34(1), 36–53. <https://doi.org/10.20473/ydk.v34i1.9304>
- Abid, G. (2016). How does thriving matter at workplace. *International Journal of Economics and Empirical Research*, 4, 521–527.
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/314750463>
- Adams, S. D., Hazelwood, S., & Hayden, B. (2014). Student affairs case management: Merging social work theory with student affairs practice. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 51(4), 446-458. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/jsarp-2014-0044>
- Ahmed, I., Rehman, W., Ali, F., Ali, G., & Anwar, F. (2018). Predicting employee performance through organizational virtuousness: Mediation by affective well-being and work engagement. *Journal of Management Development*, 37(6), 493–502. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JMD-04-2017-0115>
- Allen, D. G., Bryant, P. C., & Vardaman, J. M. (2010). Retaining talent: Replacing misconceptions with evidence-based strategies. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 24(2), 48–64. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amp.24.2.48>
- American College Health Association. (2017). *National College Health Assessment II: Reference Group Executive Summary Fall 2017*.

<https://www.acha.org/documents/ncha/NCHA->

[II_FALL_2017_REFERENCE_GROUP_EXECUTIVE_SUMMARY.pdf](#)

American College Personnel Association & National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (ACPA & NASPA). (2015). *Professional competency areas for student affairs educators*.

https://www.naspa.org/images/uploads/main/ACPA_NASPA_Professional_Compencies_FINAL.pdf

American Psychological Association (APA). (2016). *Work and well-being survey* [Data Set]. Harris Poll. <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2016/06/workplace-well-being>

Angelique, T. (2011). Managing generational diversity at the workplace: Expectations and perceptions of different generations of employees. *African Journal of Business Management*, 5(2), 249-255. <https://doi.org/10.5897/AJBM10.335>

Ash, A. N., & Schreiner, L. A. (2016). Pathways to success for students of color in Christian colleges: The role of institutional integrity and sense of community. *Christian Higher Education*, 15(1-2), 38-61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15363759.2015.1106356>

Bailey, C., & Madden, A. (2016). What makes work meaningful - Or meaningless. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 57(4), 53-61.

Barr, M. J. (1987). Individual and institutional integrity. *NASPA Journal*. 24(4), 2-5, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220973.1987.11072012>

Bencsik, A., Horvath-Csikos, G., & Jubasz, T. (2016). Y and z generations at workplaces. *Journal of Competitiveness*, 8(3), 90-106. <https://doi.org/10.7441/joc.2016.03.06>

- Billett, S. (1995). Workplace learning: Its potential and limitations. *Education + Training, 37*(5), 20–27. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00400919510089103>
- Blake, J. H. (2007). The crucial role of student affairs professionals in the learning process. *New Directions for Student Services, 2007*(117), 65–72. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.234>
- Boyd, N., & Nowell, B. (2017) Testing a theory of sense of community and community responsibility in organizations: An empirical assessment of predictive capacity on employee well-being and organizational citizenship. *Journal of Community Psychology, 45*(2), 210-229. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.21843>
- Brewer, E. W., & Clippard, L. F. (2002). Burnout and job satisfaction among student support services personnel. *Human Resource Development Quarterly, 13*, 169-186.
- Brown, D. J., Arnold, R., Fletcher, D., & Standage, M. (2017). Human thriving: A conceptual debate and literature review. *European Psychologist, 22*(3), 167-179. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1016-9040/a000294>
- Burkard, A. W., Cole, D. C., Ott, M., & Stoflet, T. (2005). Entry-level competencies of new student affairs professionals: A Delphi study. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, 42*(3), 283-309.
- Carmeli, A., & Spreitzer, G. M. (2009). Trust, connectivity, and thriving: Implications for innovative behaviors at work. *Journal of Creative Behavior, 43*(3), 169-191. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2202/1949-6605.1509>

- Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2020, June 2). Coronavirus (COVID-19) frequently asked questions. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>
- Chiaburu, D. S., & Harrison, D. A. (2008). Do peers make the place? Conceptual synthesis and meta-analysis of coworker effects on perceptions, attitudes, OCBs, and performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 93*(5), 1082–1103. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.93.5.1082>
- Chickering, A. W., & Reisser, L. (1993). *Education and identity* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Choi, S., & Rainey, H. G. (2010). Managing diversity in US federal agencies: Effects of diversity and diversity management on employee perceptions of organizational performance. *Public Administration Review, 70*(1), 109-121. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2009.02115.x>
- Cody, R. (2016). *Biostatistics by Example Using SAS Studio*. SAS Institute, Inc.
- Coffey, J. K., Wray-Lake, L., Mashek, D., & Branand, B. (2014). A multi-study examination of well-being theory in college and community samples. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 17*, 187-211. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-014-9590-8>
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences*. Second edition. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203771587>
- Cohen, J. (1992). A power primer. *Psychological Bulletin, 112*(1), 155-159.
- Cohn, V., & Taylor, P. (2010, December 20). Social & demographic trends baby boomers approach 65-glumly. <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2010/12/20/baby-boomers-approach-65-glumly/>

- Conway, M. L., & Foskey, R. (2015). Apprentices thriving at work: Looking through an appreciative lens. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, 67(3), 332-348.
- Cook, S. (2009). The important events in the development of academic advising in the United States. *NACADA Journal*, 29(2), 19-26.
- Crawford, J., Butler-Henderson, K., Rudolph, J., Malkawi, B., Glowatz, M., Burton, R., Magni, P. A., Lam, S. (2020). COVID-19: 20 countries' high education intra-period digital pedagogy responses. *Journal of Applied Learning & Teaching*, 3(1), 9-28. <https://doi.org/10.37074/jalt.2020.2.1.7>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Fifth edition. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Crouse, P., Doyle, W., & Young, J. D. (2011). Workplace learning strategies, barriers, facilitators and outcomes: A qualitative study among human resource management practitioners. *Human Resource Development International*, 14(1), 39–55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13678868.2011.542897>
- Cucinotta, D., & Vanelli, M. (2020). WHO declares COVID-19 a pandemic. *Acta Biomed*, 91(1), 157-160. <https://doi.10.23760/abm.v91i1.9397>
- Davis, T. J., & Cooper, D. L. (2017). "People are messy": Complex narratives of supervising new professionals in student affairs. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 54, 55-68. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19496591.2016.1219267>
- Dirkx, J. M. (2013). Leaning in and leaning back at the same time: Toward a spirituality of work-related learning. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 15(4), 356–369. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422313498562>

- Donnelly, N. (2009). A national survey of academic-advisor job satisfaction. *NACADA Journal*, 29(1), 5-21. <https://doi.org/10.12930/0271-9517-29.1.5>
- Doyle, W., & Young, J. D. (2007). Workplace learning strategies of managers in small and large firms in knowledge-based industries. *The University Forum on Human Resource Development*, 14. <http://www.ufhrd.co.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2008/06/doyl-34-fp.pdf>
- Draugalis, J. R., Coons, S. J., & Plaza, C. M. (2008). Best practices of survey research reports: A synopsis for authors and reviewers. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 72(1), 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.5688/aj720111>.
- Dungy, D., & Gordon, S. A. (2010). The development of student affairs. In J. H. Schuh, S. R. Jones, & S. R. Harper (Eds.), *Student services: A handbook for the profession* (5th ed., pp. 67-86). John Wiley & Sons.
- Du Plessis, A., Van Straaten, S., & Van Tonder, T. (2016.) Enhancing the well-being of support services staff in higher education: the power of appreciation. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 42 (1).
- Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. Random House.
- Dwyer, R. J., & Azevedo, A. (2016). Preparing leaders for the multi-generational workforce. *Journal of Enterprising Communities*. Emerald Group Publishing Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JEC-08-2013-0025>
- Eichler, L. (2016, January 15). Small acts of kindness can have a huge impact on workplace effectiveness. *The Globe and Mail*. 1-3.
- Evans, N. J. (1988). Attrition of student affairs professionals: A review of the literature. *Journal of College Student Development*, 29, 19-24.

- Farrell, B. (2007). Investing in staff for student retention. *The National Education Association Almanac of Higher Education*, pp. 85-92.
- Feeley, T. H., Hwang, J., & Barnett, G.A. (2008). Predicting employee turnover from friendship networks. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 36, 56–73.
- Fenske, R. H. (1989a). Historical foundations of student services. In U. Delworth, G. R. Hanson, & Associates (Eds.), *Student services: A handbook for the profession* (2nd ed., pp. 5-24). Jossey-Bass.
- Fenske, R. H. (1989b). Evolution of the student services profession. In U. Delworth, G. R. Hanson, & Associates (Eds.), *Student services: A handbook for the profession* (2nd ed., pp. 25-56). Jossey-Bass.
- Fields, D. (2002). *Taking measure of work: A guide to validated scales for organizational research and diagnosis*. SAGE Publications.
- Fink, A. (2017). *How to conduct surveys; A step-by-step guide*. SAGE Publications.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (1998). What good are positive emotions? *Review of General Psychology*, 2(3), 300–319. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.2.3.300>
- Freudenberger, H. J. (1974). Staff burn-out. *Journal of Social Issues*, 30, 159-165.
- Fry, R. (2018, April 11). *Millennials are the largest generation in the U. S. labor force*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/04/11/millennials-largest-generation-us-labor-force/>
- Gallup. (2016). How millennials want to live and work. Washington, D.C.: Gallup. <http://news.gallup.com/reports/189830/millennials-work-live.aspx>

