

SEE ME: A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY OF ASPIRING WOMEN LEADERS IN
STUDENT AFFAIRS

by

Michele A. Magliulo

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

The purpose of this grounded theory study was to develop a model for a career development program for entry-level student affairs (SA) women professionals based on the lived experiences of current mid-level SA professionals and senior-level SA professionals. As new women professionals pursue their careers in SA, they must navigate many barriers and require support and guidance to overcome each obstacle. This study sought to answer the following research questions: (a) What necessary components do student affairs departments need to retain entry-level women's professionals related to a career development model? (b) What components are needed for an entry-level professional woman to enter the field of student affairs? (c) What components are needed for entry-level student affairs professional women to master the position? (d) How do entry-level student affairs professionals know they are ready to persist in the field? To answer these questions, the researcher collected data through individual interviews with entry-level SA women professionals and mid to senior-level SA professionals and a focus group with mid, and senior-level SA professionals. The data collected were analyzed through open, focus, and theoretical coding to generate a model for a leadership program to higher education institutions. This study found that three essential phases are vital throughout an entry-level SA women professional first five years within the field. As a result, the three phases and components were integrated into a career development model for departments and institutions to utilize.

Keywords: Higher education, women leadership, student affairs, career development, leadership, new professionals

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to Nanny, my grandmother, who inspired me to be a strong and self-sufficient woman. She taught me to value myself and always remember the importance of family.

To my parents, Julie and Lorenzo, who taught me persistence and resilience while continuously challenging me to be a better person. They have always been there to support anything I wanted to do or learn and always provided the opportunity to succeed.

I dedicate this to my brother, Carl, who has been one of my biggest cheerleaders, even if he will not admit it. Hey, Carl: I have three degrees now! Beat that!

To my partner, Brian, for constantly being by my side, being my best friend and critique, accepting my flaws and all, and loving me whole-heartedly even during this challenging time.

Thank you.

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To all the women leaders I have worked for or with in student affairs; you all have shaped me in some way to be a strong, compassionate, successful student affairs professional. You all have indeed shown me what leadership is, and I am honored to have worked with each and every one of you. Thank you all for being the inspiration for this study.

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List of Abbreviations

American College Personnel Association (ACPA)

Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU)

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)

Quality of Life Survey (QOL)

Student Affairs (SA)

United States (U.S.)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Recent landmark achievements, including the first woman Vice President of the U.S., have illuminated and embodied the progress women have fought for and have shown the nation what it needs: an opportunity to redefine and reimagine leadership (Aragon & Miller, 2012; Douglass, 2018; Frye, 2021; Hill & Wheat, 2017). This historic achievement has become a catalyst for change and a foundation for progress in every setting, including businesses (Glass & Cook, 2018), politics (Baskaran & Hessami, 2018), and education (Adserias et al., 2017). Amongst higher education SA professionals, there has been an increase in women's representation. These changing demographics have resulted in around 56% of top officers and 71% of SA professionals being women (Pritchard & McChesney, 2018). Higher education has become a majority female field, which provides an opportunity for women attending college to be empowered to continue to be leaders outside academia (Block & Tietjen-Smith, 2016). However, while representation is rising, high attrition and burnout rates amongst entry-level SA professionals exist (Garland-Thomson, 2002; Mullen et al., 2018; Whitford, 2020). Higher education institutions must consider increasing retention and satisfaction with high attrition and burnout rates. Chapter one will provide background contexts of the research problem, situation to self, problem statement, purpose statement, the significance of the study, research questions, and definitions.

Background

Before a model for a leadership program for women SA professionals develop, it is imperative to understand the historical, social, and theoretical context of women's representation

in higher education and the organizational structure of SA. With this foundation provided, a context for the problem this study is exploring will cultivate.

Historical Context

The U. S. have been home to higher education institutions since Harvard in the 1600s (Boyne, 2002; Goldin et al., 2006; Lucas, 2006; Thelin, 2011). Harvard was soon joined by what is now called the premier colonial colleges, including William and Mary, Yale, Princeton, Brown, Columbia, Dartmouth, Rutgers, and Pennsylvania (Wong, 2019). These colonial colleges took specific inspiration from their European and Scottish counterparts, including collegiate systems of mixing living and learning from Oxford and Cambridge and governance and structure from Saint Andres and Glasgow (Lucas, 2006; Thelin, 2011). Colonial colleges paved the way for many of today's public and private institutions (Boyne, 2002; Thelin, 2011). There are many differences between public and private institutions, such as cost of attendance, program offering, research opportunities, and financial aid (Boyne, 2002; Lucas, 2006; Thelin, 2011). However, the defining difference between public and private is funding (Boyne, 2002). Public institutions are funded mainly by state governments, while private colleges are supported primarily by their endowment funds and students' tuition fees (Boyne, 2002; Evans et al., 2009; Lucas, 2006). Despite these differences, research has revealed that regardless of mission, focus, and goals, both sectors are customer-oriented, focused on retention and student success (Davidson, 2012).

Shaping of Higher Education

Like higher education as an industry, during the colonial era and the earliest years of American higher education, the earliest documentation of SA as a profession can be found (Cohen & Kisker, 2009; Roberts, 2007). During the development of higher education, the doctrine of *in loco parentis*, or in place of a parent, was being used (Lee, 2018; Nuss, 2008;

Wong, 2019). This concept allowed American common law to mandate universities and colleges during the 1800s to 1960s to manage students closely and consider students as academic scholars and emotionally immature young adults (Lee, 2018; Nuss, 2008). Although many public institutions incorporated *in loco parentis*, including John Hopkins University and Harvard University, many of these colleges were poorly staffed, leading to faculty serving in academic and supervisory roles (Lee, 2018). Unfortunately, overworked faculty with dual positions determined that responsibility for faculty should only be the intellect portion of higher education (Roberts, 2007). This change can document as the origin of introducing the SA profession in the U.S. (Nuss, 2008; Rojas, 2020). Graduate students were considered one of the first SA professionals that faculty trained under their field to help their students with the emotional support they needed during their courses (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008; Young, 2019). As education evolved, so did the students' interests, where they requested extracurricular activities to educate the whole student, including intellect, spirit, and body (Roberts, 2007). Students participated in their governance and utilized graduate students as their advisors, which changed by the 20th century (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008; Young, 2019). Universities and colleges started to hire professionals to oversee extracurricular activities (Roberts, 2007). In 1937, the publication "Student Personnel Point of View" was released to gain widespread recognition and acceptance of the profession (Evans, 2001). The report emphasized the core values of the SA profession, to educate the whole student, intellectually, spiritually, and personally (Nuss, 2008). These values continue to guide the role of the SA profession today.

Evolution of Higher Education

Many have questioned the value of higher education throughout history, and this debate continues today as tuition increases and students find it challenging to afford higher education

(Goldin et al., 2006; Kezar et al., 2006). However, in today's society, around 35% of career paths (i.e., educational services, health care, professional and business services) at least need a bachelor's degree, 30% require a college or an associate degree, and 36% require education beyond high school (Falk & Blaylock, 2010; Kezar et al., 2006). Higher education continues to evolve due to advancements in technology, increased competition, variations and diversity in student demographics, and changing student and employer demands (Falk & Blaylock, 2010). The future of higher education relies on the ability of institutions to become more adaptable, flexible, and agile when approaching development, offerings, and support to their degree programs and learning designs (Kromydas, 2017; Moodly & Toni, 2017).

Today, more students complete college degrees than ever before (Bowen et al., 2009; Falk & Blaylock, 2010). As of 2018, there are approximately 19.6 million college students in the U.S., with around 14.5 million enrolled in public colleges and a further 5.1 million students enrolled in private colleges (Chetty et al., 2020). Notably, women attending college in the U.S. have risen around 3.8% since 1940, resulting in roughly 36.6% of women attending four-year or more college than 35.4% of the men attending college (Chetty et al., 2020). Although higher education must equally represent and recognize that their population is more gender-inclusive, the administration may not fully comprehend what constitutes the need for further development (Dunn et al., 2014; Espinosa et al., 2019; Falk & Blaylock, 2010; Haug, 2018; Oliver & Jorre de St Jorre, 2018). While seeking support and guidance to the female population, faculty and administration need to be prepared and present to adhere to this diverse population's needs (Barham & Winston, 2006; Davis & Cooper, 2017; Shupp et al., 2018).

SA Profession

The role of a SA professional is to support the student population through teaching and learning while providing services and programs that also support and enhance the accomplishments of the educational purposes of colleges and universities (Evans, 2001; Pitcher et al., 2018; Wibrowski et al., 2017). Although the faculty's primary responsibility is facilitating teaching and learning activities, SA professionals contribute to student learning and career development outside the classroom (Bauer-Wolf, 2018; Evans, 2001). The SA field has more female representation than other college professions; women hold roughly 71% of the positions compared to the 58% of roles across higher education (Bauer-Wolf, 2018; Johnson, 2017; Quadlin, 2018). However, women represent just about 24% of the highest-paid SA director, dean, and administrator roles (Flaherty, 2021; Powell, 2018).

Today, higher education embraces a holistic view of student development that creates learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom (Mishra et al., 2020). The contribution of higher education institutions to leadership and career development is a theme that has fostered a desire for young adults to attend a university (Arbo & Benneworth, 2007). Higher education institutions are no longer required to be knowledge-based institutions but expect to play an active role in developing our economic, social, and cultural societal needs (Kromydas, 2017; Legault & Chasserio, 2003). Higher education institutions must be equipped and willing to contribute to this initiative to play an active role. However, an individual institution's characteristics (i.e., diversity, mission, community, public vs. private, and support initiatives) may significantly contribute to these societal needs, which may confuse many institutions' stakeholders (Arbo & Benneworth, 2007). Specifically, the staff and faculty contributing to the institutions' mission may be essential for playing an active role in preparing for future generations economically,

socially, and culturally but may not be trained, relevant, or equipped to provide the support the new generation needs (Klofsten et al., 2019; Rubens et al., 2017).

It is important to note that although many treat SA and academic affairs professionals similar in terms of staff and administration at universities, SA professionals will be the focus of this study (Marine et al., 2019; Mullen et al., 2018; Ozaki & Hornak, 2014; Pitcher et al., 2018). There is a decent amount of research about higher education's academic affairs, based explicitly on professors and advancement in the teaching aspects of higher education (Marine et al., 2019; Mullen et al., 2018; Ozaki & Hornak, 2014). However, there is a need for research specifically on the SA professional and the lack of women's advancement within this side of higher education (Klofsten et al., 2019; Pitcher et al., 2018).

Social Context

According to Woodrow and Guest (2020), one must understand the organization's culture and adjustments to feel welcomed in a new environment. Organizational socialization is defined as the process individuals undergo when joining a pre-existing culture which includes several processes, including anticipation, entrance into the role, and settling into the role. Within the context of entry-level SA women professionals acclimating to the field, stakeholders impacted include current mid to senior-level leaders, their families, community, and the students they serve (Burkinshaw & White, 2017; Covert, 2013; Davies et al., 2017).

Current Mid to Senior-level Leadership

While the representation of women's leadership in SA is on the rise, high attrition and burnout rates among entry-level professionals exist (Garland-Thomson, 2002; Mullen et al., 2018; Whitford, 2020). Research indicated that institutions have a reputation for relying on one or a few women in current higher administrator roles to understand what all women below them

need for support at the university (Burkinshaw & White, 2017; Covert, 2013; Davies et al., 2017). When the expectation is to acclimate new SA professionals entering the field continuously, women in mid- to senior-level positions become stretched thin, which may cause higher burnout rates among leaders and influence how new professionals are being acclimated and supported during transition (Burkinshaw & White, 2017). The focus is on deficits of women in SA leadership rather than the organizational structure, and culture may influence a lack of women in entry-level positions (Diehl, 2014; Ely et al., 2011; McNair et al., 2013).

Family and Community Expectations

Studies have defined institutions as greedy, specifically demanding their women staff and faculty to total commitment and dedication to managing motherhood and academic work (Burkinshaw & White, 2017; Correll et al., 2007; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). Although a great deal of literature has identified how women are not meeting the demands of the modern managerial university, women in the field have declared that they are no longer the problem and that their institutions must provide opportunities for new professionals to develop their careers (Burkinshaw & White, 2017; Covert, 2013; O'Connor, 2015; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). Today, women still face various obstacles that stop them from advancing in the workplace (Burkinshaw & White, 2017; Cañas et al., 2019; Krause, 2017). Occupational sex segregation paired with a male-dominated work environment are two key barriers that affect women's advancement in the corporate domain (Cañas et al., 2019; Kalev & Deutsch, 2018; Krause, 2017). If these concerns are left unaddressed, the community is affected, leading to a lack of women representation in SA (Krause, 2017).

Extant literature has focused on gendered career paths in higher education, and the findings show that women face a substantial number of barriers to their counterpart men

(Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009; Kalev & Deutsch, 2018). Additionally, there is a lack of support, mentoring, and sponsorship when it comes to guidance on their career paths, and they face a substantial number of obstacles, including juggling a career and family (Bartel, 2018; Diehl, 2014; Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009; Kalev & Deutsch, 2018). A study by Pew Research Center (2015) found that around 52% of women held to higher standards than men in higher education, 66% of women agreed that family responsibilities do not leave time for a higher-level administrative position, and 21% of women are less likely to ask for promotions or apply for senior-level positions. These high standards and higher expectations may cause family conflicts at home (Coronel et al., 2010; Schueller-Weidekamm & Kautzky-Willer, 2012). These conflicts may cause women to choose family over career, which can correlate to the lack of women retention in SA (Elmuti et al., 2009; Hewlett, 2002).

The Students They Serve

Although there has been progression in the workplace for women, the low representation of women in the highest ranks of universities is an issue in role modeling and mentoring women college students (Hoyt, 2010; Keane et al., 2021). Since the 1990s, the college gender gap in enrollment has evaporated and has continued to increase and bypass men's enrollment (Ford, 2016; Goldin et al., 2006; Hoyt, 2010; Keane et al., 2021). The continuous growth of enrollment for this demographic is, in part, since there has been an increase in positive influences to attend college (Ford, 2016; Teague, 2015). Even with this increase in female enrollment, there is still a sizeable male representation in higher-level positions. While women's representation in faculty and staff is overrepresented, there is a low representation among presidencies, provost, dean, and director positions (Ford, 2016). Numerous contributors add to the disparity in gender representation in university leadership, including unconscious bias and stereotyping. A lack of

women retention and leadership in SA may cause a lack of role modeling and empowerment for women students on campuses (Ballenger, 2010; Bartel, 2018).

Theoretical Context

Grounded theory sets out to construct a theory from data, and traditionally, due to the nature of the methodology, a theoretical framework is not required (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). However, understanding the previous and current theories on women in higher education is essential to understand the literature constructing a theory during the study's data analysis and model construction stage. Specifically, many critics believe SA theorists develop theories only based on examinations of a relatively homogenous population of young white males (Evans et al., 2009; Patton et al., 2016). While there is no single theory or model relevant to women leaders in SA, several facets of theoretical literature may be relevant to the proposed study. When using evidence through historical, social, and theoretical contexts, this study aims to address the gaps in the literature by developing a leadership model for higher education institutions. Specifically, it investigates existing SA leadership's cognitive, environmental, identity, moral, and ethical characteristics and qualities (Karkouti, 2014; Torres et al., 2009). Explicitly, a career development model will focus on their new women SA professionals to motivate and prepare to continue their SA careers.

Cognitive

Cognitive theories explain how people process and understand information through comparative thinking structures, including classifying things, symbolic representation structures, and logical reasoning structures (Evans et al., 2009; Gallos, 1995). One example of a cognitive theory is Belenky et al.'s (1986) women's ways of knowing, which focuses on identity and intellectual development across a broad range of contexts of women. Belenky et al. believed that

societal expectations expect women to continue to conform to their own experiences to relate to men's experiences and accept it as representing all human affairs. However, current literature and research have continuously demonstrated that women cannot always match the masculine knowledge to their own lives or see it as relevant, as their experiences and thoughts are different (Mohr, 2014; Powell, 2018; Priest & Seemiller, 2018; Radu et al., 2017; Renn & Hodges, 2007). One limitation that Belenky et al.'s study has is that it focused on successful women leaders who never attended college. Although the findings are relevant, it lacks the complexity of college-experienced women and their ways of thinking.

Environmental

Environmental theories are the most used in SA and focus on how the environment impacts a person (Evans et al., 2009; Henning & Roberts, 2016). Many environmental theories focus on students in higher education, including Sanford's (1967) challenge and support. Sanford's challenge and support theory are often applied to new students as they transition throughout their time in college. To fully embrace their learning process in college, there must be a balance of challenge and support to develop the student (Evans et al., 2009; Jones & Stewart, 2016). Although this theory is focused explicitly on student development, it can also be transferable to career development; as new professionals socialize into the profession, there must be a balance of challenge and support to help them successfully transition into the profession (Dinise-Halter, 2017). However, while previous studies have given insight into new professionals' experiences in general, this theory does not consider the unique experiences of women in positions of leadership (Dinise-Halter, 2017; Renn & Hodges, 2007).

Identity

Identity theories address the behaviors, emotions, and thought patterns unique to a person (Evans et al., 2009; Karkouti, 2014). One specific theory, Josselson's (1994) theory of identity development in women, explores James Marcia's four identity groups and applies them to women to identify why some women encounter a crisis and if they integrate that into their identity. Women fit into one of four groups based on experiencing a problem and commitment of identity, including path makers, guardians, searchers, and drifters (Josselson, 1994; Torres et al., 2009). Several researchers suggested that female identity formation does not relate to ideological commitments, religious convictions, sexual orientations, and occupational decisions (Evans et al., 2009; Karkouti, 2014). However, Josselson believed that a woman's life experience shapes her feminine identity, and women reevaluate their achievements as they age. Although earlier studies suggested that Josselson's theory of identity is evolutionary because it focuses on women's identity, there are no assessment techniques specifically designed to measure the four statuses of Josselson's theory. This theory has only been used as a counseling approach in women's centers at universities (Karkouti, 2014; Torres et al., 2009). While this theory had given insight into women's identity and integrating theory identity into society, it lacks the complexity of current challenges and crises women face today (Karkouti, 2014; Torres et al., 2009).

Moral and Ethical

Moral, ethical, and personality theories can identify and form a person's character (Evans et al., 2009). Traditionally, men focus on rules, rights, and justice concerning moral development, while women focus on relationships (Kiser, 2015; Mak & Kim, 2017). Gilligan's (1993) theory of women's moral development focused on women's relationships with others and how those relationships impact one's understanding of self (Evans et al., 2009). Women develop

by creating connections among people and an ethic of care instead of justice (Gilligan, 1993).

Overall, men and women make decisions differently (Ozaki & Hornak, 2014). While relationships are essential for SA professionals, they likely are not the only indicator of women SA professionals (Baldwin, 2016; Kalev & Deutsch, 2018; Oakley, 2000).

Situation to Self

The proposed research study initially interested me in reflecting on my own experience in SA and what issues and concerns were not being addressed. As I approach my seventh year in SA and reflect on my first five years in the profession, I noticed that many of my colleagues and cohort members I entered the field with are now no longer working in SA. Specifically, I noticed that many of my women friends, colleagues, and cohort members pursued another career path before approaching their fifth year in the profession. As I identify as a woman currently working in SA, I have personally experienced a need for more support and guidance navigating through the first few years. Additionally, as someone approaching the mid-level career path, I have noticed no programs or training to prepare my colleagues or me to be a leader in the roles. As I reflected on my own experience, I realized I was not the only one. I reached out to other new professionals in the SA field a year ago. After talking to many entry-level SA professionals, specifically, ones who left the field between their first and third years, I knew I wanted to focus on this area for my research. I began to consider how women in SA can gain support, guidance, and mentorship to enhance their ability to feel the need to continue their careers in higher education while also progressing in the field in leadership roles. The motivation for this research continued to develop as I began my doctoral degree at Liberty University. I focused all my assignments in previous courses throughout my time at Liberty University to collect literature for this topic. What I found is a gap in the literature. Particularly, leadership programs focusing on

mentoring aspiring women SA professionals and a model for such is needed (Burkinshaw & White, 2017; Ely et al., 2011; Selzer & Robles, 2019).

Philosophical Assumptions

Three philosophical assumptions guided this study to interpret my views, approach, and meaning of my experiences. I hold the axiological philosophical assumption that I identify as a woman in SA and have experienced hardships throughout my experience, which has guided my decision to focus on entry-level SA professionals within five years of the profession. According to the axiological assumption, exploring my values will affect my research (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Ravitch & Carl, 2020). This assumption also supports the idea that women in SA are the best participants for this study, as their values influence the process and product. I also hold the epistemological philosophical assumption working in SA. I have firsthand experience of what practices they may share, relate to working in the same field, and portray empathy during the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). With this experience, I will get a thorough perspective of the participant's practices (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to epistemological assumption, minimizing the distance between myself and the participants can demonstrate a good ethnography (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I also hold the ontological assumption that there are multiple truths, and that reality is subjective, which guides my decision on including various perspectives in this study (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Ravitch & Carl, 2020). Specifically, women who are entry-level SA professionals, mid-level professionals, and senior-level professionals will have the most experienced during their time in SA related to their support, trainings, and mentorships necessary for a career development program (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yáñez et al., 2019).

Guiding Paradigm

Since the study is directly associated with the researcher, this study's paradigm is constructivism (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Constructivist researchers strive to ground the theoretical literature in the participants' views (Bada, 2015; Charmaz, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Although a grounded theory study focuses on a specific theory, constructivist research considers several perspectives (Bada, 2015; Charmaz, 2014). A grounded theory design conducted with a constructivist approach provided an opportunity to gather new interpretations and ultimately construct a model for fostering SA professional retention through a career development program. Additionally, it enabled me to collect multiple interpretations of data so a diverse population of participants' voices could create and construct the theory in question (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Ravitch & Carl, 2020).