- Gansemer-Topf, A. M., & Ryder, A. (2017). Competencies needed for entry-level student affairs work: Views from mid-level professionals. *College Student Affairs Journal, 35*(1) 40-54. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csaj.2017.0004>
- Gibson, J. W., Greenwood, R. A., & Murphy, E. F. (2009). Generational differences in the workplace: Personal values, behaviors, and beliefs. *Journal of Diversity Management, 4*(3), 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.19030/jdm.v4i3.4959>
- Gurin, P., Dey, E., Hurtado, S., & Gurin, G. (2002). Diversity and higher education: Theory and impact on educational outcomes. *Harvard Educational Review, 72*(3), 330-367. <https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.72.3.01151786u134n051>
- Hafeez, M. M. I. (2019). Influence of thriving and job satisfaction on turnover intention: Mediating role of job satisfaction. *International Journal of Information, Business and Management, 11*(3), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-019-7894-7>
- Han, S. J. & Stieha, V. (2020). Growth mindset for human resource development: A scoping review of the literature with recommended interventions. *Human Resource Development Review, 19*(3), 309-331.
- Hassanzadeh, R., & Mahdinejad, G. (2013). Relationship between happiness and achievement motivation: A case study of university students. *Journal of Elementary Education, 23*, 53-65.
- Hershatler, A., & Epstein, M. (2010). Millennials and the world of work: an organization and management perspective. *Journal of Business Psychology, 25*, 211-223. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-010-9160-y>

- Hevel, M. S. (2016). Toward a history of student affairs: a synthesis of research, 1996-2015. *Journal of College Student Development, 57*(7), 844-862.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2016.0082>
- Hinton, K., Howard-Hamilton, M., & Rentz, A. (2016). A historical perspective of higher education and student affairs: Transitions and transformation. In Zhang, N. & Associates (Eds.). *Rentz's student affairs practice in higher education* (5th ed., pp. 28-61). Charles C Thomas.
- Holzweiss, P., & Walker, D. (2018). Higher education crisis: Training new professionals for crisis management. *College Student Affairs Journal, 36*(1), 124-135.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/csaj.2018.0008>
- Howard-Hamilton, M. F., Palmer, C., Johnson, S., & Kicklighter, M. (1998). Burnout and related factors: Differences between women and men in student affairs. *College Student Affairs Journal, 17*(2), 80-91.
- Horowitz, H. L. (1987). *Campus life: Undergraduate cultures from the end of the eighteenth century to the present*. Knopf.
- Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research (IUCPR). (2018). Carnegie Classifications 2018 public data file.
<http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/downloads/CCIHE2018-PublicDataFile.xlsx>
- Jones, S., Harper, S., & Schuh, J. (2011). Shaping the future. In J. H. Schuh, S. R. Jones, & S. R. Harper (Eds.), *Student services: A handbook for the profession* (5th ed., pp. 534-546). John Wiley & Sons.
- Kahn, W. A. (1992). To be fully there: Psychological presence at work. *Human Relations, 45*(4), 321-349. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001872679204500402>

- Kaplan A. & Maehr M. (1999). Achievement goals and student well-being. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 24, 330-358.
- Keenan, E. M., & Mostert, K. (2013). Perceived organizational support for strengths use: The factorial validity and reliability of a new scale in the banking industry. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 39, 1–12.
- Kelderman, E. (2020, April 17) *Major cost-cutting begins in response to covid-19, with faculty and staff furloughs and pay cuts*. The Chronicle of Higher Education. <https://www.chronicle.com/article/major-cost-cutting-begins-in-response-to-covid-19-with-faculty-and-staff-furloughs-and-pay-cuts/>
- Killion, J. S. (2017). *Assessing impact: Evaluating professional learning*. Third edition. Corwin.
- Kleine, A. K., Rudolph, C., & Zacher, H. (2019). Thriving at work: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 40, 973-999. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2375>
- Komives, S. R., & Woodard, D. (2003). Organizations and functions of student affairs. In S. R. Komives & D. B. Woodard, Jr. (Eds.), *Student services: A handbook for the profession* (4th ed., pp. 339-419). San Francisco, CA. Josey-Bass.
- LaFountain, R. & Bartos, R. (2002). *Research and statistics made meaningful in counseling and student affairs*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Lapoint, P. A., & Liprie-Spence, A. (2017). Employee engagement: Generational differences in the workforce. *Journal of Organizational Psychology*, 17(5), 118-128.

- Lazanyi, K., & Bilan, Y. (2017). Generation z on the labour market - do they trust others within their workplace? *Polish Journal of Management Studies*, 16(1), 78-93.
<https://doi.org/10.17512/pjms.2017.16.1.07>
- Legas, M., & Sims, C. (2011). Leveraging generational diversity in today's workplace. *Online Journal for Workforce Education and Development*, 5(3), 1-9.
<https://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1100&context=ojwed>
- Linley, P. A., Joseph, S., Harrington, S., & Wood, A. M. (2006). Positive psychology: Past, present and (possible) future. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 1(1), 3-16.
- Liu, J., & Bern-Klug, M. (2013). Nursing home social services directors who report thriving at work. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 56(2), 127-145.
<https://doi.10.1080/01634372.2012.750255>
- Lohman, M. C. (2005). A survey of factors influencing the engagement of two professional groups in informal workplace learning activities. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 16(4), 501-527. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrdq.1153>
- Long, D. (2012). The foundations of student affairs: A guide to the profession. In L. J. Hinchliffe & M. A. Wong (Eds.), *Environments for student growth and development: Librarians and student affairs in collaboration* (pp. 1-39). Chicago: Association of College & Research Libraries.
- Lorden, L. (1998). Attrition in the student affairs profession. *NASPA Journal*, 35(3), 207-216. <https://doi.org/10.2202/1949-6605.1049>
- Louis, M., & Schreiner, L. (2012). Helping students thrive: A strengths development model. In L. Schreiner, M. Louis, & D. Nelson (Eds.), *Thriving in transitions: A*

- Research-Based Approach to College Student Success* (pp. 19-40). University of South Carolina.
- Love, P. (2013). *Considering a career in student affairs*. American College Personnel Association. <https://www.myacpa.org/considering-career-student-affairs>
- Lovell, C. D., & Kosten, L. A. (2000). Skills, knowledge, and personal traits necessary for success as a student affairs administrator: A meta-analysis of thirty years of research. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 37(4), 535–572. <https://doi.org/10.2202/1949-6605.1118>
- Manuti, A., Pastore, S., Scardigno, A. F., Giancaspro, M. L., & Morciano, D. (2015). Formal and informal learning in the workplace: A research review. *International Journal of Training and Development*, 19(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijtd.12044>
- Marshall, S. M., Gardner, M. M., Hughes, C., & Lowery, U. (2016). Attrition from student affairs: Perspectives from those who exited the profession. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*. 53(2), 146-159. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19496591.2016.1147359>
- McEntee, M. L., Dy-Liacco, G. S., & Haskins, D. G. (2013). Human flourishing: A natural home for spirituality. *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health*, 15(3), 141–159. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19349637.2013.799410>
- Menkes, J. (2011). *Better under pressure: How great leaders bring out the best in themselves and others*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press.

- Mertler, C., & Reinhart, R. V. (2016). *Advanced and multivariate statistical methods: Practical application and interpretation: Sixth edition*. Taylor and Francis.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315266978>
- Moon, T. W., Youn, N., Hur, W. M., & Kim, K. M. (2020). Does employees' spirituality enhance job performance? The mediating roles of intrinsic motivation and job crafting. *Current Psychology*, 39, 1618–1634. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-018-9864-0>
- Mullen, P. R., Malone, A., Denney, A., & Dietz, S. S. (2018). Job stress, burnout, job satisfaction, and intention among student affairs professionals. *College Student Affairs Journal*, 36(1), 94-108. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csaj.2018.0006>
- Ng, E. S. W., Schweitzer, L., & Lyons, S. T. (2010). New generation, great expectations: a field study of the millennial generation. *The Journal of Business Psychology*, 25, 281-292. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-010-9159-4>
- Office of Research Administration, University of Missouri-St. Louis. (2020, July 1). *Compliance: Human subjects (IRB)*. Human Subjects (IRB).
<https://www.umsl.edu/services/ora/Compliance/human-subjects-irb.html>
- Pack, A. (2018). *Thriving in a fortune 500 company: A case study of grit, resilience, and employee perceptions* (Doctoral dissertation, East Tennessee State University). Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Paper 3380. <https://dc.etsu.edu/etd/3380>
- Park, S., & Lee, J. Y. (2018). Workplace learning measures for human resource development: Review and summary. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 50(7–8), 420–431. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ICT-08-2018-0068>

- Parker, D. F., & DeCotiis, T. A. (1983). Organizational determinants of job stress. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 32(2), 160-177.
[https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0030-5073\(83\)90145-9](https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0030-5073(83)90145-9)
- Parker, K. & Igielnik, R. (2020, May 14) On the cusp of adulthood and facing an uncertain future: What we know about Gen Z so far.
<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/essay/on-the-cusp-of-adulthood-and-facing-an-uncertain-future-what-we-know-about-gen-z-so-far/>
- Paterson, T. A., Luthans, F., & Jeung, W. (2013). Thriving at work: Impact of psychological capital and supervisor support. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 35(3), 434–446. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.1907>
- Peterson, C., Park, N., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2005). Orientations to happiness and life satisfaction: The full life versus the empty life. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 6(1), 25–41. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-004-1278-z>
- Petrucelli, T. (2017). Winning the “cat-and-mouse game” of retaining millennial talent. *Strategic HR Review*, 16(1), 42–44. <https://doi.org/10.1108/shr-08-2016-0078>
- Pope, R., & Reynolds, A. (1997). Student affairs core competencies: Integrating multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills. *Journal of College Student Development*, 38(3), 266-277.
- Pope, L., Reynolds, A., & Mueller, J. (2019). *Multicultural competence in student affairs* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Porath, C., Spreitzer, G., Gibson, C., & Garnett, F. G. (2012). Thriving at work: Toward its measurement, construct validation, and theoretical refinement. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 33(2), 250-275. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41415752>

- Priest, D., & Milne, J. (1991). A next step in student retention: Academic advising. *Journal for Higher Education Management*, 6(2), 35–41.
- Pritchard, A., Li, J., McChesney, J., & Bichsel, J. (2019, August). *The challenges of an aging higher ed workforce* (Research Report). CUPA-HR. <https://www.cupahr.org/surveys/research-briefs/>
- Pritchard, A., & McChesney, J. (2018, October). *Focus on student affairs, 2018: Understanding key challenges using CUPA-HR data* (Research Report). CUPA-HR. https://www.cupahr.org/wp-content/uploads/Student_Affairs_Report.pdf
- Raelin, J. A. (1997). A model of work-based learning. *Organization Science*, 8(6), 563–579.
- Renn, K., & Jessup-Anger, E. (2008). Preparing new professionals: Lessons for graduate programs from the national study of new professionals in student affairs. *Journal of College Student Development*, 49(4), 319-335, <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.0.0022>
- Rentz, A. L., & Saddlemire, G. L. (Eds.). (1988). *Student affairs functions in higher education*. Charles C Thomas.
- Rettie, R. (2003). Connectedness, awareness and social presence. *Proceedings of PRESENCE 2003*, 8, 474-484.
- Reybold, L. E., Halx, M. D., & Jimenez, A. L. (2008). Professional integrity in higher education: A study of administrative staff ethics in student affairs. *Journal of College Student Development* 49(2), 110-124. <http://doi:10.1353/csd.2008.0013>
- Rhoades L., & Eisenberger R. (2002). Perceived organizational support: A review of the literature. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. 2002;87(4):698-714.

- Robinson, S. L. (1996). Trust and breach of the psychological contract. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 41*(4), 574-599. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2393868>
- Roof, R. A. (2015). The association of individual spirituality on employee engagement: The spirit at work. *Journal of Business Ethics, 130*(3), 585–599. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-014-2246-0>
- Rosser, V. J., & Javinar, J. M. (2003). Midlevel student affairs leaders' intentions to leave: Examining the quality of their professional and institutional work life. *Journal of College Student Development, 44*(6), 813–830.
- Rubin, L. M., & Moreno-Pardo, M. D. (2018). Burnout among student-athlete services professionals. *Journal of Higher Education Athletics & Innovation, 1*, 1-25.
- Rudolph, F. (1962). *The American college and university: A history*. Knopf.
- Schaufeli, W. B., & Bakker, A. B. (2004). Job demands, job resources, and their relationship with burnout and engagement: A multi-sample study. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 25*(3), 293–315. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.248>
- Schaufeli, W. B., Bakker A. B., & Salanova M. (2006). The measurement of work engagement with a short questionnaire: A cross-national study. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 66*, 701– 716.
- Schneider Carodine, M. K., Snyder, M., & Zhang, H. (2016). Multicultural affairs and special support services. In Zhang, N. & Associates (Eds.). *Rentz's student affairs practice in higher education* (5th ed., pp. 243-287). Charles C Thomas.
- Schreiner, L. A. (2010a). The “thriving quotient”: A new vision for student success. *American College Personnel Association and Wiley Periodicals, Inc.* <https://doi.org/10.1002/abc.20016>

- Schreiner, L. A. (2010b). Thriving in the classroom. *American College Personnel Association and Wiley Periodicals, Inc.* <https://doi.org/10.1002/abc.20022>
- Schreiner, L. A. (2010c). Thriving in the community. *American College Personnel Association and Wiley Periodicals, Inc.* <https://doi.org/10.1002/abc.20029>
- Schreiner, L. A. (2016, October 30 - November 3). Beyond grades and graduation: Thriving as a retention strategy [Conference Session]. National Symposium on Student Retention, Norfolk, VA, United States. https://csrde.ou.edu/wp-content/uploads/NSSR_2016_Schreiner_keynote_handout.pdf
- Schreiner, L. A., Noel, P., Anderson, E., & Cantwell, L. (2011). The impact of faculty and staff on high-risk college student persistence. *Journal of College Student Development*, 52(3), 321-338. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2011.0044>
- Schreiner, L. A., Pothoven, S., Nelson, D., & McIntosh, E. J. (2009). *College student thriving: Predictors of success and retention*. Paper presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Vancouver, BC. https://0b65db65-dcd1-4c9d-8a6c-d3283bd132e3.filesusr.com/ugd/27a499_8f49638692e84eb78161c4467f438451.pdf
- Schubert-Irastorza, C., & Fabry, D. L. (2014). Job satisfaction, burnout, and work engagement in higher education: A survey of research and best practices. *Journal of Research in Innovative Teaching*, 7(1), 37-50. <https://assets.nu.edu/assets/resources/pageResources/journal-of-research-in-innovative-teaching-volume-7.pdf>

- Schuh, J. H., Jones, S. R., & Harper, S. H. (2011). *Student services: A handbook for the profession* (5th ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish a visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. Free Press.
- Seligman, M. E. P., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, *55*(1), 5-14.
- Sheldon, K. M., & King, L. (2001). Why positive psychology is necessary. *American Psychologist*, *56*(3), 216-217.
- Shufiitinsky, A., & Cox, R. (2019). Losing talent on day one: Onboarding millennial employees in health care organizations. *Organization Development Journal*, *37*(4), 33–51.
- Shin, J. C., & Jung, J. (2014). Academics job satisfaction and job stress across countries in changing academic environments. *Higher Education*. *67*, 603–620.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-013-9668-y>
- Sim, W., Zanardelli, G., Loughran, M. J., Mannarino, M. B., & Hill, C. E. (2016). Thriving, burnout, and coping strategies of early and late career counseling psychologists in the United States. *Counseling Psychology Quarterly*, *29*(4), 382-404. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09515070.2015.1121135>
- Singh, A. (2014). Challenges and issues of generation z. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, *16*(7), 59-63.
<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/b109/73a5c6d11f37542adc34455bb0c7fbcbbb9d.pdf>

- Spreitzer, G., Porath, C. L., & Gibson, C. B. (2012). Toward human sustainability: How to enable more thriving at work. *Organizational Dynamics*, *41*, 155-162.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2012.01.009>
- Spreitzer, G. M., & Sutcliffe, K. M. (2007). Thriving in organizations. In D. L. Nelson & C. L. Cooper (Eds.), *Positive organizational behavior* (pp. 74-85). SAGE Publications.
- Spreitzer, G., Sutcliffe, K., Dutton, J., Sonenshein, S., & Grant, A. M. (2005). A socially embedded model of thriving at work. *Organization Science*.
<https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1050.0153>
- Steger, M. F., Dik, B. J., & Duffy, R. D. (2012). Measuring meaningful work: The work and meaning inventory (WAMI). *Journal of Career Assessment*, *20*(3), 322–337.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072711436160>
- Stephens, C., & Beatty, C. (2015). Leading and thriving: How leadership education can improve first-year student successes. *Journal of Leadership Education*, *14*(3).
<https://doi.org/10.12806/v14/i3/t1>
- Task Force on the Future of Student Affairs. (2010). Envisioning the future of student affairs. American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA).
https://www.naspa.org/files/dmfile/Task_Force_Student_Affairs_2010_Report.pdf
- Taub, D. J. (1998). Building community on campus: Student affairs professionals as group workers. *Journal of Specialists in Group Work*, *23*(4), 411-427.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01933929808411410>

- Taub, D. J., & McEwen, M. K. (2006). Decision to enter the profession of student affairs. *Journal of College Student Development, 47*(2), 206-216.
<https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/csd.2006.0027>
- Taylor, R. (1990). Interpretation of the correlation coefficient: A basic review. *Journal of Diagnostic Medical Sonography, 6*(1), 35–39.
- Teti, E., & Andriotto, M. (2013). Effectiveness of employee welfare schemes: differences of specific professional profiles. *International Journal of Human Resource Management, 24*(17), 3232–3246. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2013.763840>
- Thelin, J. R. (2011). *A history of American higher education* (2nd Ed). John Hopkins University Press.
- Thelin, J. R. (2019). *A history of American higher education* (3rd ed.). John Hopkins University Press.
- Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition* (2nd ed.). University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.
- Torres, V., Jones, S. R., & Renn, K. A. (2009). Identity development theories in student affairs: origins, current status, and new approaches. *Journal of College Student Development, 50*(6), 577-596. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.0.0102>
- Toquero, C. M. (2020). Challenges and opportunities for higher education amid the COVID-19 pandemic: The Philippine context. *Pedagogical Research, 5*(4), 1-5.
<https://doi.org/10.29333/pr/7947>
- Tull, A. (2006). Synergistic supervision, job satisfaction, and intention to turnover of new professionals in student affairs. *Journal of College Student Development, 47*(4), 465-480. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2006.0053>

- U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2018). Postsecondary education administrators. *Occupational outlook handbook*.
<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/management/postsecondary-education-administrators.htm>
- U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2019). *Postsecondary education administrators: How to become a postsecondary education administrator*. Occupational Outlook Handbook. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/management/postsecondary-education-administrators.htm#tab-4>
- U. S. Department of Education (2021, May 11). *U.S. Department of Education Makes Available \$36 Billion in American Rescue Plan Funds to Support Students and Institutions* [Press Release]. <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-department-education-makes-available-36-billion-american-rescue-plan-funds-support-students-and-institutions>
- U. S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). (2019). College navigator. <https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>
- Van Wingerden, J., & Van Der Stoep, J. (2018). The motivational potential of meaningful work: Relationships with strengths use, work engagement, and performance. *PLoS ONE*, *13*(6), 1–11.
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0197599>
- Vijayalakshmi, S. (2013). Strategies and interventions to manage multi-generational workforce in organizations. *Vidyaniketan Journal of Management and Research*, *1*(1), 53-57.