Problem Statement

The SA profession has one of the largest cohorts of new professionals entering the field each year, with nearly half of SA divisions' staff members as new (Johnson, 2017; Longman et al., 2018; Renn & Jessup-Anger-Anger, 2008; Whitford, 2020). However, new professionals exit the field as quickly as they enter, with attrition rates around 50–60% within the first five years (Marshall et al., 2016; Mullen et al., 2018; Renn & Hodges, 2007; Yates, 2019). While women earn typically 60% more bachelor's and master's degrees than men and enter the SA profession at a higher rate than men, these same women leave the profession faster and in higher numbers (Barham & Winston, 2006; Blackhurst, 2000; Carnevale et al., 2018; Espinosa et al., 2019; Hentschel et al., 2019; Johnson, 2017; Marshall et al., 2016; Whitford, 2020; Wood & Bandura, 1989; Yates, 2019). The problem is that, while women's representation is on the rise in SA, women have high attrition and burnout rates amongst SA professionals (Garland-Thomson,

2002; Mullen et al., 2018; Whitford, 2020). The literature suggests that SA must be observed as a gendered organization. The specific policies and practices should be systematically addressed to better support new women professionals in the field (Garland-Thomson, 2002; Torres et al., 2009; Whitford, 2020; Yates, 2019).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this grounded theory study was to develop a model for career development opportunities for women SA professionals based on the lived experiences of new, mid-level, and senior-level SA professionals from regionally accredited universities. Career development was defined as a series of formal and informal trainings and opportunities that acquaint entry-level SA professionals to their institution, support them as they navigate through their first five years, and prepare them for a mid to senior-level position in SA. For this study, I investigated how women's psychological, social, and communication skills help them succeed as women in SA, rather than molding themselves into a man's business culture (Eagly et al., 2000; Helgesen, 2017). While this study aims to create a model for a career development program, the developed model will be implemented and assessed for effectiveness later.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is that it builds on the existing set of literature that advocates for career development programs focusing on women who are entry-level SA professionals (Adserias et al., 2017; Alston & Hansman, 2020; Alvesson, 2020; Barton, 2019; Block & Tietjen-Smith, 2016; Carnevale et al., 2018; Chanland & Murphy, 2018; Davies et al., 2017; Douglass, 2018; Elmuti et al., 2009; Ford, 2016; Glass & Cook, 2018; Helgesen, 2017; Howe-Walsh & Turnbull, 2016; Radu et al., 2017). Additionally, it significantly advocates for the need to decrease employee turnover within the first five years of SA (Marshall et al., 2016;

Mullen et al., 2018; Rosser & Javinar, 2003; Tull, 2006). The research also prepares for a new cohort of women pursuing a mid to senior-level position (Davis & Cooper, 2017; Lindsay, 2014; Rosser & Javinar, 2003; Tull, 2006). This study aimed to create a model for a career development program to be shared with higher education institutions that can later be implemented and assessed for effectiveness. The career development model will be grounded in the views of entry, mid, and senior-level SA professionals to obtain a holistic perspective of the concern and need regarding support programs in SA.

Practical

Finding ways to decrease the employee turnover and increase preparedness programs for a new cohort of leaders is essential for higher education institutions for numerous reasons (Glass & Cook, 2018; Longman, 2018; Marshall et al., 2016; Mullen et al., 2018; Rosser & Javinar, 2003; Tull, 2006). The perspectives of all stakeholders involved, including the new professionals, mid to senior-level professionals, faculty, administrators, current and prospective students, and the overall higher education system, play significant roles in identifying the importance of this study (Radu et al., 2017). SA professionals play an instrumental role on campuses operationally and significantly when it comes to supporting the institution and influencing the overall college student growth and development that focuses outside the classroom (Marine et al., 2019; McKenzie, 2018; Pritchard & McChesney, 2018; Rubens et al., 2017; Strayhorn, 2018). With higher education institutions struggling with declining fiscal resources and calls for increased accountability, employee turnover is crucial (Marshall et al., 2016; Mullen et al., 2018). Additionally, expenditures associated with employee turnover, such as recruiting, hiring, and training during a transition, are just a few of the costs associated with attrition (Haug, 2018; Marshall et al., 2016; Shupp et al., 2018). Due to these expenditures, high

attrition levels can cost the institution a significant amount of time and money and often impact the institution and department productivity due to consistent training and filling gaps (Gander, 2018; Marshall et al., 2016; Mullen et al., 2018). Attracting and retaining qualified new professionals is significant when promoting student learning and development by implementing positive learning environments (Davidson, 2012; Marshall et al., 2016; Rosser & Javinar, 2003).

Another practical significance for this study is understanding how women in leadership roles affects women students and entry-level SA professionals (McNair et al., 2013; Pagán, 2018; Pritchard & McChesney, 2018; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). If the field remains female-focused, preparedness programs must support new women SA professionals transitioning from entry to mid and senior positions (Herdlein, 2004; Pagán, 2018; Pritchard & McChesney, 2018). This study will help provide career development opportunities for new women SA professionals to feel connected to their institutions, desire to advance in the field, and feel motivated to continue their careers in SA (Mullen et al., 2018). It is apparent that as women's leadership representation increases on college campuses, personal and professional success for future women leaders increases (Asgari et al., 2012; Boatwright et al., 2003; Longman et al., 2018). As new SA professionals continue their careers in SA and advance in leadership positions, there will be more women's representation on college campuses (Pagán, 2018). Specifically, women students will feel supported and encouraged to advance their career paths.

Theoretical

The theoretical significance for this study is that it challenges and extends many of the current SA professions theories that focus on student development, specifically cognitive (Belenky et al., 1986), environmental (Evans et al., 2009), identity (Josselson, 1994), and moral theories (Gilligan, 1993). Although these theories are used in SA, they are student-focused and

not career or staff-focused. Additionally, women leadership is another area that lacks the complexity of the SA profession and needs to be challenged within this study (Garland-Thomson, 2002; Gipson et al., 2017; Helgesen, 2017; Helgesen & Goldsmith, 2018; Hoyt, 2010; Hoyt & Simon, 2017; Kubu, 2018). While these theories have evolved, existing theories do not consider a women-specific focus (Thomas et al., 2020). Although research has supported that many theories can be transferable, many support the need for new theories that incorporate the diverse fields that have been introduced today (Evans et al., 2009; Renn & Hodges, 2007). As previously mentioned, higher education is a dynamic enterprise that focuses on competencies to lay out essential knowledge, skills, and behaviors expected of all SA professionals (Munsch & Cortez, 2014). Within the ACPA and NASPA competencies, SA professionals are expected to use the method of theory to practice while working with students (Henning & Roberts, 2016; Munsch & Cortez, 2014; Reason & Kimball, 2012). However, there is no evidence of specific SA professional theories related to career development. This study developed a model to incorporate and focus on new SA career development.

Empirical

Researchers have consistently studied and identified why women face challenges and barriers when pursuing a career in any field, including higher education (Bartel, 2018; Davies et al., 2017; Diehl, 2014; Dunn et al., 2014; Hannum et al., 2015; Krause, 2017; Longman, 2018; Madsen, 2012; Mullen et al., 2018; Tessens et al., 2011). In comparison, the literature has also studied how women in senior-level positions obtained their role in the field (Antoniou & Aggelou, 2019; Fitzgerald, 2013; Glass & Cook, 2018; Longman & Anderson, 2011; Young & McLeod, 2001). This study connected theory to practice by linking the prior findings and theories with a leadership model. This study also integrates career development and SA (Barham

& Winston, 2006; Henning & Roberts, 2016; Reason & Kimball, 2012). Prior studies have focused more on leadership programs and initiatives that gear towards students at institutions (Anderson, 2021; Shalka et al., 2019), faculty working at institutions (Lewis et al., 2021; Sims et al., 2021), or SA supporting students as leaders (Brewer et al., 2019; Mak & Kim, 2017; McKenzie, 2018). However, this study helps bridge the literature gaps between leadership developments for women professionals and SA needs at institutions while navigating through their first five years to progress in the field (Dinise-Halter, 2017; Mullen et al., 2018; Muller et al., 2018; Place & Vardeman-Winter, 2018; Ramos, 2020; Sims et al., 2017).

Research Questions

Entering the study without narrowing down research questions is common to the research design (Birks & Mills, 2015). While other studies have research questions directing how the study proceeds, initial research questions were omitted and generated by the research process due to this grounded theory design (Birks & Mills, 2015; Fairhurst & Putnam, 2019; Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019). The purpose of these research questions was to identify and understand the needs of entry-level SA professionals from the lived experiences of new, mid, and senior-level SA professionals currently working in higher education. The below questions represent the focus of the study, which determined as the study became grounded in the data.

Due to the iterative process of a grounded theory study, evolving data collection and analysis helps progress the research and helps generate, develop, and integrate through applying the grounded theory methods (Charmaz, 2014; Knigge & Cope, 2006). Glaser and Strauss (1967) proposed that even the research problem must emerge from the findings. However, Corbin and Strauss (2014) suggested a more contemporary approach by allowing the researcher to present a research topic without expressing specific research questions (Charmaz, 2014; Heath & Cowley,

2004; Knigge & Cope, 2006). Although Charmaz identified that either direction might work successfully in a grounded theory, Charmaz suggested that the design is emergent and can unfold as the study concludes. Overall, through theoretical sampling and constant comparison, research questions became apparent later in the study (Charmaz, 2014; Ravitch & Carl, 2020).

Central Research Question

What necessary components do student affairs departments need to retain their entry-level student affairs women professionals as it relates to a career development model

Sub-Question One

What components are needed for an entry-level professional woman to enter the field of student affairs?

Sub-Question Two

What components are needed for entry-level student affairs professional women to master the position?

Sub-Question Three

How do entry-level student affairs professionals know they are ready to persist in the field?

Definitions

1. *American College Personnel Association (ACPA)* – An organization representing private and public institutions from across the U.S. and worldwide. ACPA members include graduate and undergraduate students enrolled in SA/higher education administration programs, faculty, and SA educators, from entry-level to senior SA officers and organizations and companies engaged in the campus marketplace (ACPA, 1993).

2. *Academic Affairs* – Typically, an institutional office oversees various academic programs and departments in higher education. The head of this office supports curriculum initiatives, faculty hiring and development, research and teaching, and oversees academic departments and programs (Ozaki & Hornak, 2014).
3. *Administration* – Refers to people who work in higher education. Typically, administration positions are at the director and dean level or higher. Usually, they do not teach (Barham & Winston, 2006; Davis & Cooper, 2017; Dunn et al., 2014).
4. *Bias* – Bias is the collective subconscious influence an individual’s perception of race, ethnicity, gender, or age can affect understanding, actions, and decision-making (Staats, 2016).
5. *Career Development* – The term is used for a wide variety of specialized trainings and continued education to grow skills in someone’s career and advance in their field (Roberts, 2007).
6. *Entry-Level Professional* – SA professionals have recently graduated from either their bachelor’s or master’s program and have started their position right out of graduation (Newman et al., 2019). Another definition is a professional who has switched their career into SA from another profession (academic affairs, counseling, etc.) An entry-level professional is usually the first five years of SA.
7. *Feminist* – There is no common understanding of its meaning (Garland-Thomson, 2002; Villacorta, 2019); many view the topic as moving beyond a patriarchal society. Generally, the definition supports the belief in feminism (Eagly, 2007; Wajcman, 2013).

8. *Gender Roles* – Socially constructed beliefs about men and women’s behaviors, gender roles are perceptions of what men and women do and expectations for what men and women should do as agreed upon by society (Eagly & Karau, 2002).
9. *Glass Ceiling* – An unofficially acknowledged barrier limits a professional’s advancement, especially in minorities, including female professionals (Cotter et al., 2001; Jackson & O’Callaghan, 2009; Johns, 2013; Matsa & Miller, 2011).
10. *Higher Education* – Refers to an academic institution that grants undergraduate and graduate degrees and is accredited. I am researching four-year public and private institutions that grant bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees (Cotter et al., 2001).
11. *Leadership* – The party that determines a path for a group (Alvesson, 2020). Leading a group of people to reach their goals motivates them to succeed and empowers them to continue their journey (Dirik, 2020).
12. *Mentorship* – Providing psychological and emotional support, supporting one’s set goals and career path, share an experience as a role model (Alston & Hansman, 2020; Orsini et al., 2019). Typically, a mentorship is a relationship between a younger protégé and mentee receiving guidance from a more experienced mentor in the field (Alston & Hansman, 2020).
13. *Mid-Level Professional* – A professional who has moved past their entry-level but is not near the end of their career. Most SA professionals will be in their mid-level jobs for most of their time in SA (Newman et al., 2019).
14. *Onboarding* – The processes in which new hires are integrated into the institution. This can include activities, training, and an introduction to processes. Traditionally, this is also where the individual is introduced to the institution’s structure, culture, vision, mission, and values (Alston & Hansman, 2020; Roberts, 2007).

15. *Organizational socialization* – The process individuals undergo when joining a pre-existing culture. Organizational socialization generally includes several processes, including anticipation, entrance into the role, and settling into the role (Woodrow & Guest, 2020).
16. *Senior Leadership* – In higher education, senior leadership roles refer to Presidency, Chancellor, Vice President, or Chief Academic Officers (Klotz, 2014; Lennon et al., 2013).
17. *Senior-Level Women Administrators* – Refers to women in higher education who are in the positions of dean level or higher in academic or SA settings (Newman et al., 2019).
18. *Stereotypes* – Typically a fixed image or an idea of a particular person or thing (Leskinen et al., 2015; Rhode, 2017; Steffens et al., 2019).
19. *Supervision* – A helping process designed to support staff to promote organizational goals. Ideally, supervision enhances personal and career development. A supervisor is usually mid to senior-level professional in the field (Winston & Creamer, 1997). Entry-level professionals can be supervisors but typically supervise paraprofessionals.
20. *Student Affairs* –Departments that oversee all areas of higher education, except for academics, including residential life, academic success, first-year experience, orientation, student activities, career services, counseling, or disabilities services (Davis & Cooper, 2017; Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017).

Summary

Women are currently enrolled at more institutions, earning more degrees, and representing a larger population in many professions than men (Hannum et al., 2015; Johnson, 2017; Longman & Anderson, 2011). One profession in particular, SA, has become a majority female field, having around 56% of top officers, and overall, about 71% of SA professionals are women (Pagán, 2018; Pritchard & McChesney, 2018). Unfortunately, the high percentage of

women leader representation does not match the high attrition rates research is seeing with entry-level SA professionals, being between 39% and 68% during the first five years (Barham & Winston, 2006; Essary et al., 2018; Marshall et al., 2016; Yates, 2019). Support through a well-developed career development program may better equip entry-level SA professionals to persist towards their future careers in SA (Renn & Hodges, 2007; Renn & Jessup-Anger-Anger, 2008; Selzer & Robles, 2019). This study sought to develop a model for a career development program that institutions can use to support their entry-level SA professionals who identify as women. This model was based on all stakeholders' lived experiences, including new, mid, and senior-level SA professionals, by understanding the needed supports, knowledge, and skills to pursue a mid to senior-level position.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Women continue to earn and hold more bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees than men, yet are still underrepresented in leadership education (Longman & Anderson, 2011). Women hold less than 30% of college and university presidencies (Johnson, 2017; Longman & Anderson, 2011). Out of those fortunate few who achieve higher positions, success requires a combination of personal adaptiveness and external support (Johnson, 2017; Wells & McShane, 2004). While this study sought to develop a leadership training model for aspiring women leaders in higher education, it is essential to understand why the model was needed. This chapter provides a context of previous theories related to women's leadership and development and offers a review of relevant literature regarding women's faced leadership, personal, professional, and institutional barriers. The inclusion of this literature review for this study is two-fold. It provides an opportunity to identify the gaps in the literature and demonstrate my knowledge of the field I am studying (Charmaz, 2014). The chapter then concludes with a summary.

Theoretical Framework

Understanding where current literature stands and lacks grounding a new theory is essential for the study, understanding the previous and current theories on women in higher education. While other theories such as social cognitive theory (Nucci & Powers, 2014) and feminist theory (Garland-Thomson, 2002) offer a model that describes gender development and differentiation that may be helpful to this study, they do not focus on the complexity of the SA profession and the barriers they face in the field. While previous SA theories (Evans et al., 2009) have demonstrated progressive and inclusive growth to develop gender-specific theories to incorporate women's needs, they do not capture the overall need of new professionals in SA

(Renn & Hodges, 2007). A fitting theory that considers a holistic perspective (i.e., cognitive, environmental, identity, and moral) of SA career development has not yet been developed.

Review of the Literature

A thorough, substantive, sophisticated literature review is necessary for substantive, detailed, sophisticated research (Boote & Beile, 2005). For a researcher to perform significant analysis, one must advance the collective understanding of what has been done before, the strengths and weaknesses of existing studies, and what they might mean and need for future research (Boote & Beile, 2005; Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Women face current barriers and obstacles personally and institutionally as they navigate their professional careers (Ballenger, 2010; Howe-Walsh & Turnbull, 2016). Moreover, various studies related to women in higher education have identified personal and institutional barriers that may contribute to a women's adversity as they navigate to a senior-level leadership position at their institution (Ballenger, 2010; Howe-Walsh & Turnbull, 2016; Sandberg, 2013). For this study, barriers are defined as any obstacle that prevents forward movement that makes career progress difficult (Brewer et al., 2019). This review aimed to identify the existing knowledge and current literature that provides a framework for my study. Additionally, the review recognizes what has been studied, what needs to be explored, and how my study can further fill gaps in understanding women leaders in higher education.

Cultivating Women Leadership in the Workplace

According to the International Leadership Association Directory of Leadership Programs, more than 1,500 leadership programs, training, and workshops (Guthrie et al., 2018). These programs are design to help a prospective leader learn new leadership techniques or current leaders to refine old skills, including assertive communication, motivation methods, and

coaching (Kiersch & Peters, 2017; Lacerenza et al., 2017). These training programs target supervisors in mid to senior-level positions (Kezar & Holcombe, 2017). Although these programs, trainings, and workshops are used in many organizations and institutions to allow supervisors to become better leaders, little is known or studied on the educators who teach these courses (Bilen-Green et al., 2008; Eagly, 2007; Jenkins & Owen, 2016; Kezar et al., 2006). However, there is substantial research on leadership; the study is limited to descriptions of preferred pedagogies, approaches, and backgrounds and does not target leadership educators' levels of consistency and preparedness (Cheung & Halpern, 2010; Jenkins & Owen, 2016; Priest & Seemiller, 2018). Additionally, while research on leadership has powerfully demonstrated no significant differences in leadership ability among women and men, very few studies about leadership have considered the effect gender has on leadership enactment and success (Cheung & Halpern, 2010; Kalev & Deutsch, 2018; Place & Vardeman-Winter, 2018). Nevertheless, there is a general agreement that women face more barriers to becoming leaders than men, especially for male-dominated leadership roles (Ballenger, 2010; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Kezar et al., 2006; Powell, 2018).

Women's leadership styles and the impact gender has on leadership have become two main focuses for many recent studies, but little is studied on how women leaders lead (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Hopkins et al., 2008; Hoyt, 2010; Oakley, 2000). Many argue that discrepancies in the research originated from the controversial beliefs feminist writings and ideas have on society (Bell et al., 2019; Garland-Thomson, 2002). Some feminists fear that targeting gender differences in leadership styles can justify excluding women from male-dominated opportunities (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Sandberg, 2013). In contrast, other feminists believe that the perception of sameness would fail to acknowledge the relational qualities that are

traditionally female characteristics (Eagly, 2007; Wajcman, 2013). Contrary to either belief, how women leaders view themselves within the profession and who they are as a leader is comprised of their perceptions, experiences, and values and can be both demonstrated in the workplace and higher education (Eagly, 2007; Einarsdottir et al., 2018; Seemiller & Priest, 2017).

It has been more than 50 years since Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act ended legal employment discrimination based on race and sex and more than 40 years since Title IX prohibited sex-based discrimination in education (Ford, 2016; Goldin et al., 2006; Lennon et al., 2013; Lucas, 2006; Oakley, 2000). Today, the number of women in the workplace is far greater than before the end of World War II, where less than one-third of women worked outside the home (Fitzgerald, 2013; Kiser, 2015). An increasing number of companies are seeing the value of having more women in leadership (Ely et al., 2011; Oakley, 2000; Saleh & Zinman, 2019), proving that they can make progress on gender diversity in their offices (Hopkins et al., 2008; Lennon et al., 2013). Although this is a step in the right direction, women continue to be underrepresented at every level, and to transform this notion, the literature suggests focusing on the glass ceiling effect earlier on in a person's career and considers a new idea of the *broken rung* effect (Domenico & Jones, 2006; Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009; Johns, 2013; Kong et al., 2020; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Matsa & Miller, 2011; McKinsey & Company, 2021; Saleh & Zinman, 2019; Thomas et al., 2020). Women employees are hindered primarily by this broken rung theory in which women employees are less likely to be hired as managers or promoted to management positions (Hopkins et al., 2008; Kiser, 2015; Liang et al., 2021; McKinsey & Company, 2021). For every 100 men promoted to manager, only 85 women were promoted (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Powell, 2018; Saleh & Zinman, 2019; Thomas et al., 2020). As a result, at the beginning of 2020, women remained significantly outnumbered at the manager level by

typically holding 38% of manager positions, while men held 62% (McKinsey & Company, 2021). Literature suggests that if companies were to hire and promote women to first-level managers, an estimated one million more women would be promoted to corporate management in the next five years (Hopkins et al., 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; McKinsey & Company, 2021; Saleh & Zinman, 2019; Thomas et al., 2020).