- Viner, R. M., Russell, S. J, Croker, H., Packer, J., Ward, J., Stansfield, C., Mytton, O., Bonell, C., & Booy, R. (2020) School closure and management practices during coronavirus outbreaks including COVID-19: A rapid systematic review. *Lancet Child Adolescent Health*, 4, 397-404.
- Visser, T., Vastenburger, M. H., & Keyson, D. V. (2011). Designing to support social connectedness: The case of snowglobe. *International Journal of Design*, 5(3), 129–142.
- Ward, M., & Hossler, D. (2016). From admissions to enrollment management. In Zhang, N. & Associates (Eds.). *Rentz's student affairs practice in higher education* (5th ed., pp. 28-61). Charles C Thomas.
- Wiedmer, T. (2015). Generations do differ: Best practices in leading traditionalists, boomers, and generations x, y, and z. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 82(1), 51–58.
- Williams, L. J., & Anderson S. E. (1991). Job satisfaction and organizational commitment as predictors of organizational citizenship and in-role behaviors. *Journal of Management*, 17, 601–617.
- Winston, Jr., R. B., & Creamer, D. G. (1998). Staff supervision and professional development: An integrated approach. In *New Directions for Student Services*, 84, 29-42.
- Wolfe, D. (2019). *Leading across generations*. [Poster presentation] Community Engagement Conference at The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH.
- Zhang, N., & Associates (Eds.). (2016). *Rentz's student affairs practice in higher education* (5th ed.). Charles C Thomas.

Zhang, N., & McCoy, V., (2016) Counseling centers. In Zhang, N. & Associates (Eds.).

Rentz's student affairs practice in higher education (5th ed., pp. 160-202).

Charles C Thomas.

APPENDIX A

THRIVING QUOTIENT FOR STAFF AND ADMINISTRATORS

The original source of the survey was the Thriving Project at Azusa Pacific University under the leadership of Dr. Laurie Schreiner. This instrument is the intellectual property of Dr. Laurie A. Schreiner, owner and copyright holder of the Thriving Quotient™.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- When were you born?
 1. 1928-1945
 2. 1946-1964
 3. 1965-1980
 4. 1981-1996
 5. 1997-2012

- What is your current cluster/functional area in student affairs? (Note: These clusters were created by grouping commonalities in services provided by various functional areas to increase sample size)
 1. STUDENT SUCCESS: Academic Advising/Career Development/Learning Support Services
 2. STUDENT ENROLLMENT: Admissions/Enrollment Management/Financial Aid/Registrar
 3. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT: Housing & Residence Life/Student Involvement
 4. STUDENT SUPPORT: Campus Recreation/Counseling & Health Services/Disability Support Services/Diversity & Inclusion/International Student Services/Veteran's Services

Thriving Quotient for Staff and Administrators (TQ-SA) Based on Seligman's Well-Being Theory		
<i>Note: In the final survey distributed to participants, survey items will be randomized.</i>		
<i>1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Somewhat Agree, 5 = Agree, 6 = Strongly Agree</i>		
Thriving (PERMA) – Positive Emotion – P Construct (4)	SD	SA
I look for the best in situations, even when things seem hopeless.	1 2 3 4 5 6	
I really enjoy being a staff or administrator here.	1 2 3 4 5 6	
I am optimistic about this institution's ability to weather the challenges facing higher education.	1 2 3 4 5 6	
I tend to believe that things will eventually work out for me, if I invest enough effort.	1 2 3 4 5 6	

Thriving (PERMA) – Engagement – E Construct (4)	SD	SA
I feel energized by my work at this institution.	1	2 3 4 5 6
The vision established by the senior leadership of this institution is motivating to me.	1	2 3 4 5 6
I tend to become so absorbed in my work that I lose track of time.	1	2 3 4 5 6
I enjoy my work.	1	2 3 4 5 6
Thriving (PERMA) – Relationships – R Construct (4)	SD	SA
I have a positive working relationship with the administrators with whom I interact at this institution.	1	2 3 4 5 6
I have good friends at this institution.	1	2 3 4 5 6
My immediate supervisor cares about me as a person.	1	2 3 4 5 6
I receive the support I need from my co-workers at this institution.	1	2 3 4 5 6
Thriving (PERMA) – Meaning – M Construct (4)	SD	SA
My work gives me a sense of meaning or purpose in my life.	1	2 3 4 5 6
I believe I make a difference in the lives of students at this institution.	1	2 3 4 5 6
I feel valued by my colleagues.	1	2 3 4 5 6
My values are aligned with the mission of this institution.	1	2 3 4 5 6
Thriving (PERMA) – Accomplishment – A Construct (4)	SD	SA
I tend to achieve the meaningful goals I set for myself in my work at this institution.	1	2 3 4 5 6
I am able to do what I love much of the time at this institution.	1	2 3 4 5 6
My immediate supervisor has given me positive feedback about my work in the last month.	1	2 3 4 5 6
I feel good about what I have accomplished so far in my role at this institution.	1	2 3 4 5 6
Thriving Predictors – Psychological Sense of Community (8)	SD	SA
I am proud to represent this institution in the broader academic community.	1	2 3 4 5 6
I feel like I belong here.	1	2 3 4 5 6
I feel supported by the administration of this institution.	1	2 3 4 5 6
There is a solid sense of trust between the faculty, staff, and administration here.	1	2 3 4 5 6
I have an opportunity to participate in institutional decision-making processes at this institution.	1	2 3 4 5 6

My opinions matter to the leadership of this institution.	1 2 3 4 5 6
There is a spirit of collegiality among the faculty, staff, and administration.	1 2 3 4 5 6
There is effective communication across this institution.	1 2 3 4 5 6

Thriving Predictors - Spirituality (3)	SD	SA
My spiritual or religious beliefs provide me with a sense of strength when life is difficult.	1 2 3 4 5 6	
My spiritual or religious beliefs are the foundation of my approach to my work at this institution.	1 2 3 4 5 6	
My spiritual or religious beliefs give meaning/purpose to my life.	1 2 3 4 5 6	
Thriving Predictors - Institutional Integrity (3)	SD	SA
Overall, the actions of faculty, staff, and administrators on this campus are consistent with the mission of the institution.	1 2 3 4 5 6	
My experiences at this institution so far have met my expectations.	1 2 3 4 5 6	
This institution was accurately portrayed to me during the hiring process.	1 2 3 4 5 6	
Thriving Predictors - Commitment to Staff Welfare (4)	SD	SA
The leadership of this institution is committed to the well-being of its employees.	1 2 3 4 5 6	
This institution provides me with the resources I need to succeed in a multicultural environment.	1 2 3 4 5 6	
This institution treats staff equitably, regardless of their race, ethnicity, or gender.	1 2 3 4 5 6	
Diverse perspectives are valued within this institution.	1 2 3 4 5 6	
COVID-19 - Outcome (7)	SD	SA
<i>1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Somewhat Agree, 5 = Agree, 6 = Strongly Agree</i>		
Overall, senior leadership has done a good job protecting staff from the negative health consequences of COVID-19.	1 2 3 4 5 6	
Overall, senior leadership has done a good job helping staff adapt to the changes at the institution brought on by the spread of COVID-19.	1 2 3 4 5 6	
Overall, senior leadership has shown care and concern for staff as they respond to the spread of COVID-19.	1 2 3 4 5 6	
<i>1 = Very Dissatisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, 3 = Somewhat Dissatisfied,</i>	VD	VS

<i>4 = Somewhat Satisfied, 5 = Satisfied, 6 = Very Satisfied</i>	
The timeliness of the communication you've received from this institution about its ongoing responses to COVID-19.	1 2 3 4 5 6
The clarity of the communication you've received from this institution about its ongoing responses to COVID-19.	1 2 3 4 5 6
The support you've received from this institution to help you to revise your work to a remote format when needed.	1 2 3 4 5 6
The information you've received about how changes in response to COVID-19 will impact the institution's future viability.	1 2 3 4 5 6

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

<i>1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Often, 5 = Frequently, 6 = Always</i>	N R Oc Of F A
Feel joyful about your work?	1 2 3 4 5 6
Feel positive emotions when you are at work?	1 2 3 4 5 6
Enjoy coming to work?	1 2 3 4 5 6
Thriving (1) <i>1 = Not Even Surviving, 2 = Barely Surviving, 3 = Surviving, 4 = Somewhat Thriving, 5 = Mostly Thriving, 6 = Consistently Thriving</i>	NES T
Thriving is defined as positive engagement in meaningful work, connecting to others at a deeper level, and being optimistic about one's present and future life. Using that definition, how would you rate your own level of thriving in your role at this institution?	1 2 3 4 5 6

- What has happened this semester that has shaped your assessment of your own thriving?
- How has your thriving changed over the past year?
- Finally, how has COVID-19 affected your ability to thrive in your role at this institution?

APPENDIX B

INITIAL OUTREACH TO DR. SCHREINER

⏪ Reply all ▾ 🗑 Delete 🚫 Junk 🚫 Block ⋮

Fw: Student Affairs Professionals - Thriving Quotient Research Inquiry

From: Leggett, Kawanna (UMSL-Student)
Sent: Wednesday, February 5, 2020 9:45 PM
To: lschreiner@apu.edu <lschreiner@apu.edu>
Subject: Thriving Quotient Research Inquiry

Dear Dr. Schreiner,

Currently, I am a second-year doctoral student at the University of Missouri – St. Louis in the College of Education. I'm part of a group of five writing our dissertation titled, Thriving in Student Affairs. Our study seeks to explore the factors of why some student affairs professionals thrive in their work while others do not. Understanding how staff thrive in the workplace is critical given the important role student affairs professionals play in supporting the student experience. This research has the opportunity to inform if there are differences in levels of thriving across age, race and gender.