Women Leadership in SA

Since the 1990s, the college gender gap in enrollment has evaporated, and enrollment of women has continued to increase and bypass men's enrollment (Bilen-Green et al., 2008; Cheung & Halpern, 2010; Dunn et al., 2014; Ford, 2016; Goldin et al., 2006; Graf et al., 2018; Hoyt, 2010; Keane et al., 2021). The continuous growth of enrollment for this demographic is, in part, since there has been an increase in positive influences to attend college (Ford, 2016; Madsen, 2012; Nidiffer, 2010; O'Connor, 2010; Teague, 2015). When comparing women and faculty leadership status in higher education between the 1970s and 2000s, the Association of American Colleges and Universities reported that there has been real progress (The White House Project, 2009, as cited in Johnson, 2017). This included a 25% increase in assistant professors, a 20% increase in associate professors, and a 10% increase in full-time professors (The White House Project, 2009, as cited in Johnson, 2017). Furthermore, women college and university presidents increased 5% from 2006 (Klotz, 2014; Madsen, 2012). Also, women represent about 69% of leadership positions in academic affairs, 19% in facilities, 29% in athletics, and 28% in informational technology (Burkinshaw & White, 2017; Krause, 2017; Whitford, 2020). These statistics also echo women in higher education faculty, where women make up around 46.7% of full-time faculty members, 53.8% of part-time faculty members, and 50% of faculty members overall (Colby & Fowler, 2020; Wong, 2019). These statistics show that women now make up a

larger share of higher education educators than in decades (Block & Tietjen-Smith, 2016; Whitford, 2020; Wong, 2019). Although some may find these increases in statistics comforting (Bilen-Green et al., 2008; Lennon et al., 2013; The White House Project, 2009, as cited in Johnson, 2017), others still believe progress in women leadership in higher education has stalled (Bowles & McGinn, 2004; Einarsdottir et al., 2018; Fitzgerald, 2013; Ford, 2016). Although progress has been made, Dunn et al. believed that women continue to lag their male colleagues in moving into leadership roles in higher education and tend to navigate towards holding leadership positions in less prestigious areas, including SA.

Notably, around 71% of SA leadership positions (e.g., presidents, vice presidents, deans, directors) are held by women (Yakaboski & Donahoo, 2011), and 56% of top officers in SA are women (McNair et al., 2013). Overall, while women's representation as higher education faculty and staff is overrepresented, there is low representation of women amongst presidents, provosts, deans, and directors (ASHE Higher Education Report, 2011; Bowles & McGinn, 2004; Ford, 2016). Numerous contributors add to the disparity in gender representation in university leadership, including unconscious bias and stereotyping (Dunn et al., 2014; Fitzgerald, 2013; Ford, 2016; McNair et al., 2013). Today, women still face many stereotypes, including still being caregivers (Elmuti et al., 2009; Ely et al., 2011; Kiser, 2015), nurturing (Ghouralal, 2019), caring (Mölders et al., 2018), emotional (Dunn et al., 2014), and selfless (Ford, 2016), which are opposite of assumed leader qualities, including assertiveness, decision making, and competitiveness (Fitzgerald, 2013; McNair et al., 2013). Although women want to climb this *academic career ladder*, women's expectations still have caregiving roles (Bartel, 2018).

Skills. As SA professionals should be familiar with student development theories, they are also obligated to understand their growth and development (Patton et al., 2016; Roberts,

2007). They inquire about specific skills during their career, including leadership, student contact, effective communication, and maintaining confidentiality (Roberts, 2007). While research regarding SA professionals' skills has been well studied, research regarding lack of skills has not been exhausted related to entry-level SA professionals. There is a potential lack of skills to uncover from this population.

Competencies. Higher education is a dynamic enterprise-facing unprecedented change (Howe-Walsh & Turnbull, 2016; Johnson, 2017; Kalpazidou Schmidt & Faber, 2016; Kromydas, 2017). Within the SA profession, it is essential to comprehend and uphold the SA professional competencies established by ACPA and NASPA (Muller et al., 2018; Sriram, 2014). The 10 professional competencies lay out essential knowledge, skills, and behaviors expected of all SA educations, regardless of functional area or specialty (Munsch & Cortez, 2014). The 10 competencies include personal and ethical foundations; values; philosophy and history; assessment, evaluation, and research; law, policy, and governance; organizational and human resources; leadership; social justice and inclusion; student learning and development; technology; and advising and supporting (Kuk & Banning, 2009; Muller et al., 2018). Although these competencies are to develop and maintain integrity in one's life and work, they apply in the classroom of many master's programs geared towards SA compared to the day-to-day workplace (Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017; Kuk & Banning, 2009; Lindsay, 2014; Sriram, 2014).

Educational System. Working in SA shapes the lives of the students who attend colleges and universities (Hill & Wheat, 2017). However, the field also presents many challenges, including new technologies, changing student demographics, demands for greater accountability, concern about the increasing cost of higher education, and criticism of campuses' moral and ethical climate (University of Nevada, n.d.). Obtaining a SA master's degree allows individuals

to gain a broad-based skill set to transition from department to department in SA and address the ever-facing challenges (Munsch & Cortez, 2014; Sriram, 2014). Although many recommend and require a master's degree in SA or counseling when entering the field and a doctoral degree for upper administrative roles, there is not one traditional route of education that professionals take to pursue a career in SA (Hill & Wheat, 2017; Mullen et al., 2018; Muller et al., 2018).

Personal Barriers. To comprehend what contributes to a women's professional advancements, one must identify the personal barriers women face daily in societal settings. Individual experiences and personality traits may impede one's motivation to progress in the workplace (Diehl, 2014; Heinowitz et al., 2012; McNair et al., 2013). Although there has been extensive research on what barriers women face in the workplace and why women leaders in higher education face those barriers, current research lacks addressing how to prevent these concerns (Ballenger, 2010; Diehl, 2014; Einarsdottir et al., 2018; Heinowitz et al., 2012; Howe-Walsh & Turnbull, 2016; McNair et al., 2013). Research shows that common personal barriers for women include lack of motivation, lifestyle conflicts, ambition gap, and societal expectations.

Motivation. The reason why many work every day, create goals, exercise our willpower, and overall make decisions can relate to motivation (Locke & Schattke, 2019; Sieber et al., 2019; Szutta, 2020). There are two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic (Kuvaas et al., 2017; Locke & Schattke, 2019; Ryan & Deci, 2020; Szutta, 2020). Specifically, for one to act on the behavior because it is internally fulfilling, interesting, or enjoyable without expecting a reward or recognition from others is intrinsic motivation (Kruglanski et al., 2018; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Conversely, external rewards drive extrinsic motivation, including money, fame, grades, and praise (Ryan & Deci, 2020). While women value intrinsic motivations (i.e., interpersonal

relationships, helping others, and having a desire for greater flexibility and balance), men lean towards extrinsic motivations (i.e., opportunities to earn, promotions, challenges, and power) (Feeney & Stritch, 2019; Mak & Kim, 2017). Once someone advances in the workplace, extrinsic motivations will increase, and the less likely women will be motivated to advance (Feeney & Stritch, 2019; McNair et al., 2013; Radu et al., 2017). Research suggests that self-selection can contribute to the current lack of women in leadership roles concerning motivation and leadership. Women will choose not to participate where they perceive they do not belong (Davies et al., 2017). Compared to men, women are driven more by intrinsic motivations, including internal fulfillment, satisfaction, and interests, and will continuously choose intrinsic motivation over extrinsic (Davies et al., 2017; Wigfield & Eccles, 2002).

Research concluded that intrinsic motivators may limit a women's ability to achieve a senior-level position in higher education since their motivation is not in power or money but having the feeling of enjoyment and interest in the position (Davies et al., 2017; Wigfield & Eccles, 2002). Because women are less extrinsically motivated than their male counterparts, they tend to avoid competition and may decide not to pursue senior-level positions open to other applicants (Ely et al., 2011; Griskevicius et al., 2006). Three universal needs motivate an individual's behavior within groups: to be accepted by the group, succeed, and find meaning (Davies et al., 2017). Wigfield and Eccles (2002) argue that gender differences in motivation influence how one chooses an occupation and performs within that occupation. Specifically, women may be more attracted to specific organizational cultures that mirror their motives and preferences (Griskevicius et al., 2006; Longman et al., 2018; Ronquillo et al., 2021).

Life-Style Conflicts. Research showed that women are more likely to see their family roles as part of their social identity (Coronel et al., 2010; Haar & Brougham, 2022; Hewlett,

2002; Karkouti, 2014; Legault & Chasserio, 2003). Because of this, many women still feel significant conflict when choosing between career and family life and have concerns about their work-life balance (Coronel et al., 2010; Schueller-Weidekamm & Kautzky-Willer, 2012). These conflicts require a tremendous amount of time and energy, and quite often, women find it challenging to deal with this issue (Schueller-Weidekamm & Kautzky-Willer, 2012). When they turn to the department head or office staff to discuss these issues, they do not find the support they seek (Ghouralal, 2019). Many women are the primary caretakers for their families while also holding leadership positions in their offices (Hughes, 2014). According to Welch and Welch (2006), few women CEOs and executives have children due to its effect on their career; for those who decide to have kids, about 32% of women chose to leave their positions due to pregnancy or childcare leave.

From the interview process to pursuing a mid to senior-level position, women who want to be or currently are mothers have to make sacrifices to advance in their careers (Schueller-Weidekamm & Kautzky-Willer, 2012). Conversely, if the woman remains in an executive position with a child, they are more reluctant to travel and work long hours due to their at-home responsibilities, hindering their promotion likelihood (Elmuti et al., 2009; Hewlett, 2002). This view may also impact employers' perception who may subconsciously reject a women applicant at a childbearing age or has shared having a child during the interview process (Hughes, 2014).

Ambition Gap. When women choose to stop striving for career advancement opportunities, they could be self-imposing a glass ceiling effect or ambition gap (Abouzahr et al., 2017; Howe-Walsh & Turnbull, 2016; Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009; Johns, 2013; Matsa & Miller, 2011; Pagán, 2018). Coronel et al. (2010) conducted a study on women administrators ($N = 17$) who had children during their careers found similarities amongst the participants who

refrained from professional opportunities. The study only accepted positions conducive to their family, limited higher education requirements, and limited their involvement in professional organizations, leading to less money. Additionally, women may hold themselves to a lower standard and stay in an entry or mid-level professional roles because they are discouraged, lack inspiration, or lack opportunities to advance (Sandberg, 2013; Washington, 2007). Without any internal or external motivation or support to advance professionally, some women may be discouraged from making progress in their career trajectory (Klotz, 2014; Lennon et al., 2013). Specifically, this can result in a large ambition gap of untenured women faculty and administrators stuck in entry and mid-level management (Lennon et al., 2013; McCaffery, 2018).

During Marshall's (2009) study, a primary hindrance amongst women leaders was the time constraints due to family obligations. However, literature has concluded that an essential job function in many executive-level positions is to commit more to work than outside commitments, which may not allow for women to balance work and family obligations (Bos et al., 2019; Coronel et al., 2010; Klotz, 2014; Legault & Chasserio, 2003; Washington, 2007). As a result, women in entry and mid-level roles sacrifice their professional ambition to pursue their family goals (Coronel et al., 2010; Lennon et al., 2013). However, researchers have continuously concluded that many expectations of senior-level administrators are myths, and studies have shown that women in senior-level positions are mothers and wives (Channing, 2020; Hewlett, 2002; McCaffery, 2018; Schnackenberg & Simard, 2018; Schueller-Weidekamm & Kautzky-Willer, 2012; Wheeler, 2020).

Societal Expectations. Society has viewed working women as immoral and unfeminine objects of pity (Domenico & Jones, 2006). Frequently, women are expected to perform duties as wives and mothers over fulfilling their professional responsibilities (Domenico & Jones, 2006;

Lamar et al., 2019; Schueller-Weidekamm & Kautzky-Willer, 2012). Conversely, society has assumed that women who choose their careers over family are considered negligent mothers (Coronel et al., 2010; Hampson, 2018; Hewlett, 2002; Legault & Chasserio, 2003; Meeussen & Van Laar, 2018; Radcliffe et al., 2021). Conversely, working mothers were not taken seriously by their bosses, colleagues, or society because of their nurturing nature (Antoniou & Aggelou, 2019; Hewlett, 2002). Due to societal expectations, women experienced feelings of guilt or selfishness if they put their career interests first, and because of these demands, a significant impact was on women's advancement in leadership roles in the workplace (Ballakrishnen et al., 2019; Schueller-Weidekamm & Kautzky-Willer, 2012; Vidyakala, 2019).

Regardless of the increasing number of women working, women have expected and tend to enter the workforce in lower-status, lower-paying jobs and remain clustered in specific work fields because of this (Domenico & Jones, 2006; Graf et al., 2018; Schueller-Weidekamm & Kautzky-Willer, 2012; Watson et al., 2002). Administrative support, sales, service, nursing, teaching, social work, and clerical jobs are all low-paying traditionally female careers that are still female-focused due to society's persistent attitudes regarding stereotypical occupational roles for males and females (Hampson, 2018; Meeussen & Van Laar, 2018; Watson et al., 2002).

Institutional and Professional Barriers. Although women face many personal barriers, professional and institutional barriers can play a role in the lack of women leaders in higher education institutions. According to Bartel (2018), while gender equality at universities is changing slowly, women leaders in higher education face many influences and biases that are still in place. Specifically, professional barriers are events or conditions in a person's environment that make professional progress difficult (Alqahtani, 2019; Ballenger, 2010; Miller, 2018). This issue impacts women and universities' abilities to draw on different perspectives and

provide role modeling to women students (Ballenger, 2010; Bartel, 2018). Barriers can occur when perceived women cannot break through the glass ceiling (Fitzgerald, 2013; Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009; Johns, 2013; Matsa & Miller, 2011). According to Jackson and O'Callaghan, the glass ceiling concept exists in higher education today.

Lack of Representation. According to Diehl (2014), gender-related barriers and obstacles, including discrimination, exclusion from informal networks, tokenism, lack of mentoring, workplace harassment, and salary inequalities, played a prominent role in the barriers and adversity women faced a higher-level leadership position. When women fight these barriers and adversity, female students watch this behavior, which causes a domino effect (Novis Deutsch & Rubin, 2019). If female students watch their role models face challenges every day in the workplace and consciously watch what they say and present themselves, future female leaders will have the exact expectations (Elmuti et al., 2009; Hill & Wheat, 2017; Lafortune et al., 2018). Unfortunately, gaps in literature still exist regarding the methodologies and the extent of women's leadership involvement to consider what moral and ethical issues must address.

Effects on the Community. While women of all races have broken boundaries, women's representation is still significantly low, negatively impacting many individuals (Diehl, 2014). According to Teague (2015), there is an imbalance of percentages between female students and female leadership on college campuses. While around 50% of students are female, less than 30% of the administration is female. Moreover, 50% of doctoral degree students are female, but only 26% of higher education institutions have female presidents (Klotz, 2014; Teague, 2015). This disproportionate percentage demonstrates how the higher education system lacks women's representation on their campuses. Women's leadership representation on college campuses

correlates to personal and professional success for future women leaders (Asgari et al., 2012; Boatwright et al., 2003; Longman et al., 2018).

Although there have been interventions, including mentoring for women, equal opportunity laws and policies, and affirmative action recruitment and hiring strategies, more is recommended (Davidson, 2012; McKenzie, 2018). Universities and current SA leaders need to partner and take responsibility for senior leadership's demographics and lack of female representation (Evans, 2001; Ford, 2016). One initiative that may benefit this issue is creating mid-level faculty and staff programs that support higher-level positions (McKenzie, 2018). There needs to be an examination of current institutional structures and cultures that "exclude women or create unnecessary boundaries that they perceive as insurmountable or unattractive" (Ford, 2016, p. 510). These initiatives may be difficult but essential if universities look to increase their representation diversity on their campuses and leave a lasting impact on future women leaders.

Gender Stereotyping in the Workplace. Gender-based stereotypes are not restricted to people but can also exist in the workplace, including the gender proportion of those employed in the occupation and the personality traits necessary for that occupation (Alqahtani, 2019; Fitzgerald, 2013; Heilman, 2012; Leskinen et al., 2015; Oakley, 2000). Regardless of how people decide their career, they believe whether a particular occupation is a male-dominated or female-dominated career and gear towards their gendered specific jobs (Alqahtani, 2019; Fitzgerald, 2013; Heilman, 2012; Leskinen et al., 2015). While the SA profession is a female-dominated field and is known to be beneficial for those who are family goal-oriented, there is still the question of why women are scarce at the top-level positions in SA (Bilen-Green et al., 2008; Coronel et al., 2010; Fitzgerald, 2013; Hill & Wheat, 2017; Legault & Chasserio, 2003; Teig, 2018; van den Besselaar & Sandström, 2017). Research has suggested that gender biases

can be a primary cause and the glass ceiling effect is a consequence to gender stereotyping (Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009; Johns, 2013; Steffens et al., 2019). Although women gear towards the SA profession, there is still gender stereotyping (Fitzgerald, 2013; Heilman, 2012; Mullen et al., 2018). Specifically, there are three types of biases caused by gender stereotypes in the workplace, negative biases, self-limiting biases, and motherhood biases (Correll et al., 2007; Leskinen et al., 2015).

A negative bias is when someone holds negative stereotypes about someone due to their gender, precisely when one thinks a woman is automatically warm, pleasant, and likable, and not forceful, competent, or suited for high-pressure leadership tasks (Alqahtani, 2019; Brescoll, 2016; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Kramer & Harris, 2020; Leskinen et al., 2015). A person who holds negative biases will unconsciously or consciously judge a woman, criticize how they work, and believe they are less talented and less suited for challenging tasks (Kramer & Harris, 2020). Recent studies have revealed that approximately 75% of people think of men when they hear the words career, success, business, and promotion and think of women when they hear domestic-related words such as family and caregiving (Coronel et al., 2010; Kramer & Harris, 2020). Even in the 21st century, an overwhelming majority of people still associated men with leader-related roles such as a boss, CEO, and director, while they associate women with aide-related positions such as assistant, attendant, and secretary (Kaftandzieva & Nakov, 2021; Kramer & Harris, 2020). Negative biases can be transferable to any career path, including SA (Brescoll, 2016; Heilman, 2012). When entry-level SA professionals have supervisors and senior management that hold negative gender biases, they will have lower expectations about their performance capability (Davis & Cooper, 2017). These low expectations can potentially discourage and

obscure their women colleagues to be ambitious and motivated to continue their careers or advance in their careers.

Usually, stereotypes are preconceptions about other people based on their gender, race, economic status, and education (Kramer & Harris, 2020). However, people can hold stereotypes about themselves because of the categories they may fall into (Hentschel et al., 2019; Kramer & Harris, 2020). Gender stereotypes can be unconscious assumptions that can carry over into a career. Women can cause anxiousness and uncertainty when faced with tasks and beliefs that they are not as suitable as their male colleagues (Filut et al., 2017; Heilman, 2012; Kramer & Harris, 2020; Rhode, 2017). Mohr (2014) showed that men typically apply for jobs when they meet approximately 60% of the job criteria. Still, women usually do not apply for jobs until they have completed 100% of the requirements; this is because women fear that, unless they are fully qualified for the job, they will fail; men's behavior does not resemble this, which leads them to apply for higher-level positions (Kramer & Harris, 2020; Mohr, 2014). Fear carries over within the position that a woman holds, and they tend to choose assignments and positions that involve less risk, lower visibility, fewer challenges, and less responsibility (Einarsdottir et al., 2018; Filut et al., 2017; Heilman, 2012; Kramer & Harris, 2020; Mohr, 2014; Rhode, 2017). With this self-limiting behavior, women who believe in these stereotypes can be discouraged from furthering their careers (Johnson, 2017). They think they need to act like a man to be empowered or limit themselves within their position (Kramer & Harris, 2020; van Eerdewijk et al., 2017).

Although about two-thirds of the 23.5 million working women with children under 18 worked full time in 2018, women who are mothers still face more bias in the workplace than their counterparts (Benard et al., 2008; Bowles & McGinn, 2004; Christnacht & Sullivan, 2020; Correll et al., 2007). The assumption that mothers should be committed to their children without

reservation and that their children's emotional health and academic achievement depend on their mothers being present 24 hours is a perception Americans still have today (Kramer & Harris, 2020). This ideology is unsupported by evidence or experience (Correll et al., 2007). Although it is considered an ideology, only about 16% of Americans believe a mother should work full time outside of the home, leading to biases when a woman considers becoming or currently is a mother (Correll et al., 2007; Kramer & Harris, 2020). A study published in the *American Journal of Sociology* ($N = 100$) found that mothers were 79% less likely to be hired, 100% less likely to be promoted, offered \$11,000 less in salary, and held to higher performance standards than women without children (Correll et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2013). Additionally, mothers in the workplace can be excused from meetings, not assigned challenging tasks, encouraged to leave work early, and held to lower performance standards which can lead to testing a mother's career commitment (Aragon & Miller, 2012; Bowles & McGinn, 2004; Correll et al., 2007). Lastly, another form of motherhood bias is mom guilt, which makes women feel guilty for leaving their children at home while pursuing a career (Kramer & Harris, 2020; Lamar et al., 2019).

Although many studies have portrayed motherhood as a negative factor in a women's career, others believe that mothers describe superior supervision skills and earn typically 23% higher wages than their non-mother counterparts (Bowles & McGinn, 2004; Hennekam et al., 2019; Kramer & Harris, 2020; Meeussen & Van Laar, 2018; Oesch et al., 2017; Schulte, 2015; Zhou, 2017). Even with the statistical evidence, current research fails to guide for addressing these overall biases, supporting new professionals encountering these biases, and how to support women pursuing a senior-level position who may face these biases (Benard et al., 2008; Brescoll, 2016; Filut et al., 2017; Heilman, 2012; Hill et al., 2016; Kong et al., 2020; Lindsay, 2014; Longman & Anderson, 2011).

Mentorship in SA. Higher education administrators are typically senior-level personnel who are responsible for overseeing higher education institutions departments, faculty, staff, programs of study, curricula, budgets, and facilities and may have many different titles, including deans, directors, and chairs (Dunn et al., 2014; Ford, 2016; Haug, 2018; Mayya et al., 2021; Smith & Wolverton, 2010). An effective administrator in higher education is someone who performs specific skills, including technical, human, and conceptual abilities, and can be define by broad competencies that previous administrators and deans develop (Dunn et al., 2014; Haug, 2018; McCaffery, 2018; Munsch & Cortez, 2014; Smith & Wolverton, 2010; Sriram, 2014). Identifying specific competencies, such as knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary for effective leadership is essential to strengthening the probability of achieving desired organizational outcomes (Rauhaus & Carr, 2020). Although many competencies develop institutionally, ACPA and NASPA have developed specific competencies an individual in SA must proactively and consistently practice advancing in their careers (Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017; Lindsay, 2014; Muller et al., 2018; Munsch & Cortez, 2014). These competencies include advising and supporting, assessment and evaluation, leadership, personal and ethical foundations, social justice and inclusion, values, philosophy, and history (Muller et al., 2018). Although ACPA and NASPA had good intentions in their ability to create consistent competencies for the division of SA and to promote and unify the SA profession, these competencies in a contemporary age are too generic to transfer into meaningful trainings for entering administrator positions (Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017; Lindsay, 2014; Muller et al., 2018; Munsch & Cortez, 2014; Smith & Wolverton, 2010). Also, studies have found that if mid-level supervisors are not aware, knowledgeable, or skillful within any ACPA and NASPA competencies, it can negatively

impact entry-level SA professionals (Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017; Muller et al., 2018; Munsch & Cortez, 2014).

Although good leadership is present regardless of the organization, research indicated that higher education institutions present their own unique set of leadership challenges and support systems (Barham & Winston, 2006; Dinise-Halter, 2017; Marshall et al., 2016; Moodly & Toni, 2017; Mullen et al., 2018; Ramos, 2020; Tull, 2006). In particular, SA professionals operate in a fast-paced environment with little to no supervision yet must maintain a powerful voice in significant institutional decisions and lead by example to the student population they oversee (Davis & Cooper, 2017; Marshall et al., 2016; Mullen et al., 2018; Patterson, 2019; Renn & Hodges, 2007). For entry-level professionals, this can result in a long, agonizing period of defining and redefining their goals and objectives before achieving a respectful position in SA (Dinise-Halter, 2017; Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017; Marshall et al., 2016; Shupp & Arminio, 2012; Tull, 2006). With an estimated 15–20% of the SA workforce being new professionals an attrition rate of roughly 61% within the first six years, entry-level SA professionals are leaving the position earlier in their career (Barham & Winston, 2006; Garland-Thomson, 2002; Mullen et al., 2018; Renn & Hodges, 2007; Yates, 2019). This low retention may signal a need for better-developed programs and support systems (Blackhurst, 2000; Marshall et al., 2016; Renn & Hodges, 2007; Shupp & Arminio, 2012).

In 2006, ACPA conducted a new SA professional needs study ($N = 269$), identifying necessary skills to thrive in the SA profession and desired delivery methods to receive these needs (Shupp & Arminio, 2012). The overall consensus found that it was the responsibility of supervisors and senior-level administrators to help entry-level SA professionals to adapt and master the craft of their profession. However, other research indicates that the overall reason SA

professionals leave the profession is the lack of mentoring from their senior-level administration (Blackhurst, 2000; Block & Tietjen-Smith, 2016; Hill & Wheat, 2017; Kalpazidou Schmidt & Faber, 2016; Orsini et al., 2019). The inconsistency in data concluded that supervisors and senior level administrators are not playing their part to support their new professionals in the field (Coddling, 2019; Johnson, 2017; Lamb et al., 2018; Morgan, 2015; Shupp & Arminio, 2012). Furthermore, a reflection by ACPA (1993) found that campus collaboration was the top priority for the professional to feel connected to their institution within the first fifty days of a SA professional's career. This collaboration directly connected new professionals with institutional administrators and built relationships with higher-level authority figures (ACPA, 1993; Blackhurst, 2000; Hill & Wheat, 2017; Mak & Kim, 2017; Marshall, 2009). However, Patterson (2019) shared a limitation later in their study: the lack of gathering information after the fifty days to witness a possible collaboration between the connections built to attrition rates.

Additionally, a study conducted by Blackhurst (2000) surveyed women SA professionals from new staff to senior-level staff ($N = 500$) to determine their satisfaction within the SA profession. The study concluded that the higher the career position, the more satisfied women SA professionals were. Specifically, women in senior-level positions expressed significantly more satisfaction and commitment to their career and institution (Blackhurst, 2000; Dinise-Halter, 2017). For this reason, many studies recommended that senior-level SA professionals must ensure their lower-level colleagues, including new and mid-level, are supported and as satisfied as they are in their positions (Davis & Cooper, 2017; Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017; Mullen et al., 2018). However, what this support should look like is unclear.

Scholars have identified specific competencies new professional needs to be successful, including fiscal management, planning, assessment, theory to practice, critical thinking,

collaboration, conflict management, and written communication (Reason & Kimball, 2012; Renn & Hodges, 2007; Renn & Jessup-Anger-Anger, 2008; Selzer & Robles, 2019). Although working in SA requires advanced skills and diverse knowledge of areas where a student needs support, literature explains that new professionals lack the proper training to develop the necessary skills (Holzweiss et al., 2019). Additionally, they lack the awareness of the needed competencies they are unskillful in (Dinise-Halter, 2017; Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017; Holzweiss et al., 2019; Renn & Hodges, 2007). While these studies give insight into new professionals' experiences and needs, there is a lack of research on assisting new professionals in supporting them during this time (Renn & Hodges, 2007). However, the study does claim senior management and administration must play a role to assist new professionals, including providing them with developmental needs and supporting them during the transition into the field (Burkinshaw & White, 2017; Dinise-Halter, 2017; Holzweiss et al., 2019; Kramer & Harris, 2020; Renn & Hodges, 2007). While previous studies have interviewed current senior-level faculty, practitioners, and staff; it recommends interviewing new professionals to empower their voices, find out what they have experienced in the transition, and how they have navigated through their first five years in the position (Burkard et al., 2005; Burkinshaw & White, 2017; Dinise-Halter, 2017; Holzweiss et al., 2019; Kramer & Harris, 2020; Renn & Hodges, 2007).

The lack of women in leadership across higher education has been problematized in the literature (Burkinshaw & White, 2017; Kramer & Harris, 2020). However, much literature promotes fixing the women professionals as the solution (Kramer & Harris, 2020; Krause, 2017), and interventions are focused on breaking the glass ceiling effect (Burkinshaw & White, 2017; Johns, 2013; Leskinen et al., 2015; Marshall, 2009; Matsa & Miller, 2011). The widespread problem of women in higher education positions is gendered power relations at play in

universities and should be the primary focus (Leskinen et al., 2015; Longman & Madsen, 2014). Suppose one is to identify women as the problem. In that case, it can shift the responsibility towards programs and measures and aims to target the specific women in higher education (Burkinshaw & White, 2017) away from higher education administrators focusing and reflecting on a culture that is not encouraging women (Madsen, 2012). Higher education institutions should focus on the organizational culture of their institutions rather than their women professionals (Burkinshaw & White, 2017; Leskinen et al., 2015; Marshall, 2009; Mayya et al., 2021).

Strategies for Fostering a Women-Inclusive Leadership Culture

Institutions are developing and implementing strategies to bring awareness and attention to providing opportunities for advancement for women leaders (Blackhurst, 2000; Eagly et al., 2000; Rojas, 2020). According to the ASHE Higher Education Report (2011), implementing reverse mentoring, where senior leaders pair with high potential women employees, allows employees to learn from each other and effectively increase female leadership. Creating ongoing opportunities to develop women leaders throughout their career cycle is another improvement strategy higher education institutions can initiate (Blackhurst, 2000; Kalpazidou Schmidt & Faber, 2016). From emerging leaders to senior-level, learning programs for all experience levels in an organization can increase female leaders' confidence (Barton, 2019; Guptill et al., 2018; Tibbs et al., 2016). Lastly, universities can foster a culture of support by ensuring that clubs and associations focus on women's empowerment in the workplace (Barton, 2019; Guptill et al., 2018; Kalpazidou Schmidt & Faber, 2016). They can hold talks and workshops that bring in female guest speakers who can empower women to become leaders in the future. These opportunities and associations help women navigate the challenges they might face in achieving

leadership positions and play a vital role in developing and honing leadership skills (Blackhurst, 2000; Chanland & Murphy, 2018; Elmuti et al., 2009; Schoemaker et al., 2018).

The White House Project (2009, as cited in Johnson, 2017) was an American nonprofit organization that increased female representation in institutions, businesses, and government. The organization's main focus was to promote female leadership and campaign training. They also noted that "women tend to include diverse viewpoints in decision making, are also more likely to work through differences to form coalitions, have a broader conception of public policy, complete objectives, advocate for diversity, and bring disenfranchised communities to the table" (The White House Project, 2009, as cited in Johnson, 2017, p. 3). Having men and women in leadership positions will create a stronger foundation for innovation, inclusiveness, and prosperity (Barabino, 2019; Blackhurst, 2000; Miller, 2018).

Studies have shown that executive leadership is the key to effective SA administration (Ching & Agbayani, 2019; Hewlett, 2002; Johns, 2013; McCaffery, 2018; Tibbs et al., 2016). Due to this, many institutions have reorganized SA leadership operations to eliminate or reassign functions and departments (Ching & Agbayani, 2019; Sawyer, 2019). Additionally, SA departments and senior leadership positions have been altered or eliminated to integrate institutional services and programs and allow entry-level SA professionals to gain more experience earlier in their careers (Hewlett, 2002; Johns, 2013; Tibbs et al., 2016). Although reorganization and drastic changes may seem promising, they may cause limitations, including overlooking the fundamental mission and role of SA and creating obstacles, and limiting opportunities for any new professional looking to advance in the career and build on their leadership skills (Ching & Agbayani, 2019; Sawyer, 2019). Lastly, due to reorganization, many

entry-level SA professionals might not get the opportunity to receive the mentorship from their women leadership if those positions are eliminated or altered (Ching & Agbayani, 2019).

Current Support Systems

SA professionals play an essential role in creating and sustaining higher education institutions (Mather et al., 2009; Tull, 2006). Institutional effectiveness encompasses academic and co-curricular departments' skills and commitment to their students (Carpenter & Stimpson, 2007). Despite this, the current literature and a national study of staffing practices in SA have found that often SA professionals are given cursory treatment and lack new employee orientation, onboarding programs, trainings, and preparedness programs (Carpenter & Stimpson, 2007; Davis & Cooper, 2017; Hall-Jones et al., 2018; Mather et al., 2009; Womack, 2020; Young, 2019). Few higher education institutions have incorporated these practices, and those who have not found much success have incorporated assessment initiatives to evaluate the success (Dinise-Halter, 2017). Although the initiatives have been largely neglected in the literature (Womack, 2020), it has been recommended that these areas are focused on and prioritized for higher education institutions (Mather et al., 2009; Womack, 2020).

Orientation

Starting a new position can be an exciting time, a significant life transition, indicate a period of substantial personal challenge (Davis & Cooper, 2017; Dean et al., 2011), and come with a lot of uncertainty (Davis & Cooper, 2017; Lowery, 2004). While some challenges are inevitable and can be predicted, providing inadequate support to entry-level SA professionals can create problems for both the institution and individual employees (Mather et al., 2009). According to Mather et al., organizations, including higher education institutions, can suffer when not meeting employees' needs. A thoughtful, well-designed, organized, new staff

orientation program can demonstrate necessary support for new employees (Barham & Winston, 2006; Blackhurst, 2000; Marshall et al., 2016; Mather et al., 2009; Whitford, 2020; Wood & Bandura, 1989; Yates, 2019) within the SA division and can leave a lasting first impression (Pritchard & McChesney, 2018; Whitford, 2020). Currently, the existing orientation models in SA consist of a one-day event that reviews human resources and benefits but limits cultivating a relationship with the campus community (Mather et al., 2009). Winston and Creamer's (1997) survey of SA professionals who changed institutions ($N = 67$) identified that 11 of 15 orientation subjects were presented poorly when first entering the field. Specific topics included introducing staff, student population characteristics, performance expectations, and benefits plan.

Putting a new staff member to work without providing orientation can have consequences, including unethical practices, lower employee morale, lower level of employee engagement, and lack of trust within the organization (Mather et al., 2009; Pritchard & McChesney, 2018; Renn & Hodges, 2007; Renn & Jessup-Anger-Anger, 2008). These consequences are much like Sanford's (1967) and Dinise-Halter's (2017) recommendations to incorporate supports and challenges into the person's environment to help the person meet challenges to be successful. This concept is important because the types and amount of support new professionals need changes throughout their first five years of the profession (Barham & Winston, 2006; Davis & Cooper, 2017; Elmuti et al., 2009; Herdlein, 2004; Kalev & Deutsch, 2018; Renn & Hodges, 2007). While literature supports the value of orientation programs, there is also evidence that current orientation programs implemented in SA have been inadequate (Winston & Creamer, 1997). Additionally, Cotner-Klingler (2013) showed that a relationship between orientation programs and organizational socialization (Woodrow & Guest, 2020) was evident since there were significant differences between individuals who participated in their

organization's orientation compared to those who did not. However, during this study, Cotner-Klingler also found that an orientation program was not enough to support entry-level SA professionals to continue their careers past five years. Although the literature supports the value of orientation programs, evidence exhibits that current orientation programs are insufficient and not enough for entry-level SA professionals to gain enough support to continue their career in SA and grow in their field (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011).

Training and Supervision

Entry-level SA professionals leave the field every year (Davis & Cooper, 2017; Shupp & Arminio, 2012; Tull, 2006), and one common reason for this attrition is job satisfaction (Artale, 2020; Christnacht & Sullivan, 2020; Coddling, 2019; Davidson, 2012). As mentioned previously in this chapter, job dissatisfaction can result from many personal and professional barriers but can also result from unpreparedness into the program and inadequate supervision and training (Adams-Manning, 2019; Ballenger, 2010; Carpenter & Stimpson, 2007; Davis & Cooper, 2017; Lamb et al., 2018; Mather et al., 2009; Shupp & Arminio, 2012; Tull, 2006). High attrition in any organization can indicate low morale, and a mitigating factor for attrition is the quality of supervision received in a professional first and second year of their profession (Davis & Cooper, 2017; Garland-Thomson, 2002; Mullen et al., 2018; Shupp & Arminio, 2012; Tull, 2006). Furthermore, effective supervision can have a two-fold effect by not only reducing the propensity of entry-level SA professionals leaving early on in the profession but can also prepare new professionals to be effective supervisors for their future in the career (Barham & Winston, 2006; Blackhurst, 2000; Davis & Cooper, 2017; Marshall et al., 2016; Shupp & Arminio, 2012; Tull, 2006; Whitford, 2020; Wood & Bandura, 1989; Yates, 2019).

The future of SA depends on the proper education and training entry-level staff members need (Adams-Manning, 2019; Coddling, 2019; Davidson, 2012) to continue their career in the profession (Dinise-Halter, 2017; Tull, 2006). Seasoned SA professionals must share the responsibility to train their new colleagues through supervision and training programs (Davidson, 2012; Davis & Cooper, 2017; Dinise-Halter, 2017; Tull, 2006). Although the literature has noted that supervision is essential for the orientation and socialization of entry-level SA professionals, many seasoned professionals are not prepared or trained to properly train this population (Adams-Manning, 2019; Dinise-Halter, 2017; Tull, 2006). Synergistic staff supervision focuses on a holistic approach that allows supervisors to clarify expectations through discussions of performance and informal appraisals (Morgan, 2015; Tull, 2006). This approach can also benefit both stakeholders because the model portrays better organizational communication and engagement between the supervisor and their new staff member (Dinise-Halter, 2017; Morgan, 2015; Tull, 2006). Although synergistic supervision is successful and beneficial (Tull, 2006), there has been a lack of initiative, and research has been deemed to avoid studying this gap in the literature further (Barham & Winston, 2006; Blackhurst, 2000; Marshall et al., 2016; Whitford, 2020; Wood & Bandura, 1989; Yates, 2019).

Career Development

The decision to enter SA is not well understood, and limited published research exists on factors influencing the decision to pursue a career in SA (Taub & McEwen, 2006). Nevertheless, the SA profession is one that many college students navigate towards due to the variety of programs and diverse populations one gets to work with in the field (Davidson, 2012; Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017; Kuk & Banning, 2009; Taub & McEwen, 2006). The profession must ensure their employees are well trained and meet the challenges that the vulnerable population

they work with presents to carry out these critical roles and diverse responsibilities (Elmuti et al., 2009; Kuk & Banning, 2009; Taub & McEwen, 2006). Over the last fifty years, SA and higher education master and doctoral programs were developed to prepare entry-level SA professionals to uphold the SA standards and guidelines that the Council for the Advancement of Professional Standards set (Kuk & Banning, 2009; Taub & McEwen, 2006) developed.

The ACPA and NASPA competencies (Muller et al., 2018; Munsch & Cortez, 2014) recommended that SA professionals must continuously gain career development opportunities to maintain proficiency within a competency area to advance within it (Kuk & Banning, 2009; Muller et al., 2018). Some training and career development seminar topics can be related to supervision, diversity, inclusion, advising and supporting, personal and ethical foundations, and leadership (Muller et al., 2018). However, this higher education opportunity may be the only career development aspiring SA professionals receive within their SA careers (Lindsay, 2014). Many higher education institutions do not budget career development funds for their professionals or limit what career development opportunities an employee can endure (Fuller et al., 2017). However, research has found that job stress and burnout have negative consequences for work-related issues, such as lower career development of staff and found that participating in career development can result in career sustaining behavior (Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017; Kuk & Banning, 2009; Mullen et al., 2018; Muller et al., 2018; Taub & McEwen, 2006). However, no studies have examined the effectiveness of career development opportunities to prevent job stress and burnout (Mullen et al., 2018; Muller et al., 2018; Taub & McEwen, 2006).

External Supports

Although internal support systems, including orientation, training, and career development opportunities, are essential for one's growth within a profession, support from

external communities like one's family is also necessary and can influence an entry-level SA professionals' commitment to the field (Garland-Thomson, 2002; Kodama et al., 2021; Mullen et al., 2018; Muller et al., 2018; Terry & Fobia, 2019). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (Mendoza et al., 2017), 35% of undergraduates are first-generation students, and 60% of graduate students are first-generation. Although the definition used for entry-level professionals in this study includes non-traditional career-changing professionals, studies have focused solely on traditional entry-level professionals and the need for external support (Garland-Thomson, 2002; Kodama et al., 2021; Mullen et al., 2018). With about 60% of graduate students being first-generation, they are one of the firsts in their immediate families to enter the professional workforce (Terry & Fobia, 2019). Despite the importance of the support needed during this transition into the workforce, families are not sure how to offer support (Kodama et al., 2021). In SA, lack of support is even more significant since family members of entry-level SA professionals who are also first-generation, never attended college, and do not know or have experienced the complexity of a college environment (Coronel et al., 2010; Mullen et al., 2018; Muller et al., 2018). When someone transitions into a field, emotional support can be provided to through the institution (e.g., counseling, mental health services, therapy, wellness centers, and consulting services). However, emotional and family support is still needed and can only be given by the family (Cheung & Halpern, 2010; Coronel et al., 2010; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). No research focuses on this phenomenon, and no studies examine the relationship between family support and entry-level SA professionals.

Recommendations

Although many institutions have attempted the above initiatives, research suggested that instead of one event (including orientation, training, and workshops), an ongoing process should

be conducted to prepare entry-level SA professionals to advance in their careers (Carpenter & Stimpson, 2007; Mather et al., 2009). Suppose a higher education institution were to follow these recommendations. In that case, their employees might find value in continuing their career in the SA profession and continue their career at that current institution (Shupp & Arminio, 2012). Additionally, it is recommended that support be implemented from recruiting the new professional through acclimation of the institution and a yearlong ongoing orientation and training (Mather et al., 2009; Renn & Jessup-Anger-Anger, 2008). Many higher education institutions have not given the above processes the attention to support their new professionals (Davis & Cooper, 2017; Mullen et al., 2018; Shupp & Arminio, 2012; Tull, 2006).

Assessment is an effort to gather, analyze, and interpret evidence that can describe an institutional, departmental, or program's effectiveness (Shutt et al., 2012). In addition to recommending an ongoing training or orientation, researchers have suggested evaluating the effectiveness of an assessment tool to be implemented during any new program, orientation, or training for entry-level SA professionals (Kuk & Banning, 2009). However, it has only been recommended, and no studies have conducted further implementation for this tool (Shutt et al., 2012). While much of the current research on specific orientations, programs, and trainings has come from trial and error and spread across the U.S. higher education institutions, ongoing programs must be implemented to support entry-level SA professionals (Kuk & Banning, 2009). The programs must allow them to feel connected to the institution and empowered to continue their career in SA. Overall, the focus on entry-level SA professionals, specifically women, advancing their careers in SA is missing research.

Implications for Women, Researchers, and Leaders in SA

While women in SA need support to reach their leadership potential and executive positions, the types and timing of that support are unclear. Research on women's leadership in higher education has grown in response to the underrepresentation of women and the lack of diversity in senior-level positions (Ballenger, 2010; Longman & Madsen, 2014; Tessens et al., 2011). Literature on women in higher education leadership has numerous consistencies, including environmental and personal factors that affect women in their positions in higher education (Diehl, 2014; Ford, 2016; McKenzie, 2018; Teague, 2015). Many current studies have used in-depth interviews to understand women in senior-level positions (ASHE Higher Education Report, 2011; Cheung & Halpern, 2010). Many have found similarities in the importance of specific factors, including family, mentoring, and support, that women need to advance in their careers (Ballenger, 2010; Coronel et al., 2010; Hill & Wheat, 2017; Kalpazidou Schmidt & Faber, 2016). Furthermore, studies found that specific factors, including interests, educational preparation, opportunities, and barriers, influenced a women's decision to pursue a senior-level position (Ballenger, 2010; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Eagly et al., 2000; Mak & Kim, 2017). Though this information is valuable, what is still unknown is using these perspectives to guide entry-level SA professionals. Although current research focused on experiences of women who have achieved senior-level positions, there is a lack of research about advancing women into these positions.

Summary

The consistent concept of the glass ceiling has been identified in the current research related to women's leadership on college campuses; however, a lack of suggestions and solutions on breaking this glass ceiling has been evident (Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009; Johns, 2013;

Matsa & Miller, 2011). Due to historical initiatives and advancements, women leaders have increased. However, women's leadership support in higher-level positions lacks creating barriers and adversity for future women students and new professionals.