The purpose of the study is to explore the five factors in Schreiner's Thriving Quotient (2010) of thriving as it relates to student affairs professionals. We hope that adapting the Thriving Quotient for the student affairs workforce can assist in the retention of student affairs professionals. I am reaching out to you as I would like to seek your permission to use your Thriving Quotient as a conceptual framework to our study. I would also like to get your feedback on whether the Thriving Quotient could be adapted for this study.

Our team will ensure we follow all guidelines outlined and reference all use of your research. Additionally, we will share all parts of our research study. Finally, we are under the direction of our dissertation committee advisor Dr. Christina Hubbard-Jackson.

Thank you for considering this request.

Kawanna Leggett, M.Ed
Doctoral Student

--

Executive Director of Residential Life
Washington University in St. Louis

[Reply](#) | [Reply all](#) | [Forward](#)

APPENDIX C

PERMISSION FROM DR. SCHREINER

From: Laurie Schreiner <lschreiner@apu.edu>
Date: Sunday, August 30, 2020 at 11:27 AM
To: "Leggett, Kawanna" <kleggett@wustl.edu>
Subject: RE: [External] Seeking Permission - Student Affairs Professionals - Thriving Quotient Research Inquiry

Hi Kawanna,

I'm sorry that your email got lost in my inbox! Thanks for sending the research request. You have my permission to use the Thriving Quotient in your research as outlined. I have attached my signed version of the agreement.

We can certainly connect on the phone or by zoom later in September, and I could also connect with you in person when you are in California in October, while observing appropriate social distancing guidelines ☺. I will be out of town October 2-8, however.

Thanks again for your interest in using the Thriving Quotient!
Laurie

⏪ Reply all ▾ 🗑 Delete 🗑 Junk 🚫 Block ⋮

Fw: Student Affairs Professionals - Thriving Quotient Research Inquiry

From: Laurie Schreiner <lschreiner@apu.edu>
Sent: Monday, February 17, 2020 5:10 PM
To: Leggett, Kawanna (UMSL-Student) <kklkw8@mail.umsi.edu>
Subject: RE: Student Affairs Professionals - Thriving Quotient Research Inquiry

Hi Kawanna,
Thanks for your patience, as well as your interest in using the Thriving Quotient. Currently the instrument has been validated on undergraduate college students, as well as graduate students and adult learners. I am attaching those two versions for you. I took the liberty of adjusting some of the graduate items to fit student affairs professionals better.

We are currently in the process of validating a new instrument to measure faculty thriving. It may be applicable to staff, but that has not been validated yet. I'm attaching it purely for your interest. It is based on Seligman's (2011) concept of flourishing in adults.

Finally, any permission to use these instruments comes in writing once you have completed the attached research request. The instrument is free to use, but we do expect you to share your results with us. Please sign and return the research request, and I will sign it and return a copy to you that will indicate my full permission to use the instrument.

Let me know if you have any further questions!
Best wishes,
Laurie

From: Leggett, Kawanna (UMSL-Student) <kklkw8@mail.umsi.edu>
Sent: Monday, February 17, 2020 2:17 PM
To: lschreiner@apu.edu
Subject: Student Affairs Professionals - Thriving Quotient Research Inquiry

Dear Dr. Schreiner,

Thank you again for taking my call. Below you will find my previous email. I appreciate you sending me the appropriate materials for next steps.

Thanks
Kawanna

Permission to Use the Thriving Quotient™ for Research Purposes

By signing below, the researcher utilizing the Thriving Quotient™ (TQ) instrument or data from the Thriving Project agrees that such use will be governed by the following principles and agreements made with Dr. Laurie Schreiner, owner of the instrument and the data ("owner"):

Use of the Thriving Quotient™ Instrument

This Agreement allows the undersigned researcher to use the Thriving Quotient™ solely for research purposes. The researcher agrees to (1) administer the instrument in accordance with standard research protocols that protect human subjects; (2) provide the owner of the instrument information regarding the administration process, response rate, and timeline of the research project; and (3) protect the items on the instrument as the intellectual property of the undersigned owner.

If a researcher collects data using the instrument independently (not through the web registration process at www.Thrivingincollege.org), such researcher agrees to provide Dr. Laurie Schreiner (lschreiner@apu.edu) with a de-identified copy of the data collected, in an Excel or SPSS file, within 120 days of data collection. The researcher also agrees to provide Dr. Schreiner with a copy of the report created to summarize the findings.

A copy of any manuscript submitted for publication is to be submitted to Dr. Laurie Schreiner at the point that it is submitted for publication. Such submission to the owner is for information purposes only.

Protection of Individuals

The undersigned researcher will not release or disclose, and will take all necessary and reasonable precautions to prohibit others from releasing or disclosing, any information that directly or indirectly identifies individual participants within the data.

Limitations on the Disclosure of Data and Safeguards

I, the undersigned researcher, acknowledge and affirm that I am personally responsible for compliance with the terms of this Agreement, to the exclusion of any other party, regardless of such party's role in sponsoring or funding the research that is the subject of this Agreement.

I will ensure that the data are kept in a secured environment and that only authorized institutional users will have access to the data.

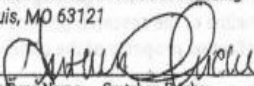
I acknowledge and affirm that interpretations, conclusions, and/or opinions that I reach as a result of my analyses of the data sets are my interpretations, conclusions, and/or opinions, and do not constitute the findings, policies, or recommendations of Dr. Laurie Schreiner or Azusa Pacific University.

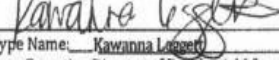
I agree to acknowledge in all reports, publications, or presentations based on these data that the source of the data is the "Thriving Project at Azusa Pacific University under the leadership of Dr. Laurie Schreiner."

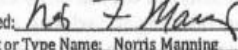
My signature indicates that I understand the terms of this Agreement and that I agree to comply with its terms.


Research team of doctoral students:

University of Missouri- St. Louis
209 Education Administration Building
St. Louis, MO 63121

Signed:  Date: 6/17/2020
Print or Type Name: Gretchen Fricke
Title: Director, Student Services
Organization: Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
Address: Campus box 1062
City: Edwardsville State: IL ZIP Code: 62026
Phone: 618-973-8725 Fax: 618-650-5468
E-mail: gfricke@sue.edu

Signed:  Date: 6/17/2020
Print or Type Name: Kawanna Leggett
Title: Executive Director of Residential Life
Organization: Washington University in St. Louis
Address:
City: State: ZIP Code:
Phone: 678-478-2914 Fax:
E-mail: kleggett@wustl.edu

Signed:  Date: 6/17/2020
Print or Type Name: Norris Manning
Title: Director
Organization: Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, School of Business
Address: P.O. Box 1186
City: Edwardsville State: IL ZIP Code: 62026-1186
Phone: 618-650-5450 Fax:
E-mail: nmanning@sue.edu

Signed:  Date: 6/17/2020
Print or Type Name: Shawn Brodie
Title: Coordinator, Enrollment Services
Organization: St. Louis Community College
Address: 11333 Big Bend Rd.
City: St. Louis State: MO ZIP Code: 63122
Phone: (314) 984-7504 Fax:
E-mail: sbrodie2@stlcc.edu

Signed: Phillip Campbell Date: 6/17/2020
Print or Type Name: Phillip Campbell
Title: Admissions and Enrollment Services Manager
Organization: St. Louis Community College
Address: 11333 Big Bend Rd.
City: St. Louis State: MO ZIP Code: 63122
Phone: (314) 984-7608 Fax: _____
E-mail: pcampbell41@slcc.edu

The information above is maintained by the Thriving Project only for the purpose of enforcement of this Agreement.

Signed this 11 day of June, 2020
Laurie A. Schreiner 8/30/20
Laurie A. Schreiner, Ph.D.
Owner and Copyright Holder of the Thriving Quotient™

APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

University of Missouri - St. Louis
College of Education
One University Boulevard
201 Education Admin Bldg.
St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4400
Telephone: (314) 516-4970

Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities

Thriving in Student Affairs Professionals: An Exploration of Supporting Constructs
HSC Approval Number 2044202

Principal Investigators: Shawn Brodie, Phillip Campbell, Gretchen Day Fricke, Kawanna Leggett, Norris Manning

Summary of the Study

This study is part of a co-authored dissertation research through the College of Education at the University of Missouri-Saint Louis. The researchers will investigate the different experiences of student affairs professionals in a higher education setting using Dr. Laurie Schreiner's Thriving Quotient for Staff and Administrators (TQ-SA). More information about Dr. Schreiner's Thriving Project can be found at www.thrivingincollege.org.

The TQ-SA will be administered to participants via online survey and will require the use of a computer or smartphone to complete. If you wish to participate, but cannot complete the study electronically, please contact one of the researchers and they will work to make an accommodation for you.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. The authors anticipate minimal risk of harm to participants. Participants may experience feelings of discomfort in recalling professional experiences from the past or those they may be experiencing now.

1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted under the supervision of dissertation committee chair Dr. Shawn Woodhouse, Ph.D. The purpose of this study is to learn more about the experiences of student affairs professionals and to use that information to make recommendations for institutions in order to improve processes and conditions which will help to retain student affairs professionals. Insights from this study will be explored to help guide workplace and team development opportunities to develop thriving communities of student affairs professionals. It is expected that the inquiry will assist in answering the research questions and propel the development of a more

sustainable workplace in which more student affairs professionals will thrive.