There is a need to study the lack of women's leadership on college campuses and how they face personal, professional, and institutional barriers and adversity (Ballenger, 2010; Diehl, 2014). As the increase of women students increases on college campuses, SA professionals need to be prepared to support and guide them to succeed in their future careers (Diehl, 2014; Mullen et al., 2018; Young, 2019). However, if there is an underrepresentation of female leadership on college campuses, there is a lack of mentorship and role modeling (Eagly, 2007; Hill & Wheat, 2017). Universities and colleges need to be intentional when hiring and promoting women in the workplace (Yousaf & Schmiede, 2017). For change to happen, we must start within the higher education community to encourage women to fight for equality and workplace advancements, providing a foundation for leadership more for higher education institutions. There are several suggested components for a model, but it is unclear what an ongoing model for entry-level SA professionals should look like from the stakeholders' perspective. The perspectives of entry-level SA professionals and current SA professionals may help generate a model for a career development program to help support entry-level SA professionals as they navigate towards a senior-level position.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

With about 50% to 60% of new professionals leaving SA within the first five years, limited mentorship and leadership programs require additional attention from researchers (Marshall et al., 2016; Mullen et al., 2018; Renn & Hodges, 2007; Yates, 2019). Understanding the factors stakeholders identify as contributing to the persistence of current women SA leaders may help current and future entry-level SA professionals who are successful and motivated to continue their careers in SA (Hill & Wheat, 2017; Mullen et al., 2018). The purpose of this grounded theory study was to develop a model for a career development program for entry-level SA professionals to be shared with higher education institutions. Chapter three will detail the chosen design, setting, participants, procedures, data collection and analysis methods, trustworthiness strategies, and this study's ethical considerations.

Design

Qualitative research is expressed in words and uses concepts, thoughts, or experiences to gather in-depth insights on a specific topic that is not well understood (Brédart et al., 2014; Ravitch & Carl, 2020). Assumptions and frameworks are where qualitative research informs the study of research problems addressing the individuals of concern (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Creswell & Poth, 2018). To study a concern, qualitative researchers must use an emerging qualitative approach to inquire, collect data, and review data in a natural setting that can be both inductive and deductive to establish patterns (Bansal et al., 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). A qualitative inquiry was the appropriate design for this study as I explored the phenomenon of women's career development in SA from the perspectives of multiple stakeholders observed in their natural settings (Blackhurst, 2000; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moodly & Toni, 2017; Ravitch

& Carl, 2020; Roberts, 2007). A qualitative study allowed me to address gaps in the literature by developing a model for a career development program focusing on entry-level SA professionals at higher education institutions grounded by the participants' voices and the data collected (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Grounded theory was the appropriate design for this qualitative study because a model was created to address this gap and extend existing theory after investigating existing theories and finding a gap in the research (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Knigge & Cope, 2006). The essence of grounded theory moves beyond descriptions that narrative and phenomenology approaches implement, discover, and generate a theory for a process or action (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Sebastian, 2019). Previous SA theories, including cognitive (Belenky et al., 1986; Evans et al., 2009), environmental (Evans et al., 2009), identity (Josselson, 1994), and moral (Gilligan, 1993), were reviewed to identify gaps in the theoretical background, and linked to research that was conducted on women leadership and entry-level SA professionals. The concepts were connected to the collected data and grounded to the new model. This study was to understand how entry-level SA professionals, specifically women, persist in the face of their personal, professional, and institutional barriers that prevent women from continuing their career in SA and becoming senior-level positions (Davidson, 2012; Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017; Marshall, 2009; Newman et al., 2019; Shupp & Arminio, 2012; Waple, 2006). Sebastian stated that a grounded theory study aims to bridge the gap between research and theory while conceptualizing the studied theoretical framework. Researchers use grounded theory to provide a theoretical explanation for a complex problem that they are studying (Charmaz, 2014; Knigge & Cope, 2006; Merriam, 2002). This design provides an opportunity to uncover the strategies and approaches that help senior-level professionals progress in the field.

Grounded theory was also the appropriate approach because it allowed data to guide the model that was being developed (Charmaz, 2014; Knigge & Cope, 2006). Compared to other qualitative research designs where one must rely on past analyses or assumptions to highlight the correct answers to the wrong questions (Fairhurst & Putnam, 2019; Knigge & Cope, 2006), grounded theory pushes researchers to find the correct answers to the right questions (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). While most qualitative research asks “what” and “how” questions, grounded theory leads to “why” questions (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), in 1967, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss believed that the research designs being implemented were unsuitable and inappropriate towards the participants involved. After conducting their research from prior theorists, they concluded that another research approach was to consider previous theories, investigate how they are grounded in data from the field, and interpret those using current actions, interactions, and processes based on the participants of a study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Although Glaser and Strauss initially started with the same thought process of what grounded theory should look like, their interpretations divide into different approaches: what we use today, structured approach, and constructivist approach.

Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin believed that the investigator should seek to systematically develop a theory that explains a process, action, or interaction on a topic (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Corbin and Strauss (2014), the systematic approach focuses on events, happenings, and instances while collecting and analyzing observations and documents from these experiences. A systematic grounded theory approach allows data collection and analysis in a well-defined, step-by-step process that identifies saturation occurs (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Although the systematic approach is well organized, systematically

fluent, and efficiently structured, the systematic approach lacks the postmodern perspective (Corbin & Strauss, 2014).

The constructivist grounded theory approach seeks to understand and explore a social process where no adequate prior theory or method exists (Charmaz, 2014) and generates a new theory from the data gathered (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The uniqueness of the constructivist approach is that it is both grounded in the participants' own words and experiences and constructed by the researcher and participants (Charmaz, 2014; Knigge & Cope, 2006; Sebastian, 2019), unlike systematic grounded theory, which is grounded in events and instances (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Specifically, the researcher is an integral part of the constructivist grounded theory approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Heath & Cowley, 2004). Understanding the researcher's role through memos and reflectivity facilitates data analysis and interpretation (Heath & Cowley, 2004). To create a model to support new women SA professionals, one must understand the lived experiences of current new, mid, and senior SA professionals; a constructivist grounded theory will be used for this study. A constructivist grounded theory approach offers a structured and organized way to report and write scholarly research and literature while developing a new theory or model (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Knigge & Cope, 2006). The constructivist grounded theory approach was most suitable for this study because it interpreted the experiences of current SA professionals and used their experiences to develop a leadership model that can be used at higher education institutions (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Research Questions

Central Research Question

What necessary components do student affairs departments need to retain their entry-level student affairs women professionals as it relates to a career development model

Sub-Question One

What components are needed for an entry-level professional woman to enter the field of student affairs?

Sub-Question Two

What components are needed for entry-level student affairs professional women to master the position?

Sub-Question Three

How do entry-level student affairs women professionals know they are ready to persist in the field?

Setting

The participants for this study were not located at one site to get the most contextual information and diverse perspectives for developing categories during the data analysis phase (Creswell & Poth, 2018). An essential requisite in a grounded theory study is for all the participating individuals to have experienced the same phenomenon, and for this specific study, all participants were SA professionals working at an accredited four-year higher education institution (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam, 2002). When looking for a setting for this study, convenience, generalizability, and diversity were all primary factors considered (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Knigge & Cope, 2006; Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019). Although the sites of this study were dispersed, they were only located in the northeast and southeast regions of the U.

S. Four-year accredited institutions are known to have a more diverse student and staff population, are known to have a more student-centered focus, and have a reputation of staff speaking more freely about their experiences in the field (Bowen et al., 2009; Boyne, 2002; Feeney & Stritch, 2019). Convenience played a role in choosing northeast and southeast regions, as the researcher previously worked at or currently works at the institutions selected. Due to the nature of the study, nine institutions were used as a target area to recruit participants. Specifically, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Tennessee were represented. During the recruitment stage, potential participants for mid to senior-level interviews were identified by reaching out to persons holding the titles of dean, director, or assistant director. Participants' positions were proven by looking at titles on their institutions' websites or having a participant send a resume when their title was not publicly listed. As for the entry-level SA professionals, no specific title was necessary, as long as it fell within the field of SA on the institution's website, and they worked in the field for no longer than five years. Since this information was not on the institution's website, these criteria were proven by each participant's resume with the specific dates of when they started their position in SA. After completing the demographic profile survey, these participants sent their resumes to me via email.

Participants

The participants for this study were mid to senior-level SA professionals and entry-level SA women professionals working at a four-year institution. They had to have worked in the SA field for no more than five years to be considered an entry-level participant, excluding any graduate assistantship experience. Senior-level SA professionals were also eligible to participate. However, time had passed from their entry-level positions, and to protect the integrity of the

study, mid-level professionals had to have been in the field for six to 15 years, and senior-level professionals had to have been in the field longer than 15 years. Although the study focused explicitly on women SA professionals, male mid to senior-level professionals were invited to participate in the research and must have been in the field longer than six years. This information was gathered in the demographic profile survey to confirm their eligibility.

In a grounded theory study, theoretical sampling is a process of data collection for generating theory. The data collection and analysis process are jointly facilitated to determine what data needs to be collected next and what theory or model emerges (Charmaz, 2014). After IRB approval (see Appendix A), theoretical sampling ensured that the chosen participants could contribute to the theoretical leadership model. This was first accomplished through an initial purposive or criterion sample of SA professionals (Charmaz, 2014; Coyne, 1997) which was then followed by snowball sampling, or recruiting of additional participants through existing participants (Ravitch & Carl, 2020), to garner a larger sample and to adjust the participants included (i.e., entry level, male mid to senior level) so that the data collected evolved as the theory and model developed. After exploring the institutions' websites, SA-specific webpages and asking participating institutions to send communication, an initial sample was identified and contacted to gain participation. An invitation to participate (see Appendices B and C) was sent to potential candidates based on the institution's websites. Within the invitation to participate invitation, an informed consent (see Appendix D) and a demographic profile survey link (see Appendix E) were attached for willing participants. During the recruitment process, Facebook Groups *SA Professionals*, *Residential Life Professionals*, and *New SA Professionals* (see Appendix F) were used to gain as many potential candidates as possible during the selection. Fellow SA professionals recommended these platforms. The same link with the consent and

demographic profile survey was posted in the various Facebook groups by group admins. Overall, these recruitment attempts provided the demographic data needed to stay within the projected numbers of candidate types and obtain a diverse selection of participants (Charmaz, 2014). During the initial recruitment process, 50 responses were gathered; then, demographic data were categorized and organized for maximum variation.

According to Charmaz (2014), those who represent the concepts of the study are the individuals who can provide the most detailed and purposeful data. Due to the hierarchy of rank at institutions and challenging work schedules for mid to senior-level professionals, snowball sampling also played a role in identifying specific participants (Ravitch & Carl, 2020). Creswell and Poth (2018) recommended 10 to 30 candidates for a grounded theory study sample size. Out of the 50 responses, a total of 22 participants (nine entry-level and 13 mid- to senior-level professionals) were contacted to participate in the interviews (see Appendix G). The entry-level professional group of participants was limited to only women new professionals. However, only two male SA professionals were asked to participate in the study to avoid skewed data for the mid to senior-level professionals. They had not fully experienced the phenomenon in the same ways as their women colleagues (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Additionally, only two participants per institution were permitted to participate to gain multiple perspectives from a diverse array of institutional experiences. This included one entry and one mid to senior-level professional from one institution. Constant comparison was an essential component of this grounded theory research (Charmaz, 2014). It allowed the incoming data to shape the data collection process to find consistent themes and patterns (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To uphold this expectation, after each interview was conducted, it was immediately transcribed and coded to be compared to the previous interviews (Charmaz, 2014; Ravitch &

Carl, 2020). This permitted the perpetual assessing of new data to be compared to existing data, which allowed the identification of similar themes and patterns and a clear marker for saturation during the data analysis process (Charmaz, 2014).

In Chapter Four, two tables break down the participants' years of experience, highest degree earned, ethnicity, gender, and location. Three entry-level professional participants, Jasmin, Pauline, and Leslie, were in their fifth year in the field. The other six participants had under five years of experience. All entry-level professionals received their master's degrees and were working in the northeast or southeast region. Five of the participants identified as White, one identified as Latinx, and two identified as Black. All participants worked in SA. Jordan and Pauline worked in academic advising Morgan, and Nina worked in residential life. Leslie worked in community standards, and Sophia worked in student success. Lisa worked in admissions, Kelly worked in disabilities services, and Jasmin was in student activities. Thirteen participants contributed to this study. Emily, Susan, Tara, Alex, Liam, Amy, and Brandon were all mid-level professionals, while Lucy, Sandy, Cory, Carla, Peggy, and Julie were senior level. Seven of the participants had master's degrees, and six had doctoral degrees. Liam and Brandon were men; Liam identified as Latinx and Brandon was white. The other 11 participants were women; seven identified as White, two as Black, and two as Latinx. Except for Tara, who works in Tennessee, all participants currently work in the northeast or southeast region. Overall, both groups of participants fit the initial criteria and contributed to the study's data collection and analysis.

Procedures

After receiving IRB approval, I reached out to the SA offices at institutions and requested permission for their staff to participate in the study. After support from institutions was received, I recruited participants by following the guidelines set by each institution's leadership team and

sent invitations to participate through a survey link which included both the informed consent and demographic profile survey. The method of survey link distribution depended on the institution's requirements. Ultimately, it was added to a listserv sent via outside email or distributed by the leadership team via an email sent on my behalf. Because SA is a tech-friendly field and many professionals use social media to connect with the SA community, I also used Facebook groups to reach out to the larger community of SA professionals in the U.S. I reached out to each group's admins to ask if they could post my recruitment message to the groups. When individuals consented to participate in the study, I contacted individuals to schedule interviews (see Appendix G). I forwarded an interview request follow-up (see Appendix H) to confirm the participant's willingness to participate. Once 50 responses were collected, I pooled a small group of qualified participants who met the criteria to pilot the initial set of interview questions. This data was not incorporated into the study.

Interviews began for the actual study once the pilot was completed and the interview questions were supported and reviewed for accuracy. The individual interviews and the focus group were conducted virtually through Zoom since the participants were from a dispersed geographical area. Each interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis. First round interviews were conducted for the data collection and analysis process. Then second round interviews were initiated to gain further insight into the participant's experiences and recommendations for a future model. All candidates who participated in the first-round interviews were asked to participate in the second-round interviews and schedule a time to meet again two to three weeks later. A focus group was scheduled after the first round and second round interviews were conducted and transcribed.

Candidates who participated in the individual interviews and fit the criteria of mid to senior-level professionals were theoretically and intentionally selected to participate in a focus group based on their interview responses and their geographic region (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Precisely, insight into mid to senior-level leadership who already experienced working in the field for more than five years was the focus group's primary criteria, which led to no entry-level professionals being invited. I ensured each mid-to senior-level participant fit my required criteria when reviewing individual interviews to intentionally select the focus group participants. Again, two professionals from the same institution were invited, and no potential outside participants or men were invited. It was highly recommended not to mix genders in focus groups to avoid the peacock effect, or when men speak more frequently and with more authority in a group with women, which can irritate the women in the group (Hollander, 2004). Since there were not many willing male participants, eliminating male participants from the focus group did not cause a lack of participants for the focus group.

To remain intentional, most of the participants for the focus group were from the individual interviews. These participants were purposefully selected to provide data informing central concepts necessary for generating theory on the topic (Charmaz, 2014). The focus group of six participants was recorded to gain the most data for the study. After the focus group, I transcribed the data verbatim for analysis.

The Researcher's Role

As the researcher for this study, I was committed to the highest ethical standards (Messick & Bazerman, 1996) and served as the human instrument for this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). While conducting and analyzing the data, I aimed to limit my influences on the data as much as possible (Charmaz, 2014). As Charmaz suggests, I participated in self-reflection. I

made memo-writing a habit of pondering, exploring, revising, and sorting through the material during interviews and the focus group to ensure I did not influence the data. I have had personal experiences, challenges, and barriers as being a woman pursuing a higher education career; however, by using memo-writing (see Appendix I), I avoided importing my prior experiences and assumptions into the data (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). During individual interviews, to ensure my opinions and ideas did not taint the data, I avoided asking leading questions or suggesting responses from participants. I did not participate in the discussion during the focus group and only directed the conversation when it involved far off-topics. During the data analysis process, I disregarded any evidence that was assumed but not found so that my interest in a concept did not guide the study or create biases and required evidence of one's concept by using constant comparison (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Lastly, I compared the data collected with the theoretical literature rather than my own experiences and beliefs. I also had experts review the generated model from the data to ensure validity (Charmaz, 2014).

Data Collection

Fundamentally, grounded theory methods unite the research process and theoretical development (Charmaz, 2014). Due to this rigid nature, data collection and analysis simultaneously involve each other, and analysis must shape the data collection procedure (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Three data collection methods were introduced for this study, including the first round of individual interviews, the second round of individual interviews, and the focus group. During the data collection process, multiple rounds of data collection allowed further theoretical sampling as interview and focus group questions were adjusted to further facilitate the evolving theory that was beginning to emerge.

Individual Interviews

Upon completing the demographic profile survey form, the participants were emailed to schedule an individual interview. Interviews were set up with those willing to participate with maximum variation in mind. Each completed interview was recorded, and transcription was done immediately afterward for consistency and accuracy. The constructed interview questions provoked the participant's psychological, social, and communication skills to succeed in a senior-level SA position. Using Charmaz's (2014) recommendation, incorporating a second-round interview can address conceptual issues that were only briefly addressed during the first-round interviews. Additionally, conducting second-round interviews assisted with the theoretical sampling during the data analysis process. By verifying an interview guide for both first and second individual interviews and creating one-sided, gently guided conversations, intensive interviewing incorporated authenticity and accuracy (see Appendices J, K, L, and M).

While using Charmaz's (2014) recommended intensive interview strategy, interviews were around 60 to 75 minutes long and were constructed using open-ended questions. The questions were broad, and the interviews were fluid to gain insight from participants' experiences and opinions. Intensive interviewing ensured that the research comprehended the participant's perspective, meanings, and experiences and guaranteed all topics and questions were covered for each interview. The questions developed for both first and second interviews were drawn from the initial literature review regarding women's leadership in higher education and reviewed by experts. The questions were piloted by three willing participants who met the study's criteria to identify accuracy and relevance but were not used for any data collection (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Since interviews are considered complex and intense, the interview questions were not too structured so that the researcher could get as much of the

participant's perspective as possible (Charmaz, 2014). Due to the nature of the grounded theory study having data collection and analysis overlapping, the interview questions were continuously reshaped and reviewed to make sure they were appropriate during the process (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Widening the scope of the existing interview questions was another technique introduced through theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2014; Ligita et al., 2019). With the permission of each participant, both first and second round interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

First Round Interviews

First-round interviews allowed the participants to describe their experiences while working towards their current position (see Appendices J and K). Since two populations were interviewed, two sets of first-round interview questions were created, one for current mid to senior-level professionals and another for new professionals entering the field. The questions are provided in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1

Open-Ended Interview Guide Questions for Mid to Senior-Level SA Professionals

Questions

Opening Questions

1. Describe to me how you came to work in student affairs?
2. What was the motivation to pursue the profession?

Personal Barriers

3. When did you first experience any personal barriers while in the profession?
4. Can you tell me the story of overcoming the barrier?
5. How did you happen to overcome these barriers?
6. Who helped you overcome this barrier?

Institutional/Professional Barriers

7. When did you first experience any professional barriers while in the profession?
8. Can you tell me the story of overcoming the barrier(s)?
9. How did you happen to overcome these barriers?
10. Who helped you overcome these barriers?

Career Development

11. Could you describe the events that led to you becoming a mid/senior-level professional in student affairs?
12. What contributed to your success in your current position?
13. How have you developed as an individual during your career?
14. How did your advancement into mid to senior-level positions intertwine with your personal life?
15. How would you describe how you viewed career development before becoming a mid to senior-level professional?
16. How do you view career development now?
17. What is your perception of the way entry-level professionals view career development?

Mentors

18. Who contributed to the preparedness from entry to mid/senior-level position?

Men

19. What mentors did you have that have prepared you for your current role?
20. In your opinion, what are the markers of successful mid to senior-level women in student affairs?
21. In your opinion, what are the markers of barriers and challenges entry-level women in student affairs face?

Leadership Style

22. How would you describe your leadership style?
23. What leadership style did you find facilitated your career progression?
24. What key leadership styles do you believe are essential for entry-level professionals to progress in the field?

Experiences and Trainings

25. What experiences and trainings have you had before being in your current role that you believe better prepared you for your current position?
26. What are the support systems at your institution?
27. Why do entry-level professionals leave the field within their first five years?
28. Tell me how you learned to handle challenges and barriers in the student affairs field?
29. What positive changes have occurred in your life since you became a mid/senior-level professional?
30. What negative changes, if any, have occurred in your life since you became a mid/senior-level professional?
31. How does your institution develop new professionals and prepare them to become mid-level professionals?

Closing Questions

32. What advice would you give to women just beginning in the student affairs profession?
 33. Is there anything else we have not covered today that you think is essential to tell someone who is just starting in student affairs to help them persist? And if so, what?
-

Table 2*Open-Ended Interview Guide Questions for Entry-Level*

 Questions

Opening Questions

1. Describe to me your entry into student affairs?
2. What was the driving motivation to pursue the career?
3. Who (titles only) contributed to your decision to pursue student affairs?

Graduate Program

1. Describe your graduate program in student affairs (or related field)?
2. What experiences in the program better prepared you for your entry-level position?
3. If applicable, how would you describe your connections to other students in your degree program?
4. How would you describe your connections to your professors?

Onboarding

5. When onboarding your first position, what orientations or trainings did you have if any, that prepared you for your position?
6. What experiences and trainings do you believe have better prepared you for your current role?

Personal Barriers

7. Tell me, how do you handle, if any, personal barriers you have faced while in the profession?
8. Who, if anyone, was involved in overcoming your barriers?

Supervision

9. How have your current supervisors influenced your experience in student affairs?
10. What are essential components a supervisor needs to support entry-level professionals?

Professional Barriers

11. Tell me about how you learned to handle, if any, professional/institutional barriers you have faced?
12. Who, if anyone, was involved in overcoming your barriers?

Career Development

13. What career development opportunities have you participated in?
14. What is your perception of career development?

Future in Student Affairs

15. What trainings or experiences do your current institution provide to new professionals within the field within the first five years?
16. How would you describe your commitment to the student affairs profession?
17. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
18. Where do you see yourself in 10 years?
19. What do you think contributes to your remaining in the profession?