2. a) Your participation will involve completing a 54-item survey that will explore various aspects of your professional work in student affairs. It is anticipated that the survey will take 20-30 minutes to complete. In addition to this initial invite, all study participants will receive at least two reminder e-mails. The online survey will be open for 30 days.

b) Approximately 170 student affairs professionals from [REDACTED] may be involved in this research hosted by the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

c) To thank you for your participation, we will enter you for a chance to win one of five \$25 Amazon gift cards. If you wish to participate in this raffle, please provide a valid email address at the end of the survey. Participant emails will be separated from submitted survey data in order to ensure confidentiality.

3. There are no known risks associated with this research, though you may experience some feelings of discomfort when recalling past or current professional experiences. If you experience any discomfort with participating in this survey, please contact your institution's human resources department for information on any Employee Assistance Programs that may be available to you.

4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study but results that are collected could contribute to suggestions on new practices for developing future student affairs professionals.

5. As part of the agreement of using the Thriving Quotient for Staff and Administrators, the research team will provide anonymous raw data to Dr. Laurie Schreiner. This data will be collected and stored by Dr. Schreiner for use in her ongoing research on thriving.

6. Participants will not receive any individual research results.

7. Your participation is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate in this research study or withdraw your consent at any time. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or withdraw.

8. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication that may result from this study. In rare instances, a researcher's study must undergo an audit or program evaluation by an oversight agency (such as the Office for Human Research Protection) that would lead to disclosure of your data as well as any other information collected by the researcher.

9. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the dissertation committee chair, Dr. Shawn Woodhouse, at

woodhouses@umsystem.edu or (314) 516-5889. You may also ask questions or state concerns regarding your rights as a research participant to the Office of Research, at ora@umsystem.edu or (314) 516-5897. Please feel free to contact any member of the research team at any time:

Shawn Brodie – brodies@umsystem.edu

Phillip Campbell – pjc2n4@umsystem.edu

Gretchen Day Fricke – gdf9c7@umsystem.edu

Kawanna Leggett – kklkw8@umsystem.edu

Norris Manning – nmhkk@umsystem.edu

This project has received IRB approval from [REDACTED] IRB. IRB protocol number and project title: 1067 Thriving in Student Affairs Professionals: An Exploration of Supporting Constructs

APPENDIX E**EMAIL COMMUNICATION WITH POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS****Introductory email to potential participants**

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 9:15 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Invitation to Participate in a Research Project

Dear Colleagues,

In the next few days, you will receive an invitation to participate in a research study being conducted by several [REDACTED] colleagues who are part of a larger team completing a co-authored dissertation research project through the College of Education at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. This project investigates the different experiences of student affairs professionals in a higher education setting. The study includes a survey asking participants to respond to various professional experiences they have had.

You've been selected as a potential participant because of your role in working with students. Participation is entirely voluntary and anonymous. Your participation will help add to the current research on what causes student affairs professionals to thrive. Please watch for the invitation coming in a few days and I encourage you to consider participating.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Survey invitation potential participants

Subject: Invitation to participate in a research project

Dear \${m://FirstName},

This email is the study invitation referenced in the e-mail sent by [REDACTED], earlier today.

We are a part of a team completing a co-authored dissertation research project through the College of Education at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. This project will investigate the different experiences of student affairs professionals in a higher education setting. The study will consist of a survey about your professional experiences as a student affairs professional.

You've been selected as a potential participant because of your role working with students. Participation is entirely voluntary and anonymous. Your participation will help add to the current research on what causes student affairs professionals to thrive. Completion of the entire survey will help us fully analyze the data. At the beginning of the survey is information about informed consent that provides additional details of the study.

Follow this link to the Survey:

[\\${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the Survey}](#)

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:

[\\${l://SurveyURL}](#)

While the survey will be anonymous, if you'd like to enter your email at the end, you will be entered in a drawing for one of five \$25 Amazon gift cards as a thank you for your participation. Your email will not be attached to your responses to ensure all responses are kept anonymous.

Thank you in advance for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

Shawn Brodie – brodies@umsystem.edu
Phillip Campbell – pjc2n4@umsystem.edu
Gretchen Day Fricke – gdf9c7@umsystem.edu
Kawanna Leggett – kklkw8@umsystem.edu
Norris Manning – nmhkk@umsystem.edu
Doctoral Candidates, Doctor of Education
University of Missouri-St. Louis

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
\${!://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}

Survey invitation potential participants – reminder at one week

Dear colleagues,

This email is a reminder of our invitation to you to participate in a research project. We know this time of year is extremely busy. This email is a friendly reminder that the survey will remain open for three more weeks and will close on March 18. We would greatly appreciate your participation.

We are a part of a team completing a co-authored dissertation research project through the College of Education at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. This project will investigate the different experiences of student affairs professionals in a higher education setting. The study will consist of a survey asking participants to respond to various professional experiences they have had.

You've been selected as a potential participant because of your role working with students. Participation is entirely voluntary and anonymous. Your participation will help add to the current research on what causes student affairs professionals to thrive. Completion of the entire survey will help us fully analyze the data. At the beginning of the survey is information about informed consent that provides additional details of the study.

Follow this link to the Survey:
\${!://SurveyLink?d=Take the Survey}

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
\${!://SurveyURL}

While the survey will be anonymous, if you'd like to enter your email at the end, you will be entered in a drawing for one of five \$25 Amazon gift cards as a thank you for your participation. Your email will not be attached to your responses to ensure all responses are kept anonymous.

Thank you in advance for your time and participation.

Sincerely,
Shawn Brodie – brodies@umsystem.edu

Phillip Campbell – pjc2n4@umsystem.edu
Gretchen Day Fricke – gdf9c7@umsystem.edu
Kawanna Leggett – kklkw8@umsystem.edu
Norris Manning – nmhkk@umsystem.edu
Doctoral Candidates, Doctor of Education
University of Missouri-St. Louis

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
\${1://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}

Survey invitation potential participants – reminder at two weeks

Dear colleagues,

This email is a friendly reminder that the survey will remain open just two more weeks and will close on March 18. If you are able, we would greatly appreciate your participation.

We are a part of a team completing a co-authored dissertation research project through the College of Education at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. This project will investigate the different experiences of student affairs professionals in a higher education setting. The study will consist of a survey asking participants to respond to various professional experiences they have had.

You've been selected as a potential participant because of your role working with students. Participation is entirely voluntary and anonymous. Your participation will help add to the current research on what causes student affairs professionals to thrive. Completion of the entire survey will help us fully analyze the data. At the beginning of the survey is information about informed consent that provides additional details of the study.

Follow this link to the Survey:

\${1://SurveyLink?d=Take the Survey}

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:

\${1://SurveyURL}

While the survey will be anonymous, if you'd like to enter your email at the end, you will be entered in a drawing for one of five \$25 Amazon gift cards as a thank you for your participation. Your email will not be attached to your responses to ensure all responses are kept anonymous.

Thank you in advance for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

Shawn Brodie – brodies@umsystem.edu
 Phillip Campbell – pjc2n4@umsystem.edu
 Gretchen Day Fricke – gdf9c7@umsystem.edu
 Kawanna Leggett – kklkw8@umsystem.edu
 Norris Manning – nmhkk@umsystem.edu
 Doctoral Candidates, Doctor of Education
 University of Missouri-St. Louis

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
 \${1://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}

Survey invitation potential participants – final reminder if participant is less than 50% (THIS REMINDER WAS NOT NECESSARY)

Subject: Invitation to participate in a research project – one last call

Dear colleagues,

Thank you in advance for your consideration. We want to ensure that we have enough responses for a robust data analysis and need XX more responses. Will you help us get to XX? Can we count on you to complete the survey? It will only take XX minutes. SURVEY LINK. We know this is a busy time of year for you and we greatly value and appreciate your time.

We are a part of a team completing a co-authored dissertation research project through the College of Education at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. This project will investigate the different experiences of student affairs professionals in a higher education setting. The study will consist of a survey asking participants to respond to various professional experiences they have had.

You've been selected as a potential participant because of your role in working with students. Participation is entirely voluntary and anonymous. Your participation will help add to the current research on what causes student affairs professionals to thrive. Completion of the entire survey will help us fully analyze the data. At the beginning of the survey is information about informed consent that provides additional details of the study.

The survey may be found at: XXX

While the survey will be anonymous, if you'd like to enter your email at the end, you will be entered in a drawing for one of five \$25 Amazon gift cards as a thank you for your participation. Your email will not be attached to your responses to ensure all responses are kept anonymous.

Thank you in advance for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

Shawn Brodie
Phillip Campbell
Gretchen Fricke
Kawanna Leggett
Norris Manning
University of Missouri-St. Louis doctoral students

APPENDIX F

IRB APPROVAL FROM UMSL AND THRIVING UNIVERSITY



February 08, 2021

Principal Investigator: Gretchen Fricke (UMSL-Student)
 Department: Education EDD-Doctorate

Your IRB Application to project entitled *Thriving in Student Affairs Professionals: An Exploration of Supporting Constructs* was reviewed and approved by the UMSL Institutional Review Board according to the terms and conditions described below:

IRB Project Number	2044202
IRB Review Number	295066
Initial Application Approval Date	February 08, 2021
IRB Expiration Date	February 08, 2022
Level of Review	Exempt
Project Status	Active - Exempt
Exempt Categories (Revised Common Rule)	45 CFR 46.104d(2)(i) 45 CFR 46.104d(2)(ii)
Risk Level	Minimal Risk
Approved Documents	Removed reference to affiliation with other institutions. Revised informed consent addressing feedback. Provided earlier reference to Thriving Quotient for Staff and Administrators. Clarified the anonymous nature of data collection,

The principal investigator (PI) is responsible for all aspects and conduct of this study. The PI must comply with the following conditions of the approval:

1. Enrollment and study related procedures must remain in compliance with the University of Missouri regulations related to interaction with human participants following guidance at <http://www.umsl.edu/recd/compliance/umsl-guidance-covid19-restart-6.25.2020.pdf>.
2. No subjects may be involved in any study procedure prior to the IRB approval date or after the expiration date.
3. All changes must be IRB approved prior to implementation utilizing the Exempt Amendment Form.
4. The Annual Exempt Form must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval at least 30 days prior to the project expiration date to keep the study active or to close it.
5. Maintain all research records for a period of seven years from the project completion date.