Closing Question

20. Is there anything else we have not covered today that you think is essential to tell someone who is just starting in student affairs to help them persist? And if so, what?
-

Second Round Interviews

While first-round interviews allowed the participants to share details about themselves and their prior experiences, the second-round interviews focused more on the experiences and reflection on their own experiences (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018; see Appendices L and M). Additionally, this provided an opportunity to focus more on the emerging themes and categories during the first-round interviews (Charmaz, 2014). The questions in Table 3 or Table were asked during the second-round interviews.

Table 3

Second Round Interviews—Questions for Mid- to Senior-Level SA Professionals

Questions
Supervision/Mentorship
1. What is the difference between supervision and mentorship?
2. What role does a supervisor play in mentoring entry-level professionals?
3. How does your supervision style provide guidance and support for women professionals?
4. How has your previous experienced prepared you to be a supportive supervisor?
Investment
5. What role does your institution or department play in supporting entry-level professionals?
6. What role should your institution or department play in supporting entry-level professionals?
7. What specific workshops or trainings are essential for entry-level women professionals to experience during their first five years in the field?
8. What do you believe is needed to get the institution and department involved in providing entry-level professionals?
Individualized
9. What awareness, knowledge, and skills do you believe are essential for an entry-level professional?
10. Are there specific characteristics women entry-level professionals need to continue in the field after their first five years, and if so, what are they?
Integration
11. How can departments/institutions be more intuitive with providing entry-level professionals opportunities to integrate into the field?
12. What integration techniques/practices are essential for a department to incorporate?
Career Development
13. How do you define career development?

14. Why is there a disconnect between entry-level and mid/senior-level professional definitions of career development?
 15. What career development opportunities are essential for entry-level professionals to feel connected to the department, institution, and the field?
-

Table 4*Second Round Interviews—Questions for Entry-level Professionals*

Questions

Reflect

1. Describe something you have learned during your time in your recent position?
2. What is something you still believe you lack professionally?
3. Tell me about the strengths you discovered or developed through any training, career development, or orientation?

Supervision

4. What feedback has your supervisor provided you that has helped you in the field?
5. What opportunities has your supervisor provided you?
6. What characteristics and skills does your supervisor have that you feel are essential to your success in the field?

Integration

7. What specific components of your onboarding do you believe were essential for your commitment to your continued work in the field?
8. What components of your onboarding were lacking that could have provided you more opportunities to feel more valued?
9. What does integration into the position look like to you?

Success

10. How do you describe success?
11. What do you need to succeed?
12. What do you want to succeed?
13. Thinking back on what you have learned during your time at your department/institution, what has contributed to your work this year?
14. What trainings, workshops, or interactions have given you the proper knowledge and skills that have made you feel successful?

Institution/Department Role

15. What do you believe is the role of the institution or department when onboarding a new professional?
16. What do you believe is the role of the institution or department when it comes to continuous training?
17. What role does your department play in supporting you as a woman in the field?

Investment

18. How invested are you in the field of student affairs?
 19. How confident are you to continue in the field as a mid to senior-level professional?
-

Focus Group

Since the intent of this grounded theory was to gather as much information as possible to identify practices to increase retention and potential future promotions, gathering perspectives from the experienced mid to senior-level professionals using a focus group was the proper data collection technique. To gain different perspectives, provide an opportunity for participants to bounce comments and responses from each other, and create deeper meanings to the data collected, a focus group with mid to senior-level professionals was conducted (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Professionals who participated in the first and second round individual interviews were invited to the focus group. One focus group was conducted with various professionals from multiple institutions who met the participation criteria. The focus group was conducted virtually, via Zoom, since the participants were from around the states. During the process, the participants responded to and discussed the open-ended questions provided to address the knowledge, skills, and behaviors entry-level SA professionals possess during the first five years of their careers. Additionally, questions focused on the first and second-round interview concepts of which the interviewer wanted to gain more perspective (see Appendix N). All focus group interviews were recorded and transcribed. See Table 5 for the focus group questions.

Table 5

Open-Ended Interview Guide Questions Mid to Senior-level Professionals Focus Group

Questions

Entering the Position

1. What are the critical components for an entry-level professional to have when they begin a position in student affairs?
2. What are the essential factors a department needs to prepare for a new entry-level professional?
3. How would you describe the relationship between the entry-level professional and the department during the onboarding of the position?

4. What initial key characteristics does a woman entering the field of student affairs need?

Mastering the Position

5. Where do you believe a supervisory relationship falls when supporting entry-level professionals?
6. How is setting expectations when acclimating to an entry-level professional essential?
7. How is providing an opportunity for exposure essential for an entry-level professional?

Evaluating the Position

8. What evaluation components guide an entry-level professional to know if the field is right for them?
9. What have you done as a supervisor to evaluate entry-level professionals?
10. What components have you incorporated in your evaluations to provide support and feedback for entry-level professionals?

Acclimating

11. What key characteristic differences have you seen in a women entry-level professional who stays in the field compared to those who have not?
12. How would you provide the necessities for an entry-level professional to continue in the field for more than five years?

Data Analysis

The distinction between data collection and analysis phases in grounded theory is blurry. A traditional grounded theory method involves the researcher using data analysis to update and shape the data collection process (Birks & Mills, 2015; Charmaz, 2014; Heath & Cowley, 2004). Data collected during the study were analyzed using the grounded theory data analysis methods outlined by Charmaz. First, the demographic profile survey was examined and used to refine the interview guide for first and second-round interviews. Then, data analysis immediately began after the first completed interview and continued throughout each interview to ensure the participants' responses were accurate (Birks & Mills, 2015; Charmaz, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Through a constant comparative model, completed initial coding occurred during the analysis stage, focused coding was introduced, and once saturation was achieved, theoretical coding was conducted (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019).

Initial Coding

The first step of data analysis was to analyze the first and second interviews and focus group transcriptions from all participants using initial coding while keeping constant comparative analysis in mind (Charmaz, 2014; see Appendices O and P). Data fragments will be studied for initial coding to occur- lines, words, and incidents using coding practices recommended by Charmaz. Additionally, this heuristic device helped look at data holistically and was used to see areas in which information was lacking. During this process, the researcher needed to eliminate any preconceptions regarding the data's direction (Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019). To execute this, the researcher used memo writing. Initial coding had two purposes: to continue the interactions that occurred between the participants and the interviewer, and it provided an opportunity to bring the researcher to an interactive analytic space that pulled the researcher deeper into the data and get the researcher to question new analytical inquiries (Charmaz, 2014). Throughout initial coding, I looked for repeated codes or similarities between codes. I used Quirkos, a qualitative data analysis software, to create themes and understand the findings during the coding process. Initial coding for entry-level professionals resulted in a list of 208 codes (see Appendix O), while mid to senior-level included 204 codes (see Appendix P).

Line by Line Coding

Line-by-line coding is a device conducted during the initial coding stage where a researcher gets introduced to the data and interacts with each fragment (Charmaz, 2014). This technique assists with defining the implicit meaning of the data gives direction to the researcher and offers suggestions and links between the processes in the data. The first transcript and subsequent transcripts were analyzed line by line to determine an initial set of codes. Some suggestions were considered while conducting a line-by-line coding, including staying close to

what the data suggested and remaining open-minded while keeping the codes short, simple, and analytic. While conducting a line-by-line coding, I gained insight on what data was needed to collect next, and actions and processes were identified.

In Vivo Coding

During the initial coding stage, another technique, in vivo coding, or the process of coding data with the participant's actual words, meanings, or phrases, was introduced (Charmaz, 2014). This technique helped preserve the participants' meanings of their views and actions in the coding by placing the codes in quotation marks around the phrases and words that stood out during each transcribed interview. This technique ensured that the coding concepts remained close to the participants' own words (Birks & Mills, 2015). There are four kinds of in vivo codes that was useful while conducting this technique (Charmaz, 2014), including terms that everyone knows and are significant, participants' innovative terms that capture the meanings and experiences, insider shorthand terms that reflect the group's perspectives, and specific statements that signifies a participant's actions or concerns (Birks & Mills, 2015; Charmaz, 2014)

Process Coding

In addition to line-by-line and in vivo coding, process coding was an essential component of this study. Process coding, or incident with incident coding, can be described as a process that analyzes data for concepts labeled as an incident or an action (Birks & Mills, 2015; Charmaz, 2014). This process helped the researcher better understand any sequence of incidents or actions related to the phenomenon (Birks & Mills, 2015). It was essential to use the focus group coding to derive initial coding. This approach simultaneously compared any incident or action necessary to a participant's life (Charmaz, 2014). It compared similar incidents and actions between the first and second-round interviews and focus group findings. Overall, Charmaz recommended that

initial coding, including line by line, in-vivo, and process coding, be simultaneously introduced to the analysis to get the most heuristic analysis.

Memo Writing

Charmaz (2014) recommended immediately recording memos on the introduced codes to prompt analysis of the collected data during the initial coding stage. These analytic notes are highly used in grounded theory to record reflections and thoughts and capture the comparisons and connections from the first initial coding to the end of the study. As codes were created and concepts were connected and compared, memo writing was introduced to record reasoning. Memo-writing creates an interactive private space for the researcher to converse in their data, codes, ideas, and assumptions. During memo writing, one technique Charmaz recommended was to cluster-write, which I used to start as a prewriting technique. Once I was an expert in the cluster technique, I continued memo writing through freewriting (see Appendix I). This technique provided the introduction to focused and theoretical coding.

Focused Coding

After completing initial coding, focused coding, or the process in which the most frequent and significant codes amongst initial codes are tested against large batches of data (Charmaz, 2014), was introduced to concentrate on the most useful initial codes. It was essential to use the second-round interview and focus group coding to help with focused coding during this process. Suggested focused coding is simultaneously conducted with initial coding (Charmaz, 2014; Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019). This technique aims to study and compare the initial codes (Birks & Mills, 2015). It compared similar categories between the first and second-round interviews to focus group coding. Initial codes that were similar or related were organized and categorized to identify relationships (Charmaz, 2014) and then tested against extensive data

(Birks & Mills, 2015; Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019). Focused coding expedited the theoretical direction of this study and condensed and sharpened the codes in the initial coding stage (Birks & Mills, 2015; see Appendices Q and R). This process helped limit the number of initial codes while organizing the data, identifying five main themes grounded by the data.

Theoretical Coding

There are many different analysis techniques grounded theorists use and, depending on which theorist you use to support your research, the analysis process looked slightly different. Since this study was a constructivist grounded theory, Charmaz's (2014) steps for analysis were used, including theoretical coding over the traditional axial coding Corbin and Strauss (2014) use. Theoretical coding helped theorize the collected data and focused codes from first, second, and focus group interviews (Birks & Mills, 2015; Charmaz, 2014). Once focused coding was completed, theoretical coding followed to apply analytical schemes to the data to enhance and emerge the process (Charmaz, 2014; Heath & Cowley, 2004). During the theoretical coding process, the properties of the categories were saturated to refine and make sure no new properties or categories emerged (Charmaz, 2014). I related different initial codes and grouped the codes that reflected commonalities into the same categories. Then, I identified several themes and categories concerning the focus of this study (see Appendices S, T, U, V, and W). These themes arrange to an acronym that I use to focus on the process emerging from the data. During this step, I considered how each theme and category from the different data collection processes, including individual interviews and focus group, was uncovered and linked to the developed categories created. Once categories emerged, the ideal components of a career development model that supports entry-level SA professionals were identified in the study (see Appendix X).

Theoretical Saturation

Theoretical saturation occurs once constant comparison showed no new emerging data, categories were identified, findings showed no new properties, and the properties had established patterns in the data (Charmaz, 2014). When gathering more data, theoretical saturation does not affect new properties or yield any further theoretical insights into the emerging grounded theory. I achieved theoretical saturation by defining, checking, and explaining the relationships that emerged from the categories discovered from the coding of the first, second, and focus groups and how those categories showed a range of variation (see Appendix X). Theoretical saturation is what I aimed for in this study, as this suggested that my data analysis process was complete.

Trustworthiness

Ensuring trustworthiness and the specific aspect within trustworthiness is an essential component of any qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), specifically during the study's preparation, initiation, and interpretation phases. I took measures into account to address some specific aspects of trustworthiness. The study's credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability were measured (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Credibility

Credibility focuses on accurate interpretations by the researcher and is a construct of trustworthiness (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Additionally, credibility is confidence in the truth of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The first method used to increase credibility was triangulation, which uses two or more data sources to ensure that a valid concept is being represented (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This was accomplished through collected data from multiple stakeholders, including entry-level SA professionals, mid-level professionals, and senior-level professionals. This was also achieved through two rounds of interviews and a focus group.

Additionally, gender-based data was collected as women and men were both studied, which allowed the opportunity to gain multiple perspectives of a particular phenomenon during data collection (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Another method introduced to the study to exhibit credibility was prolonged engagement, which builds trust between the researcher and the participants. By conducting multiple interviews of virtual, face-to-face interactions with the participants, I built rapport while identifying any misinformation that may have originated from a lack of connecting with the participants. Another method I endured was peer debriefing, which allowed me to engage in conversations with my dissertation chairs to eliminate any emotions that could have negatively affected my judgment (Charmaz, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Dependability and Confirmability

In quantitative research, reliability can be achieved when a study can be replicated under the same circumstances in another location or at a different time (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Lincoln and Guba, there is no credibility without dependability. A more robust method for showing dependability used in this study was to overlap methods, which is a type of triangulation process that supports claims of reliability to the extent that they produce complementary results. Additionally, a study's confirmability occurs when credibility, transferability, and dependability are achieved (Koch, 2006). The confirmability of a study arises from the elements of the study. The specific elements for this study were the audio recordings for each interview, detailed transcripts for each interview, detailed notes taken during the interviews detailing participants' nonverbal expressions, and a detailed trail of analyzed data. To demonstrate confirmability, I documented how conclusions and interpretations arose from the data, detailed logs were added in an audit trail (see Appendix Y), peer reviews were conducted, member checks occurred, and researcher journaling continued throughout the study.

Transferability

Transferability is the component of trustworthiness that ensures that the specific study's findings can be applied to future studies that meet the criteria (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). One method that incorporated transferability was my rich and detailed descriptions of the participants' responses. This ensured that if future research were to be conducted, those other researchers could determine if the study's findings could be transferrable. From collecting data from a diverse array of participants' interview responses, the transferability of the study increased due to the multiple stakeholders involved (Charmaz, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were addressed throughout this study, and confidentiality was the priority (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Increased ethical concerns were addressed during the recruitment stage due to social media recruitment strategies. Nevertheless, investigators proposing social media recruitment approaches are recommended to consider social media recruitment the same way traditional recruitment methods are approached (Gelinas et al., 2017). There are two significant social media ethical considerations, respect for privacy and transparency. I received recommendations from fellow SA professionals on which Facebook Groups to recruit through and purposely did not join them to remain anonymous and support privacy. Since the groups are private, I had to look into who the groups' admins were. Then, I asked the group's admins to post my invite, remove myself from the group members, and ensure privacy. This prevented potential participants from feeling any vulnerability during the process or assertiveness from the researcher. However, in the message that each group's admin posted, the survey link contained a confidentiality form with my name and contact information if anyone had any questions to authenticate the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Gelinas et al., 2017).

During the interview process, a web-based platform, Zoom, was used. Due to this, ethical considerations were addressed, including being aware that not all potential candidates had access to the internet or had the technical skills to use Zoom. Participants who showed interest in participation but shared that they did not have access to a webcam were given an in-person option when they inquired. The meeting was feasible for the interviewer (Creswell & Poth, 2018). While an in-person meeting was offered to participants if they were not comfortable with the internet or technology requirements of a Zoom meeting, such meetings were not necessary for this study as each of the participants was fluent with the platform. Since it is encouraged to use innovative data collection such as social media and web-based platforms to gain more attention and interest for the study, the interviews via Zoom ran smoothly.

I provided informed consent forms to each participant. Once I received the consent form, a choice of a telephone conversation or an email was conducted to (a) introduce myself, (b) schedule a time, and (c) inquire about a preferred location. All participants preferred the email option but appreciated the telephone conversation option. All participants were reassured that their identity was not revealed throughout the interview process, and pseudonyms were used to replace their names and programs (Creswell & Poth, 2018). During the process, I asked participants not to discuss the interview questions or their answers, as some were in the same department or institution.

During the study, I provided opportunities for the participants to ask questions about the scheduled interviews; this allowed the participants to make an informed decision regarding their participation in the study and confirm their clear understanding of the purpose of the study, possible risks, and terms of confidentiality (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Furthermore, there was no physical risk to the participants during the interview, as the interviews were conducted in the

participant's chosen environment. Lastly, to minimize the possible emotional risk of sensitivity to an interview question asked, the participants were provided an opportunity to stop the interview at any time. The interviews were video-recorded during the interview process, and the digital files were kept on a password-protected flash drive only I was responsible for.

Additionally, a password-protected laptop was used, to which I only have access.

Summary

Chapter three explained the components for constructing a career development model for higher education institutions by presenting the specific procedures, research design, and analysis for this qualitative grounded theory study. During this detailed qualitative grounded theory design, sought out participants who were either entry-level SA women professionals or mid to senior-level SA professionals from various institutions in the U.S. partake in the study. After gaining IRB approval and participant consent, data collection occurred through first and second round individual interviews with new and mid to senior-level professionals and a focus group with mid to senior women SA professionals using initial coding and focused coding (Charmaz, 2014). While using theoretical sampling and constant comparison to develop consistent concepts, theoretical saturation and theoretical sorting occurred, and themes emerged.

Considering trustworthiness is essential for any study. Trustworthiness factors were highly regarded and incorporated to protect the authenticity of the methods and collection that occurred (Charmaz, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Specifically, the introduction of triangulation, prolonged engagement, and prior briefing was necessary for credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The study could be certified as dependability and confirmability through video recordings, detailed transcripts, detailed notes, and a detailed trail of analyzed data (Koch, 2006). This study introduced transferability through rich and detailed descriptions of the participants' responses

consented to be interviewed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Ethical consideration was highly thought-out throughout the study, including during the data collection and analysis process. Expressly, written informed consent forms were provided to each participant. I allowed the participants to choose their desired environment for comfortability purposes, and for anonymity, pseudonyms were used (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The purpose of this grounded theory study was to develop a model for a career development program for women SA professionals based on the lived experiences of current new women SA professionals and current mid-level and senior-level SA professionals from regionally accredited universities.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this grounded theory study was to develop a career development model for higher education institutions based on the lived experiences of current entry-level, mid-level, and senior-level SA professionals from regionally accredited universities. This chapter begins with a narrative portrait of each participant and continues with a description of themes generated and an overview of the model developed. Lastly, it concludes with a discussion of the research questions that guided this study.

Participants

Theoretical sampling was the primary technique used to gain participants for this study (Charmaz, 2014). After reviewing specific institutions' SA departments, an invitation to participate in the demographic profile survey was distributed to eligible entry-level or mid to senior-level professionals. Additionally, social media posts with the survey were added to specific private Facebook groups that only had SA professionals or higher education professionals' members. Once candidates filled out the demographic profile survey, out of 50 submissions, 22 participants were eligible and fit the criteria for the study. The 22 participants (nine entry-level professionals and 13 mid to senior-level professionals) were contacted for an individual interview. Upon the conclusion of the first interview, participants were asked to schedule their second-round interview two or three weeks after their first round. All interviews were scheduled, except one, who was expecting a baby and could not commit to a second-round interview. During the second-round interviews, those mid to senior-level were asked if they would like to participate in a focus group. Those interested were asked to fill out a doodle survey to get a time that all willing participants could meet.

During the beginning of the interviews, there was much interest in the topic, and I found myself continuing to get interested candidates wanting to participate, specifically in the mid to senior level. Although I anticipated interviewing ten professionals for each group, I ended up with nine entry-level professionals and 12 mid- to senior-level professionals. While interviewing specific participants, names of mentors and professionals they worked with in the past were brought up that were then introduced to me to interview. Through theoretical and snowball sampling, I obtained a diverse perspective from various participants from different states, different ethnicities and races, and years of experience (Ligita et al., 2019). Table 6 and Table 7 show the participants of this study.

Table 6

Entry-Level Women Professionals

Participant Pseudonym	Years of Experience	Highest Degree Earned	Ethnicity/Race	SA Area	Current Institution State
Jordan	4	Masters	White	Academic Advising	PA
Morgan	4	Masters	White	Residential Life	MA
Leslie	5	Masters	White	Community Standards	PA
Sophia	2	Masters	Other	Student Success	PA
Lisa	3	Masters	White	Admissions	FL
Pauline	5	Masters	White	Academic Advising	NE
Kelly	2	Masters	Latinx	Students with Disabilities	NY
Nina	3	Masters	Black	Residential Life	NJ

Table 7*Mid to Senior-Level Professionals*

Participant Pseudonym	Years of Experience	Highest Degree Earned	Ethnicity/ Race	SA Area	Current Institution State
Emily* (W)	15	Masters	White	Student Services	CT
Susan (W)	8	Masters	White	Academic Advising	NJ
Lucy (W)	30	Doctorate	White	SA	MA
Tara (W)	15	Doctorate	Black	SA/Academic Affairs	TN
Alex* (W)	15	Masters	White	Academic Affairs/Career Center	MA
Liam (M)	12	Masters	Latinx	Student Services	CT
Amy (W)	8	Masters	Latinx	Academic Advising	NJ
Sandy* (W)	21	Masters	White	Residential Life	CT
Cory* (W)	16	Doctorate	White	SA	NC
Brandon (M)	14	Masters	White	Residential Life	PA
Carla (W)	20	Doctorate	Latinx	Dean's Office	VA
Peggy* (W)	28	Doctorate	Black	Dean's Office	FL
Julie* (W)	21	Doctorate	White	Dean's Office	NH

Note. An asterisk indicates those who participated in the focus group.

Results

Today, the field of SA represents an increasingly complex set of programs, services, and fields ranging from admissions, financial aid, housing, student activities, and academic support services (Ogles et al., 2021). Within this complexity, professionals must possess a broad range of awareness, knowledge, and skills to succeed within the profession. While these competencies can be specific within each field of SA, the journey to mid to senior-level SA professionals follows a prescribed set of phases that each entry-level professional must encounter (Holzweiss

et al., 2019; Ogles et al., 2021). Each phase of an entry-level professional's journey is accompanied by its own set of challenges, barriers, and compromises. Although each entry-level professional's journey is different, this study found that the challenges, barriers, and compromises they face are not.

The participants spoke about what was needed for an entry-level professional to succeed in SA after their first five years. The participants indicated what components were required when entering the field, what supports and challenges were needed to master the position, and how evaluating the needs and wants of an individual was essential for a professional to feel they were ready to persist. Based on the analysis of these responses, a model for a career development series was generated that could demonstrate the journey that an entry-level professional must endure while becoming a mid to senior-level professional and staying in the field for more than five years. Within this model, themes including entering the field, mastering the position, and evaluating the position emerged from the data collected. Categories emerged within these themes, including supervision, exposure, expectations, mastering, and evaluation. Using each of the Categories' initials, an acronym was established and used throughout the study, SEE ME, which identified subcategories within each category.

Entering the Field

For career development to start, the individual and the department stakeholders must clearly define their expectations and needs. The first theme, entering the field, revealed three categories, supervision, exposure, and environment. When speaking about entering the field and who should be involved in the entry-level professional's onboarding, Peggy stated, "It has to be everyone; not all on one person or department." Peggy discussed how all stakeholders, including department chairs, supervisors, and the individual, must work together to identify the necessary

components for successful onboarding. Specifically, who the supervisor is, how the supervisor works, and clear departmental expectations. Peggy shared, “You need to expose the [entry-level] professional before they can truly start.”

Supervision

Within the entering the field phase, the first category revealed by the data collected in this study was the importance of supervision. All participants, including entry-level and mid to senior-level, identified supervision as critical for any entry-level professional. For some, like Tara and Sophia, a lack of supervision made the transition for their entry-level experience a challenging one. They both struggled to navigate what their supervisor expected from them and how they led their team. Reflecting, Sophia said, “it would have been more helpful to have set expectations on how my supervisor was leading the team, what they wanted from me as a supervisee ... there were many hiccups during my first six months, let us say....”

All study participants identified supervision as a critical element that contributed to them continuing in the field and feeling connected to the department. Leslie identified her relationship with her supervisor as “the most supportive relationship and strongest communication” she has ever had. Due to her current relationships with supervisors, Sandy adjusted better to the environment than her colleagues. When it came to gender-specific needs for supervision, Cory and Carla were adamant on how their previous supervisors were women, who knew their needs and wants more than their current men supervisors. Cory specifically mentioned, “If I did not have a woman as a supervisor my first five years, I probably would not have continued in the field ... men supervise women different ... they just do not get us.” Carla mentioned, “having my first supervisor be a woman helped me identify how I wanted to supervise future SA professionals.” Carla continued to discuss how her supervisor treated her not just as an employee

but as a human being, giving her the motivation to work harder and the desire to be in her supervisor's shoes one day. The men contributors of the study also validated this point.

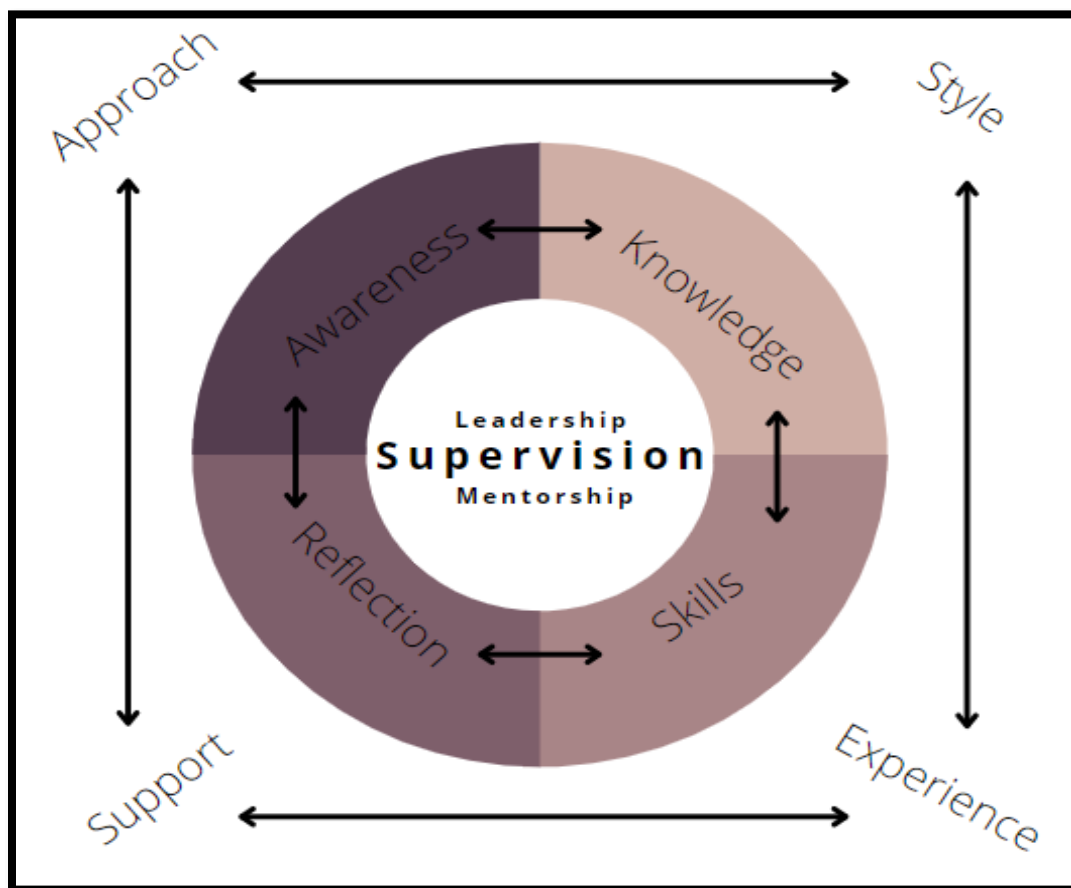
Specifically, Brandon stated:

I connected more with my women supervisors; they just knew what I needed. They were very vocal about what they wanted from me. I have had men as supervisors in my past, and they assume I know what they want.

SA professionals operate in a fast-paced environment with little to no supervision and are expected to continue to work in a field with no set expectations or structure from leadership (Davis & Cooper, 2017; Renn & Hodges, 2007). For entry-level professionals, this can result in a long, agonizing period of defining and redefining their goals and objectives with their current supervisors (Dinise-Halter, 2017; Tull, 2006). Many components of a supervisors' approach when supervising entry-level professionals were identified (see Figure 1). Specifically, awareness, knowledge, reflection, and skills were essential for a supervisor to implement. Once they achieve these supervision components, they can approach their supervisees, provide their identified work style, support new entry-level professionals, and lead by experience (see Figure 1). Departments could tailor this specific category to achieve a section of entering the field phase of the model. Giving supervisors the tools and appropriate ideas on how to supervise can provide the appropriate component for entry-level professionals to feel supported to master the field.

Figure 1

Entering the Field Theme — Emerging Category — Supervision



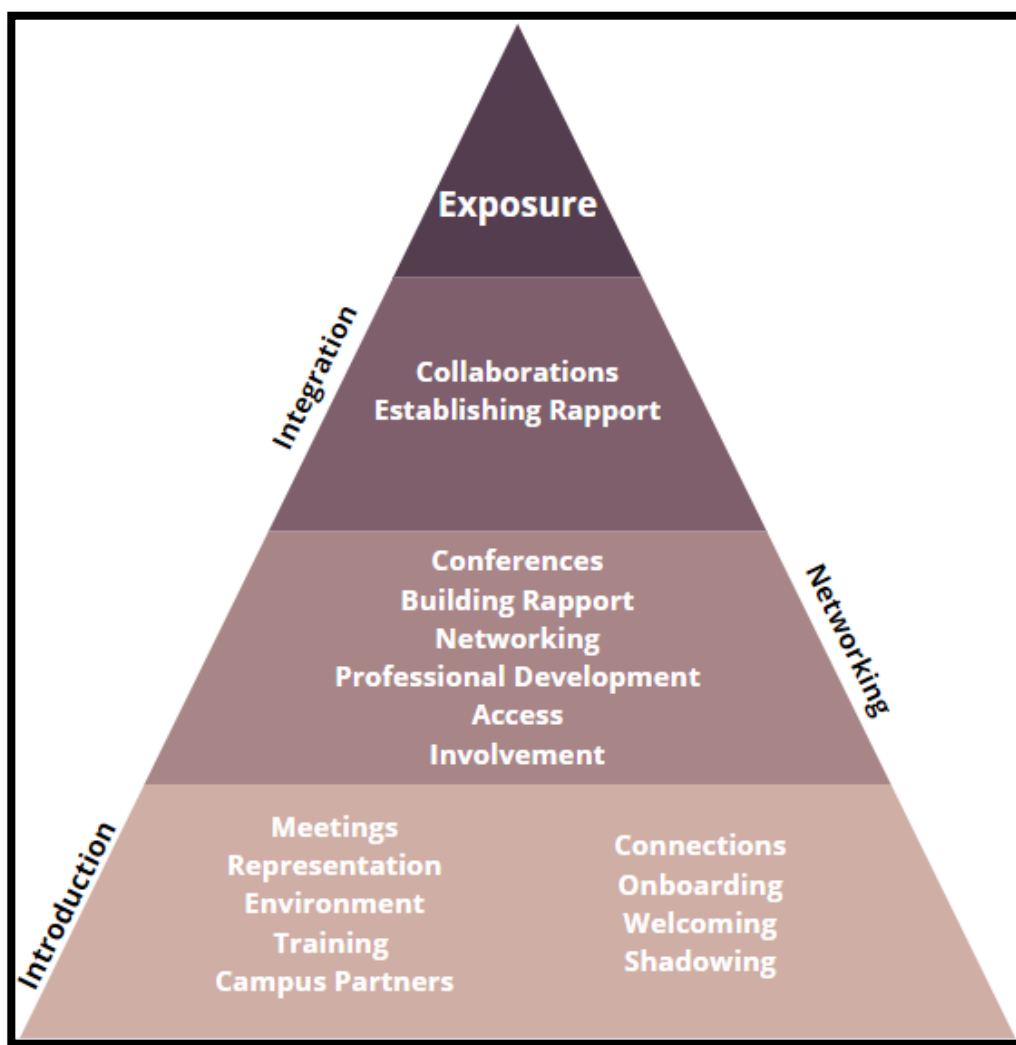
Exposure

The second component for *entering the field* phase that emerged from the data was exposure (see Figure 2). Exposure refers to the introduction of the position, the networking incorporated to feel connected to the department and institution, and the integration to establish a rapport (Mullen et al., 2018). Exposure to the department and institution can result in a sense of belonging (Strayhorn, 2018). For Peggy, having a meet and greet when first hired, being introduced to other departments they would be working with, and having a set training schedule contributed to her sense of exposure to the environment and belonging to the department. Jordan shared that her first position had no introductions, trainings, or intentional connections, which

contributed to a gap between her love for the field and her commitment to the department and institution. Jordan admitted that the gap was why she left her first position.

Figure 2

Entering the Field Theme — Emerging Category — Exposure



For some, prior and current education and degrees were not a solution to limited exposure, such as a master's in SA, counseling, higher education, etc. Sandy specifically stated, "Education cannot be the only thing; exposure is essential." Sandy, along with Alex, emphasized that having a graduate degree can build a foundation on how to support the student population

but does not help with the daily exposure needed for any entry-level professional. Alex stipulated:

Exposure does not mean education; exposure means introductions to staff, being CC'd in emails, shadowing colleagues, and getting a sense of the environment around them ...

Without this [exposure], I would have left immediately; I am thankful I had these opportunities because it built my confidence to network.

Out of 13 mid to senior-level participants, all but one discussed how stakeholders played an essential role in exposing entry-level women professionals to the environment. Some emphasized that the department and institution are responsible for the exposure; others stressed it was the individual's responsibility. Although there was inconsistency across the board on who is responsible for exposure, many could agree, including Julie, who stated that "it has to be a well-balanced collaboration between the buyer and the consumer ... the new employee who is willing to step outside their comfort zone and the university responsible for them." Continuing this notion, Liam and Emily both explained how no matter what you believe is essential for exposure, the supervisor is responsible for giving the opportunities for exposure. The individual is accountable for utilizing those opportunities.

Networking and integration were two critical elements of exposure (see Figure 2). Participants agreed that networking and integration should be balanced to gain exposure to the new environment. Jordan, an entry-level professional who changed positions twice and struggled with gaining exposure, ultimately decided to leave the field within five years. Jordan started her dream job right out of college and thought it was the perfect fit before she started. On her first day, she was not introduced to anyone, had no training, and was just given a file full of guidelines. Immediately, she felt disconnected from her colleagues, the office, her students and

what they needed, and the institution. She pushed through three months hoping things would change, and they did not. She gave a two-week notice even without another job to lean on; she was desperate to leave. Jordan realized, “it was healthier for me to leave my position not knowing where I was going then stay there and say two works in two weeks to anyone ... it was a horrible environment to work in.” Despite her experience during her first position, she pursued SA and found a better fit. Reflecting on that position, she said:

It was night and day; I could not believe how welcoming and genuine people are in SA. I was welcomed with open arms, introduced to everyone- not just who was in my office, and got proper training and shadowing two weeks after I started.

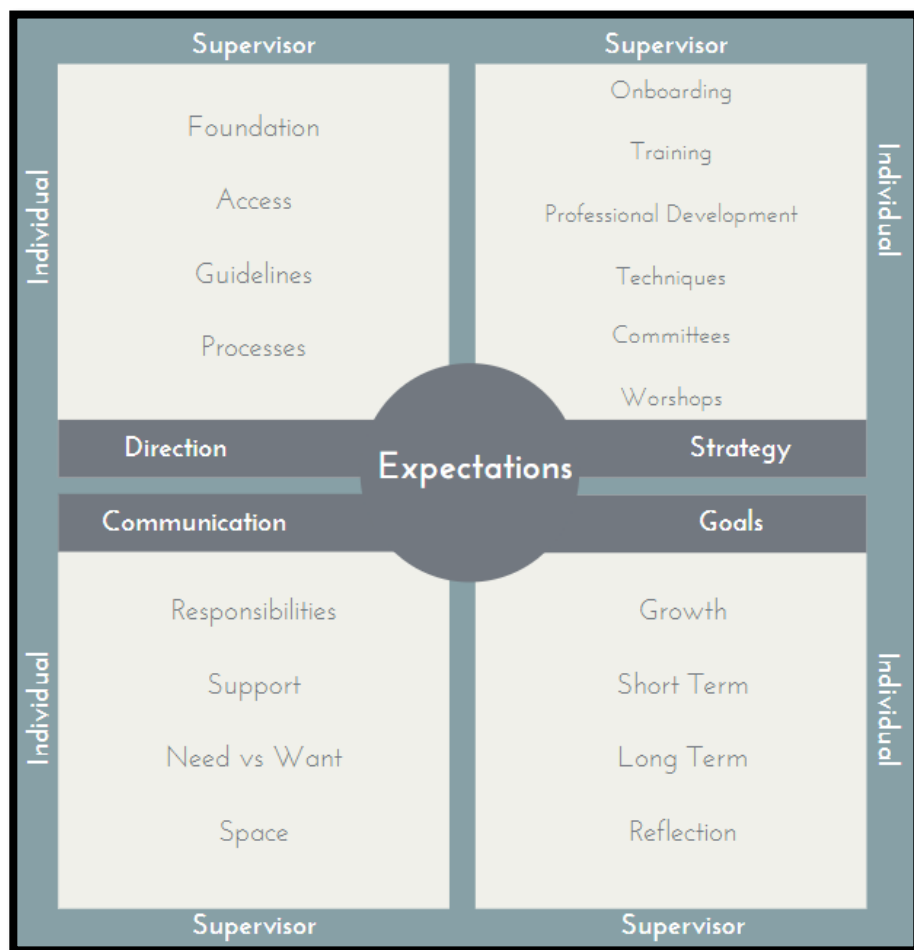
Jordan said she felt more comfortable and confident in her current role because of her exposure.

Expectations

The third category for *entering the field* phase that emerged from the data was expectations (see Figure 3). While receiving supervision and gaining exposure is essential for an entry-level professional to enter the field, setting expectations is equally important. Setting expectations can clarify both employee and supervisor, get everyone on the same page, and establish a measurement baseline for future performance evaluations. Additionally, it can enhance communication and empower employees to act more freely because they have more guidelines and structure. Kelly shared how expectations should be set when the entry-level professional starts and revisited throughout their experience to better themselves, both as an employee for the department and a professional in SA. Per Tara’s suggestion, supervisors and department chairs should set different expectations, including overall department expectations, supervisor and supervisee expectations, and each position’s expectations.

Figure 3

Entering the Field Theme — Emerging Category — Expectations



Some participants in the study shared that, although the department can set expectations, the supervisor and employee need to set specific expectations to build their relationship and create strong communication and support. As visualized in Figure 4, four subcategories of expectations emerged from the data, including direction, strategy, communication, and goals. The first expectation is providing direction. According to Jasmin, “when starting the position, they must give you some sort of direction on where to start. I got no direction when I started, making it hard to understand the position. I did not know what my purpose was.” Cory shared, “explaining the department’s processes and what they entail can give the entry-level professional

direction on where to start in their role” Cory gave an example of an entry-level professional starting a residential life position in July, and how they should be provided the specific beginning of the year processes (i.e., move-in, housing selection, resident assistant training) so they have more direction on what specific job responsibilities they need to focus on. Another example of Brandon’s direction was providing a guideline for a new entry-level professional to use when starting the position:

Guidelines are different from instructions. It is important to give a new professional some general rules about the department and their job. I usually provide them recommendations, not demands- this way, they know the baseline of what needs to be accomplished but also can put their spin on it.

While providing processes and guidelines is essential for a supervisor to guide the entry-level, Emily noted that providing access to the entry-level professional is equally important. “We can give the new professional all the directions they can, but it is important to make sure they have the appropriate access to our systems, our department, and our students.” Emily shared an example of her onboarding experience and how her supervisor would not give her access to the orientation software, so she had to run everything by her supervisor. That experience made her feel not part of the department and having a supervisor micromanaged her work. Kelly, an entry-level professional, gave a similar example:

It took me three months to get access to the department’s shared email; I was always getting emails forward to me but could not send emails from the shared email. I know it sounds small, but those small things made a difference. I had to send emails through my email, while everyone else in the department could send the email through the shared one. I felt vulnerable.

Lastly, the foundation was another subcategory for the supervisor to guide the individual. For the participants, including Morgan, the foundation was meant to build the relationship between the individual and their supervisor. “It was crucial for me to build a foundation with my supervisor. They were my first connection within their department, and I thought it was essential to build that connection as soon as I started the position.”

Another subcategory of expectation that emerged was strategies. Brandon explained:

A supervisor and department should vocalize what opportunities they have to their new employee and encourage them to participate ... Yes, it is up to the individual to do the techniques we give them, but we still need to give them.

Some participants, like Sophia, Jordan, and Liam, gave onboarding, training, and career development strategies. Sophia shared, “I think it is important for the supervisor to play an important role in the onboarding and to train a new employee. I was able to connect with my supervisor while learning the essentials for my position.” Jordan explained:

During my one on ones with my supervisor, she is always giving me the newest career development opportunities happening on campus or nationally. I am going to a conference in a couple of months that my supervisor thought would be great for me.

Liam suggested that although giving career development opportunities required to attend conferences is essential for an entry-level professional to gain networking experience, providing international opportunities is equally important:

One strategy I have is to involve my new employees with the workshops and committees we have on campus; this way, they can connect with our community. Although connecting with other SA professionals outside our university is essential, they should

also feel connected to others on our campus and take advantage of the opportunities we have here.

Figure 3 shows that another subcategory within expectations that emerged was communication. Peggy was one participant who shared the communication she received from her supervisor, specifically communicating her responsibilities as follows:

About once or twice a week, regardless of our weekly meetings, my supervisor checks in on what I am working on, asking if I have any questions, and goes over upcoming responsibilities I have. This communication is a refresher from my first supervisor who never checked in.

Other participants, including Sophia, discussed receiving support from their supervisor, “After experiencing two different style supervisors, I think support is essential for an entry-level professional to feel from their supervisor.” Sophia explained that her first supervisor did not support her when she had to take a few days off for mental health. When she requested the days off, the supervisor asked detailed questions. After returning, Sophia felt that her supervisor was judgmental and always kept bringing up her mental health in conversation. After getting her second supervisor, Sophia felt a difference of support and encouragement from her other supervisor, not judgment. This also was an example of space demonstrated under communication in Figure 3. Sophia explained that giving her the space she needed to recoup from the mental health situation she was experiencing would have helped her. Still, her supervisor continued to email her during her days off. Lastly, four entry-level and five mid to senior-level professionals discussed the need vs. want when communicating with new employees. Lucy was one of the participants; she stated:

As a supervisor, it is important to know what your supervisees need and what they want. Now, these things [need vs. want] might not be the same, and they [entry level professional] might not know they need or want it.

Lucy gave an example of how one of her new professionals wanted to take on more responsibilities. Still, she knew that the individual was taking on too much and needed to step away from some responsibilities. Lucy needed to communicate this with the professionals and help them prioritize the responsibilities they already had.

The last subcategory within expectations was setting goals. Kelly and Sophia both discussed how they worked with their supervisors to set short-term and long-term goals during their one-on-ones. Susan, a mid-level professional who just started supervising entry-level professionals, mentioned:

I focus on growth. My supervisor never asked how I wanted to grow as a professional when I started. Now, this is something I focus on as a supervisor myself. I think an entry-level professional needs to be given opportunities to grow in their position and the field, and it should be the supervisor who supports them during this goal.

Carla continued to discuss setting goals by following through and reflecting on the goals set forth. “We can set those goals, but if no one reflects on them or helps a new [entry level professional] professional revisit their goals, are those goals being achieved?”