If you are offering subject payments and would like more information about research participant payments, please click here to view the UM Policy: https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/policies/finance/payments_to_research_study_participants

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the UMSL IRB Office at 314-516-5972 or email to irb@umsl.edu.

Thank you,
UMSL Institutional Review Board

2/11/2021

Protocols

PROTOCOLS



#1067 - Thriving in Student Affairs Professionals: An Exploration of Supporting Constructs

Review Type	Status	Approval Date	Continuing Review Date	Expiration Date
Exempt	Exempt	Feb 11, 2021		Feb 08,

Feedback

Approval Comment

Reliance Agreement approval: Thank you for submitting to the IRB your project Reliance Agreement with UMSL. The [REDACTED] has approved your submission. Please contact the IRB if you make any changes to this approved protocol. Thank you, Linda

General Information

Principal Investigator

Fricke, Gretchen Day

Lead Unit

Academic Affairs

Study Title

Thriving in Student Affairs Professionals: An Exploration of Supporting Constructs

Is this a student lead project?

No

External Funding Status



2/11/2021

Protocols

Is this project either: 1) externally funded; 2) part of a proposal that was submitted for external funding; or 3) part of a proposal that will be submitted for external funding

No

People

Click "add line" to add Co-Investigators, Faculty Advisors, or Student Investigators. You must also edit your information by clicking on the pencil icon.

SIUE Personnel

Person
Fricke, Gretchen Day
Home Unit
Academic Affairs
Email Address
[REDACTED]
Phone
[REDACTED]
Researcher Role
Principal Investigator
Contact Roles
Admin
Permissions
Full Access
CITI - Group 1 faculty staff or student conducting research involving human subjects - Basic Course
04/15/13 - 04/14/16 Expired



2/11/2021

Protocols

Training Completion Date

Date of Human Subjects Training Completion
March 7, 2019

If you do not see your human subjects training certificate listed above, please upload or drag and drop your certificate here.

[CITICOMPLETIONREPORT7959803_FRICKE.PDF](#)

Person

Manning, Norris F.

Home Unit

[REDACTED]

Email Address

[REDACTED]

Phone

[REDACTED]


Researcher Role

Co-Investigator

Contact Roles

Permissions

Full Access

 Norris Manning has no training courses on file.

Training Completion Date

[REDACTED]

2/11/2021

Protocols

Date of Human Subjects Training Completion
March 28, 2019

If you do not see your human subjects training certificate listed above, please upload or drag and drop your certificate here.

MANNING NORRIS - UMSL - CITICOMPLETIONREPORT8011815.PDF

Person

Brodie, Shawn Perry

Home Unit

[REDACTED]

Email Address

[REDACTED]

Phone

[REDACTED]

Researcher Role

Co-Investigator

Contact Roles

Permissions

Full Access

Shawn Brodie has no training courses on file.

Training Completion Date

Date of Human Subjects Training Completion
March 27, 2019

[REDACTED]

2/11/2021

Protocols

If you do not see your human subjects training certificate listed above, please upload or drag and drop your certificate here.

[BRODIE - CITICOMPLETIONREPORT7962090.PDF](#)

Does this project include a Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI) who is not employed by SIUE?

Yes

Non SIUE Personnel

Name

Kawanna Leggett

Email Address

[REDACTED]

Training Completion Date

March 29, 2019

Researcher Role

Co-Investigator

Please upload a copy of your Human Subjects Training Certificate

[CITICOMPLETIONREPORT7973783_LEGGETT.PDF](#)

Name

Phillip Campbell

Email Address

[REDACTED]

Training Completion Date

March 29, 2019

[REDACTED]

2/11/2021

Protocols

Researcher Role

Co-Investigator

Please upload a copy of your Human Subjects Training Certificate

P.CAMPBELL CITI SBR BASIC - 31015058 (002).PDF

General Questionnaire

Does your project involve the use of human subjects, either through data collection or human interaction? (Human Subject means a living individual about whom an investigator is conducting research and either: 1) Obtains information or biospecimens through intervention or interaction with the individual or 2) Obtains, uses, studies, analyzes, or generates identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens.)

Yes

Are you conducting research? (Research means a systematic investigation, including research development, testing, and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. Generalizable Knowledge for the purpose of research includes one or more of the following concepts: 1) The study is designed to draw general conclusions and knowledge and apply it to populations outside of the specific study population to influence theory, behavior or policy; 2) The results are intended to be replicated in other settings; 3) Publication, presentation or other distribution of the results is intended to inform the field of study.)

Yes

Is [redacted] relying on an external IRB to review this research?

Yes

External Reliance Documents

Please upload a copy of all documentation provided by the External IRB [redacted] will rely on. This **should** include the Letter of Approval from the IRB, or any Agreements.

External Reliance Details

Project Start Date: Upon IRB Approval

I Agree

End Date



2/11/2021

Protocols

July 31, 2021

Description of Research Project

Please provide a brief description of the research

The research team had a shared interest to study the workforce of student affairs professionals. This exploration propelled our research to focus on a multidimensional framework of thriving to provide a more holistic view of the experiences of thriving student affairs professionals. The purpose of this study is to explore the experience of thriving student affairs professionals to discover more about the constructs in which student affairs professionals thrive using Schreiner's existing Thriving Quotient for Staff and Administrators (TQ-SA) survey. This study will explore the following research questions about student affairs professionals' construction of thriving in the workforce: Research Question 1: How do student affairs professionals experience thriving?

Research Question 2: How strongly correlated are the PERMA constructs (positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments) with thriving for student affairs professionals? Research Question 3: What is the contribution of the predictors (psychological sense of community, spirituality, institutional integrity, and commitment to staff welfare) on thriving for student affairs professionals? Research Question 4: How does thriving differ amongst different generations and functional areas of student affairs professionals? Research Question 5: What impact has the COVID-19 global pandemic had on thriving for student affairs professionals?

I cannot find my external organization

IRB Of Record Details

Organization Name

University of Missouri St. Louis

Organization IRB Office Contact

Danielle Hunter

Organization FWA

00000011

Attachments

Read the instructions below the attachments. They are customized to the answers on this protocol form and will give you guidance on which attachments to upload.
To add an attachment, please click the +Add Line button on the right.

Attachments

Name
UMSL IRB Application
Attachment
IRB_UMSL APPLICATION.PDF
Attachment Type
Comments

Name
Informed Consent and Survey Questions
Attachment
INFORMED CONSENT AND SURVEY_REVISIED.DOCX
Attachment Type
Consent Material
Comments

Name
Recruitment Emails



2/11/2021

Protocols

Attachment

RECRUITMENT_EMAIL_REVISION.DOCX

Attachment Type

Recruitment Materials

Comments

Name

UMSL IRB Approval Letter

Attachment

IRB_EXEMPT_APPROVAL_LETTER_FEB-08-2021.PDF

Attachment Type

Comments

External Reliance Documents

- Please upload a copy of all documentation provided by the External IRB [REDACTED] will rely on. This should include the Letter of Approval from the IRB, or any Agreements.

Certification

I have read and do understand the policies and procedures governing research with human subjects, and I fully intend to comply with them. I further acknowledge my responsibility to report significant changes in the procedural summary prior to making these changes.

I accept responsibility and have used the ethical guidelines set forth by the Belmont Report, Declaration of Helsinki, the Nuremberg Code, or the Ethical Principles of the American Psychological Association for the research described.

I have the requisite credentials, training and any necessary privileges to carry out all procedures involved in the protocol. Universal precautions will be used in handling all research specimens. I certify that the above statements are accurate

[REDACTED]

2/11/2021

Protocols



APPENDIX G

**RESPONSES TO “WHAT HAS HAPPENED THIS SEMESTER THAT HAS
SHAPED YOUR ASSESSMENT OF YOUR OWN THRIVING?”**

Theme	Example Quote
Relationships	<p>“Being isolated at home and losing face to face interactions has proven tiresome; however, the ability to rise above to these challenges and provide a positive experience for students has helped me thrive.”</p> <p>“The loss of connection with students in a face-to-face mode has been challenging.”</p> <p>“It has been difficult to feel successful while working remotely as well. The interaction with colleagues, both within the office and across campus, is missing in a remote environment. It is difficult to feel like one is thriving in this environment.”</p> <p>“A continuation of lack of support from my immediate supervisor and colleagues.”</p>
Overwhelmed	<p>“I’m overwhelmed, overworked, and underpaid for the quality of work I am producing for the department and institution.”</p> <p>“Work is overwhelming. We’re told to find balance, but there’s so much to do, that it’s difficult to find an opportunity for that.”</p>
COVID	<p>“I think that the ongoing struggle with COVID-19 has shaped my assessment of thriving this semester. I am tired of the ongoing rules and regulations even though I know they are necessary.”</p> <p>“This semester I was reminded by a colleague that the decisions, communication, and action I am taking related to COVID is saving people’s lives”</p>
Communication	<p>“I think the university as a whole does good with communication, but my department is lacking considerably in this area.”</p> <p>“Senior administration continues to effectively communicate about COVID 19 issues.”</p> <p>“I feel like our department’s lack of communication and segmented work areas has created an environment that does not promote growth or collaboration. COVID has only highlighted this even more with people working remotely.”</p>
Optimism	<p>“Optimistic that the program I am coordinating can truly help those who need it.”</p> <p>“Although we all have had challenges presented to us having to work remotely, I believe we are more tolerant of each other and patient with each other than pre-COVID times. This past year has brought more compassion towards each other.”</p>
Finding meaning through supporting students / Accomplishment	<p>“I would rate myself as surviving and the only reason it’s that high is because of connections to my students and knowing that I am making a difference there.”</p>

	<p>“Multiple students thanking me and my staff for going above and beyond to serve their needs on ground while many offices have seen a significant decline in student satisfaction.”</p> <p>“Seeing that our students are showing resilience is actually inspiring for me.”</p>
Remote work (commitment to staff welfare)	<p>“Moving to a remote environment has been fantastic for my overall morale and happiness in my position - however, the pressure of "return to normal" or "putting students first" has made me reevaluate my happiness in the office.”</p> <p>“Being able to manage my own work schedule while working from home to accommodate for times I feel most motivated to get work done has been extremely beneficial.”</p> <p>“As we have been given the freedom and flexibility to adjust our schedules as needed when working with students, as well as recognition that we are all in this new and seemingly impossible situation together, I have felt supported and been able to provide support.”</p> <p>“I feel that working remotely has also helped me to thrive professionally because it makes it so much easier to achieve a healthy work/life balance.”</p> <p>“Our department is on-ground providing in-person facilities and programs, while other departments/staff are still being allowed to work remotely. we dont have that option.”</p>
Racism (institutional integrity)	<p>“Watching faculty and staff of color repeatedly looked over for promotions and opportunities for advancement have really put a damper on my experience at xxxxxx. Dealing with blatant racism/sexism and a lack of appropriate responses from the university has not improved my outlook.”</p> <p>“The institution continues to share an anti-racist value, but it is not living up to said values. Espousing values but not living up to it clouds my judgement of the institution and stops me from feeling like I'm thriving. In addition, being the only person of color on my leadership team puts me in a position to be tokenized on the team. I cannot thrive in the position while being used by the institution.”</p> <p>“I have been able to see how deeply rooted in white supremacy our campus is.”</p>

Note. $N = 95$

APPENDIX H

RESPONSES TO “HOW HAS YOUR THRIVING HERE CHANGED OVER THE PAST YEAR?”

Theme	Example Quote
Lack of connections / relationships	“I have been intentional about creating relationships outside the department I work in and outside the division I work in so that I can take ownership in bridging gaps and create the meaningfulness that I NEED to see in my work.”
Unfair work distribution	“pushed to create more in-person programming and events, without the support of other staff or other departments to share the workload of supporting in-person programming, it continually falls to the same staff.”
Work from home	<p>“while working from home I do not hear most of the negative and/or loud conversations that go on in my office.”</p> <p>“Toxic workplace energy that I sometimes feel in-person within the office no longer permeates my (remote) workspace.”</p> <p>“Working from home has given me a lot of peace in an ever changing environment with the pandemic.”</p> <p>“Working remotely and having the ability to schedule work tasks at times that work best for me personally has allowed me to be more productive with my work while experiencing less burnout.”</p>
Commitment to staff welfare	<p>“The students have become disengaged with me and the university doesn't seem to care about their employees, only the students.”</p> <p>“I've been more involved on campus and in campus decisions. It has allowed me to honestly see thriving as less attainable. The more I learned about the institution and decisions, the more I've come to be skeptical of the administration.”</p> <p>“I believe that the University's take on leading with "grace" has been top notch.”</p>
Accomplishment Overall thriving	<p>“I have had time to learn my role and adapt to certain challenges.”</p> <p>“The positive feelings I once had for xxxxxx have now been dampened and I do not anticipate my spirits improving.”</p> <p>“This time last year, I was a much more positive and enthusiastic team member.”</p> <p>“sense of not feeling appreciated for the work I do on a daily basis by my supervisor.”</p> <p>“being physically present in Church and a better sense of optimism, has helped me thrive better this spring.”</p> <p>“I feel that working remotely has also helped me to thrive professionally because it makes it so much easier to achieve a healthy work/life balance.”</p> <p>“I feel like it also built up confidence and resilience in me.”</p>

Note. N = 95

APPENDIX I

**RESPONSES TO “HOW HAS COVID-19 AFFECTED YOUR ABILITY TO
THRIVE IN YOUR ROLE AT THIS INSTITUTION?”**

Theme	Example Quote
Feeling of isolation	<p>“I feel very lonely and isolated and feel like I have not been able to connect to campus like I would have wanted to within the first year of my role.”</p> <p>“Working from home as a single person living alone has been severely isolating.”</p>
Lack of connections / relationships	<p>“The absence of daily face-to-face interactions with colleagues and students has left me feeling isolated and alone.”</p> <p>“It has affected my ability to be a true team player in my group and create connections with my students.”</p> <p>“I feel generally successful in my work, but disconnected from my colleagues.”</p> <p>“since everything is done by zoom, there is no personal interaction with others which has decreased my relationship with my colleagues</p> <p>“I miss seeing everyone (staff, students, faculty). I miss seeing the campus.”</p>
Unfair work distribution	<p>“Staff has been of secondary importance to the University. More concern about not upsetting the faculty union was prevalent than thinking about impacts to employees.”</p> <p>“It is difficult to watch my staff be fearful of being at work in person while other areas of the University are closed to the public and people are protected by working from home.”</p>
Work from home, positive	<p>“If anything the pandemic has shown me is a more positive work environment - my home space.”</p> <p>“I find that working from home brings me more inner peace and happiness, allowing me to work my job more effectively and support students without feeling as much burnout. The only negative things that I am currently experiencing at this point in regards to COVID-19 is this looming dread that I will likely no longer get the option to work remotely after a while due to institutional and office pressures to return back to campus, thus removing a factor of my working joy and inner peace. I worry that I will no longer be happy and able to thrive in-person if I'm no longer given the option to work remotely, at least part-time or when I can.”</p> <p>“I'm self motivated and working from home makes it easier to accomplish more because everyone is expected to communicate with each other in our dept much more than previously working in the office.”</p> <p>“My productivity may even exceed what it was when I was on campus because I have fewer interruptions and distractions.”</p> <p>“I feel like I am thriving with working remotely and being able to rethink some of our programming. I feel excited about the the new</p>

	programming and connecting with students through different formats.”
	“I love the autonomy of having more flexibility in my position and by being able to work from home. I truly feel that this has been a silver lining of Covid and has renewed my sense of thriving in my career.”
Work from home, negative Wellbeing	“I am unable to carry out responsibilities that I normally would in an in-person manner.”
	“The response to working remote is not consistent throughout the institution.”
Meaning	“I am provided a different sense of meaning, where the term "health and safety of the community" means something deeper than I could have possibly imagined my role would be responsible for insuring.”
	“Some seem to take advantage of "work from home" mode more than others, or more than others are capable of doing.”
Commitment to staff welfare	“The lack of support I felt from direct leadership specifically in the beginning of the pandemic has caused me to feel my work is undervalued.”
	“I am lucky to have a university provided laptop to utilize at home but many staff continue to use their own equipment and resources to maintain an effective remote office. I think that could be better addressed to support remote work.”
	“COVID-19 has shown me how much xxxxxx and my department care about my well-being. They were quick to pivot and do whatever it took to ensure the success and health of the students, staff, and faculty.”
	“I would have appreciated a clearer message from the administration on the expectations of open doors/work from home, and a more equitable solution for all staff.”
	“As a "front line" staff member, it feels like administration expects that staff will take on many challenges, but does not pay attention to the needs of the staff. It seems that there is a lot of focus on what the students and faculty need during this time, but the staff are somewhat ignored. Feels like an extension of what was already happening at the institution, just magnified because of the pandemic.”
Accomplishment	“It's challenged me to figure out to be creative about engaging students. I enjoy this challenge but miss more organic opportunities to engage students.”
	“We have had to completely rethink certain processes, so it has been an opportunity to learn more and think critically regarding tasks in our department.”
	“It showed me that I am more resourceful and adaptable than I previously thought. It gave me the confidence to improve my skills and expand my skills in a way I was not able to in our traditional schedule. I was given more trust and more opportunities throughout my work and demonstrated abilities to effectively help others through their issues.”

Overall Thriving	<p>“I sincerely believe that (ironically) my ability to thrive has increased. The remote work environment suits me, and students seem very comfortable in a virtual space. I have gained additional students who are excited to return to the institution to pursue their degree. This has created lots of positive energy, with nothing in my work environment (like people wearing masks), to cause negative energy.”</p> <p>“If anything, it has STRENGTHENED by ability to thrive. It has reminded me that when you show up, when you are present, when you demonstrate you care, and that you have a strong understanding of the mission, values, policies and procedures that guide our interactions with students, you will thrive as an Academic Advisor.”</p> <p>“My ability to thrive in my role has remained constant through COVID-19 as I find that thriving is largely a choice I can make independent of the conditions around me.”</p> <p>“Worry about how we were going to transition as we went into quarantine, then excitement of creating new ways to serve students, and now a feeling of burnout as I have tried to create as many new opportunities for students as possible.”</p> <p>“I think COVID-19 has shown me just how little I have put my happiness first all along, and when it's all over (enough to return to "normal"), I wonder how long I will continue to put up with that.”</p> <p>I am also concerned that there is going to be this immediate expectation "when things are back to normal" to immediately shift back to everyone "as it was" which will cause significant stress for employees, in my opinion.”</p>
------------------	--

Note. N = 99