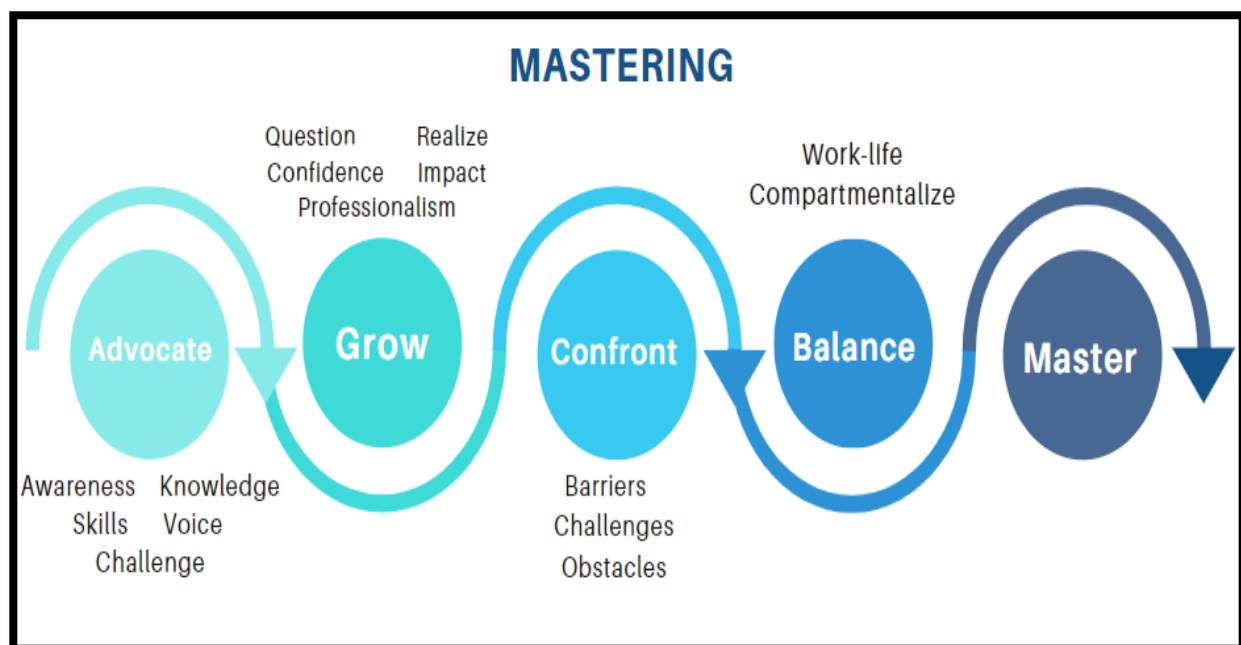
Mastering the Position

For career development to continue after the entry-level professional enters the field, it was clear from the participants’ perspective that mastering the position was as essential as entering the field. After providing the individual with the foundation needed, including supervision, exposure, and expectations, the individual should use these components to navigate

mastering their position. According to Susan, a mid-level professional, “once we introduce and provide the appropriate resources for our new employees to feel confident in the position, they are responsible for grasping the essential components to succeed in their role.” There were four components within the mastering the position phase of the model, including advocating, growing, confronting, and balancing. While not all participants recommended all the components of mastering the position (see Figure 4), each participant shared that throughout their experiences, either as entry or mid to senior-level professionals, they have encountered each component to master their positions.

Figure 4

Mastering the Position Theme



Advocate

As demonstrated in Figure 4, one of the steps to mastering the position is to advocate for oneself the specific awareness, knowledge, and skills needed to excel. If women in SA cannot advocate for themselves, they will not master the position and feel confident to continue. Per

Alex, “it is hard, but any new professional needs to learn how to advocate for themselves. If they are unwilling to advocate, they will never grow.” In addition to these competencies, one must advocate for being challenged and find their voice in the position. Peggy mentioned, “we can support them [entry-level professionals] as much as we can, but they also need to be challenged, or they will never be pushed to be ‘uncomfortable’ in the position.” All four participants mentioned that women in SA do not advocate for themselves, allowing their male colleagues to take on more leadership responsibilities. Tara said:

I worked in an office where it was frowned upon to speak up, and we just had to do the “old” ways for everything. This limited us in everything, but of course, we had men in the office that was never willing to change their ways.

Tara continued to discuss her challenges in that role when it came to speaking up for herself and to bringing new ideas to the table. “it took a while. Still, I finally found my voice; now here I am 15 years later.”

Grow

Another category that emerged within the mastering the position phase (see Figure 4) was growth. Many subcategories develop within the growing category, including questioning, realizing, confidence, impact, and professionalism. Confidence was one subcategory that was continuously mentioned by participants, including Sandy, who noted:

To grow in the position, they must build on confidence. SA is all about building relationships and using those relationships to move up in the field; if you do not have confidence, you will find it challenging to move to a higher position.

Any area of growth requires the uncomfortable notion to question traditional practices and introduce new ideas to the team. Lucy hinted, “we like to see our new employees questioning

why we do things in the office; it shows that they are acclimating to the environment and feeling comfortable as part of our team.” In addition, Leslie shared:

As I grow in my current role, I feel one shift I had as I move on to the mid-level position was feeling confident to ask questions on why we were doing a new procedure or introducing a new policy.

Leaving an impact was another common component within *mastering the* position that participants discussed. Carla stated:

You know when I can tell someone is familiar with their position? They are starting to leave their mark in the department and at the university, starting to introduce their initiatives and programs; it is a proud moment for us supervisors.

Overall, growth requires the capability to feel more comfortable to ask questions, realize their potential, be confident in their decisions, leave an impact on their students, and build on their professionalism.

Confront

Another area of mastering the position that participants discussed was confronting the challenges entry-level professionals encounter during their first five years in the field. As covered in Chapter Two, many professional and personal barriers have been identified in the current literature, and participants’ perspectives mirrored this same perception. All but one entry-level professional who was interviewed encountered some type of personal or professional barrier when entering the field. For example, Lisa explained:

In grad school, I was told to take whatever job I get to get my foot in the door, and after my first job, I learned that my worth was more than what I was told it was. I should have interviewed more and picked a job I would like.

Nina mentioned:

I just got married and trying to start a new job in residential life, they told me my husband could not live with me in the apartment they were providing me with. I had to decide if I wanted to take the job over my new family or leave a good job because they could not accommodate my living arrangements.

Jordan shared her barrier of overworking because of how students gravitated towards her over her colleague for support. “I work in an office with only two other colleagues, and they are both men; I noticed that when it comes to personal issues or someone to talk to, students make way more appointments with me than them.” Jordan continued to discuss this barrier of being overworked as something she had to overcome to gain respect in the office. She confronted her colleagues by asking them to take on more appointments in the office and asked for consistency when it came to training on how to support the student population. She mentioned that she started feeling more comfortable in her role as an SA professional by overcoming this barrier and confronting the situation.

From the examples of the above participants’ perspectives, the difference between entry-level professionals entering the field and mastering the field was discovering how to confront these barriers and challenges while working in SA. Along with Jordan, Morgan, Leslie, Pauline, and Jasmin, all within their fourth or fifth year, mentioned an example of confronting an issue in their first position. Leslie stated, “After only three months on the job, they had me supervising 22 undergraduate students, overseeing three residential halls by myself; if I did not say something, I probably would have been swallowed whole by that position.” Leslie continued to use the example of how she confronted her supervisor and the other Assistant Directors on how she was

feeling overwhelmed. Leslie mentioned that she had to confront them or realized no one else would.

Balance

Learning how to balance was another component discovered when discussing how to master the position. Precisely, how one must balance work-life and compartmentalize, all but one entry-level participant entered the field through working in residential life and taking a live-in position. Due to this, their work and life intertwine, and they find it harder to balance their work-life. For example, Morgan stated, “I was working 12 to 13 hours a day working in residential life, I went home, but my home was in a dorm. I could never get away from work.” Four out of nine entry-level professionals and 11 out of 13 mid to senior-level professionals mentioned burnout, including Morgan, and how it was introduced early in their positions. 10 out of 13 mid to senior-level participants explained how they overcame this issue when they first started their positions. Tara stated:

It is easier said than done, but I knew I overcame the whole being a new professional when I was able to turn off my work after 5 PM. I think this is the biggest issue we have with our new employees. We expect too much from them, and they do not learn how to have a healthy work ethic.

All mid to senior-level participants recommended supervisors helping entry-level professionals learn how to balance their responsibilities and healthy work ethics. If they were able to learn restorative techniques to balance their work-life, they would master the position and move on to evaluating their capabilities. One example was Lucy, who stated:

Practice what you preach, especially leaders. We must set an example for our staff. I make it intentional not to send an email after work hours or on the weekend; that way, my

younger and newer staff do not feel pressured to respond or even check when they should not be working.

Another example of restorative techniques to exemplify a healthy work ethic was from Alex:

I think it is important as a supervisor to encourage my new employees to focus on an outside hobby or something that makes them happy. It is important for them to add value to their free time and not be consumed with work.

Alex continued to focus on how a supervisor should encourage entry-level professionals to make their free time more valuable and find what makes them happy. Alex quoted, “I remember my mentor telling me, ‘You do not live to work, you work to live,’ and I have kept this quote as I became a supervisor and shared this mentality with new employees.”

Evaluating the Position

From the participants’ perspectives, once an entry-level professional enters the field and they master the position, they should also evaluate it. Many explained, including Cory, that entry-level professionals should be receiving evaluations and feedback from their colleagues and supervisors consistently during their time in the position. Cory mentioned, “Many universities implement evaluation processes annually for each department ... What I am suggesting is an evaluation if the position is the right fit.” When discussing evaluation, it was identified that there should be two evaluation categories for the employee, individually and professionally (See Figure 5). Within each type of evaluation, specific items were essential to evaluate.

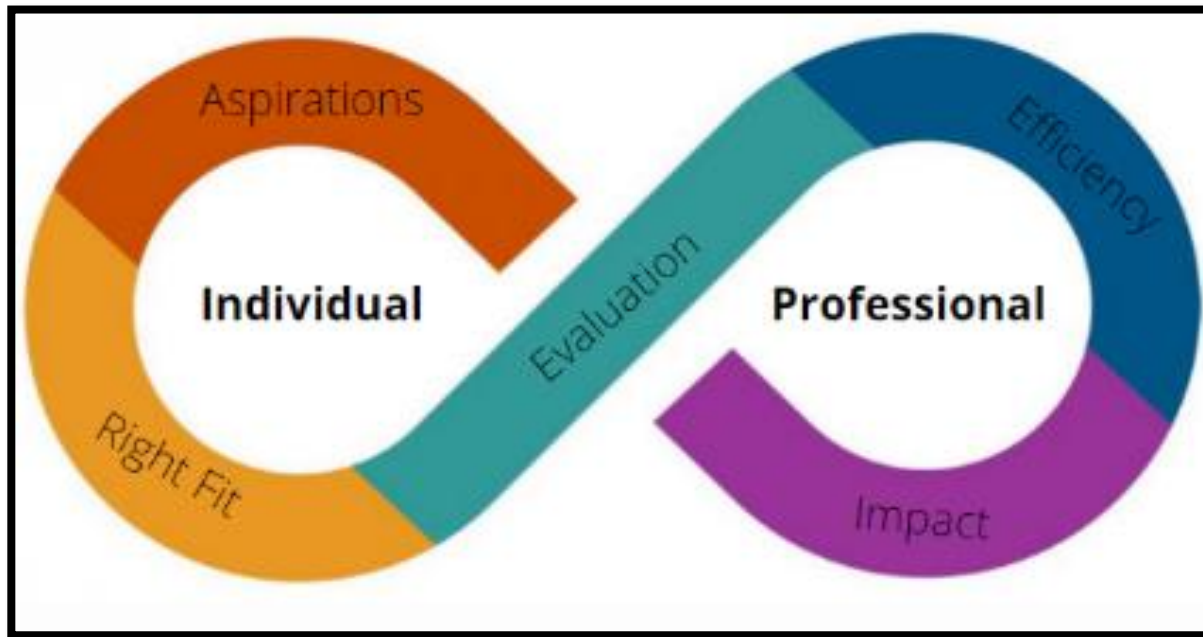
Figure 5*Evaluating the Position Theme****Individual***

Figure 5 shows that two subcategories emerged within individual evaluation: aspirations and the right fit. These subcategories could determine if the entry-level professional could persist in the field. For evaluation on aspirations, 12 participants, including Peggy, discussed how it is essential to evaluate the individual and how their aspirations fit their future in the department. If an entry-level professional can identify their aspirations within their first year in their role and acknowledge if working in the field is something they see themselves doing in the future, then according to participants' perspective, they are on the path to persist. Specifically, Sandy and Peggy both mentioned that it is essential during ongoing evaluation to see if the entry-level professionals' aspirations match a future in SA as a supervisor. Peggy shared, "during the six-month eval, I will ask my employees where they see themselves in five to ten years. If I see some hesitation, I typically assume they have been questioning the position or career path." Peggy

discussed how she would ask follow-up questions on how they have been feeling to see if this is the right fit for them if she saw the hesitation.

Professional

As indicated in Figure 5, individual and professional evaluation are equally essential and intertwine with each other. Two specific professional topics of evaluation that participants from this study mentioned were efficiency and impact. Efficiency was one area of evaluation used by many senior-level participants and then noted that it was essential to observe among entry-level professionals. Brandon stated, “I try to understand my employee’s motivations and what they find important to succeed. I believe motivation relates to efficiency in the office.” This belief correlates to Pârjoleanu’s (2020) study on how work, recognition, and diversification of responsibilities can relate to working motivation and efficiency in the workplace. Pauline shared her experiences with her previous evaluations and explained how her supervisor would go over her responsibilities and how they related to effective work in the office. She shared, “we went over my job responsibilities and tied it back to the success in the office. This provided me an opportunity to understand where I stood in my role and how I could do better for the department.” Supervisors need to strike a balance between identifying the challenges experienced by their entry-level professionals and supporting them to stimulate efficiency in the workplace.

Another professional evaluation component that was expressed was impact. Five mid- to senior-level professionals explained that identifying an entry-level professional’s impact on the population they are working with can motivate them to continue in the position. Susan stated:

I like to go over what their staff says about them; if they supervise student workers, I get feedback on how they were as a supervisor. I believe new employee needs to be reminded of their “why” they are in the field and their purpose.

All but six participants from this study discussed finding their why. They mentioned continuously being reminded of why they continue to work in the field and the impact they have left. It is suggested that an entry-level professional be evaluated on their impact on the students, staff, and overall community.

Ready to Persist

The last theme that emerged from the data demonstrates how entering the field, mastering the position, and evaluating the position can allow the entry-level professional to be ready to persist in the field past their first five years. During the focus group, it was established that, once the entry-level professional experiences all categories and subcategories within the first three phases, they would proceed to the next phase, ready to persist. From participants’ perspectives, entry-level professional women would be more likely to continue and feel motivated to progress in the field if these phases are achieved. Lisa explained:

If I was supported from them [SA department] from day one and knew they were committed to me as I was to them, I think I would be more dedicated to put more effort in my work and do more for them [SA field].

Emily elaborated, “there needs to be something, we [SA professionals] are watching our new professionals leave the field as quickly as we hire them, something is wrong here.” Emily questioned:

How can we expect them [entry-level professionals] to do so much for us [administration], without giving something back to them? We need to help the new generation persist in the field, or there is not going to be a field to persist in.

Overall, I discovered that an entry-level SA woman professional would be introduced to many new expectations and responsibilities, overcome barriers and challenges, and reflect on their field journeys. Once an entry-level professional is aware of this, is knowledgeable in the specific areas, and is skillful, they will be ready to persist.

Outlier Data and Findings

Some findings did not align with the purpose of this study during the data collection and analysis. In this study, graduate program preparedness and budget and resources were two outlier findings that a small population of participants revealed during the data collection process.

Although the two outliers did not align with this study, they are essential to identify in the research. However, they are significant as they can potentially define expected cause-and-effect relationships (Gibbert et al., 2021).

Graduate Program Preparedness

One participant in the study shared a graduate program experience unique to the other participant's graduate experience. Although they were in a traditional graduate program, unlike many, they had specific electives that focused on particular areas within SA and the day-to-day skills they would need for their position within SA. Despite the observation, this would mean more funding, consistency amongst programs, and more specialized professors with experience within each field of SA. Leslie offered:

Graduate programs should change their classes to more of what we need to do in the field and not whom we are working for [students] ... at least a well balance of both instead of [ACPA and NASPA] competencies and theory.

Despite this observation, it is an uncommon practice, and it can be challenging to change graduate program curriculums.

Budget and Resources

One participant shared their experience of having a large amount of funding for career development opportunities and resources. They disclosed that their university provides them with \$5,000 to \$8,000 per year for career development and encouraged her to use these funds. Morgan shared:

There was no probation status, and I can use the fundings at any time. When one of us goes to a conference, we are expected to return and present what we learned or gained from experience to the rest of the staff. Our department has been able to grow and develop new ideas.

Despite this observation, it is uncommon for many departments, especially small universities, to have this kind of funding and are expected to budget towards other necessary items.

Research Question Responses

The research questions that guided this study were: (a) What necessary components do SA departments need to retain their entry-level SA women professionals related to a career development model? (b) What components are needed for an entry-level professional woman to enter the field of student affairs? (c) What components are needed for entry-level student affairs professional women to master the position? (d) How do entry-level student affairs women professionals know they are ready to persist in the field? Although the answers to these questions

can be understood through the career development model developed above, the following section has summarized these questions by analyzing the data collected during the study.

Central Research Question

My central research question was: What components do student affairs departments need to retain entry-level women professionals related to a career development model? I was interested in this question, in particular, because after further researching this topic, pursuing a literature review, and collecting data, it was evident that many components of my discovered career development model addressed retention and persistence within the field. Throughout the data collection and analysis, participants cited a variety of necessary components essential for an entry-level SA professional woman to succeed in the field in both entry and mid to senior-level groups. These components were developed into four major themes; entering the field, mastering the position, evaluating the position, and being ready to persist. For the first phase, entering the position, a good balance of supervision, expectations, and exposure were addressed as the necessary categories for an entry-level women's SA professional to feel confident to move on to the next phase, mastering the position. Peggy, a senior level professional, stated:

I have been in this field for 28 years. I have seen new people come and go and what I can say is that a plan to support and guide them through exposure and supervision is needed so they can move on in their careers.

Cory added to this by adding, "setting expectations is needed right when they [entry level professionals] start. How are you expecting them to work efficiently without giving them appropriate expectations?" During the next phase, mastering the position, a consistent flow of advocating, growing, confronting, and balancing were identified as subcategories by the participants perspective. Alex shared, "you can tell when a new employee has grown in the

position- they know how to advocate for themselves and balance their work-life well.” Lastly, an interesting component that emerged from this study was the theme of effective evaluation and its need to persist after their first five years. Carla, a senior-level professional, mentioned, “we must know what is essential to educate and prosper our new generation in this field.” Nina, an entry-level professional, stated, “student affairs need to identify what is lacking in career development, or we [entry-level professionals] will just keep leaving the field to do something easier, even if our passion is in higher education.” The four emerging themes from this study, entering the field, mastering the position, evaluating the position, and readiness to persist, answered the central research question developed for this study.

Sub-Question One

What components are needed for entry-level professional women to enter the field of student affairs? When entering the field, from the participant’s perspective, including Alex, supervision, expectations, and exposure were the three key components that emerged from the theme *entering the field*. Alex said:

I pushed through my first five years because I knew I had to have a career where I can have both a job I love and a family to love. If it were not for my supervisors, I would probably have picked a different job within the first five years.

For others, exposure was critical to their success in entering the field. Lisa mentioned, “I got exposure to the culture immediately; I felt like I belonged. That is all I needed to feel part of a team and this huge family of like-mind people. It is truly an amazing feeling.” Lastly, setting expectations was another subcategory that was emerged from entering the field theme in this study. Participants like Sandy shared, “I needed to set expectations as a way to know I was

meeting the standards that my department expected me to. It was accountability. A way to know that I was doing my job and doing it well.”

Sub-Question Two

What components are needed for entry-level student affairs professional women to master the position? According to the participants’ perspective, the change from entering the field to mastering the position is where an entry-level professional can feel they can advocate, grow, confront, and balance on their own. Pauline mentioned:

I am about to start my sixth year in student affairs, and I have learned so much within these first five years. With the guidance of my mentors, I was able to grow in the position and challenge myself to be able to confront issues I have never confronted before.

While Leslie stated, “I knew I was moving on in my position when I was able to advocate for myself and fight for what I wanted without the help of others.”

Sub-Question Three

How do entry-level student affairs women professionals know they are ready to persist in the field? This question emerged from the themes discovered from this study, including mastering the position and evaluating the position. Participants, including Jasmin, Leslie, Morgan, Liam, and Susan, all shared their experiences on how they could persist in the field, including evaluating their experiences and reflecting on if the position was the right fit. These categories emerged within the two themes listed above: mastering the position and evaluating the position. Susan mentioned, “I knew I was ready to continue to work in student affairs when I looked back in my first position, reflected on my journey, and wanted to continue to work in the field.” Like Susan Leslie, an entry-level professional in their fifth year, shared:

I know many my colleagues in grad school have moved out of student affairs, but for me, the love and passion are still there. I make sure I assess my value in my work and impact my students. That is what keeps me going.

Summary

This chapter summarizes a portrait of entry-, mid-, and senior-level participants from multiple sites in this study. Additionally, I introduced a model for a career development series for higher education institutions and SA departments that was developed from the data collected in this study. The career development model included three phases: entering the field, mastering the field, and evaluating the field. Within each phase, many components surfaced that must be incorporated and mastered to move on to the next phase. Supervision, exposure, environment, advocating and growing, and evaluating were essential components. Additionally, sources of support were identified, especially supervisors, department chairs, and the entry-level professionals themselves. I concluded the chapter with a summary of the answers to the research questions presented in this study. Overall, the answers to the research questions and the developed model were grounded in the data collected through individual interviews of entry-, mid-, and senior-level professionals and a focus group with mid- to senior-level professionals from an array of institutions around the U.S.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this grounded theory study was to develop a career development model for entry-level women professionals based on the lived experiences of current entry-level, mid-level, and senior-level SA professionals from regionally accredited universities. In this chapter, I discuss the interpretation of the findings, implications for policy and practice, theoretical and methodological implications, and limitations and delimitations. Finally, I conclude the chapter with recommendations for future research.

Discussion

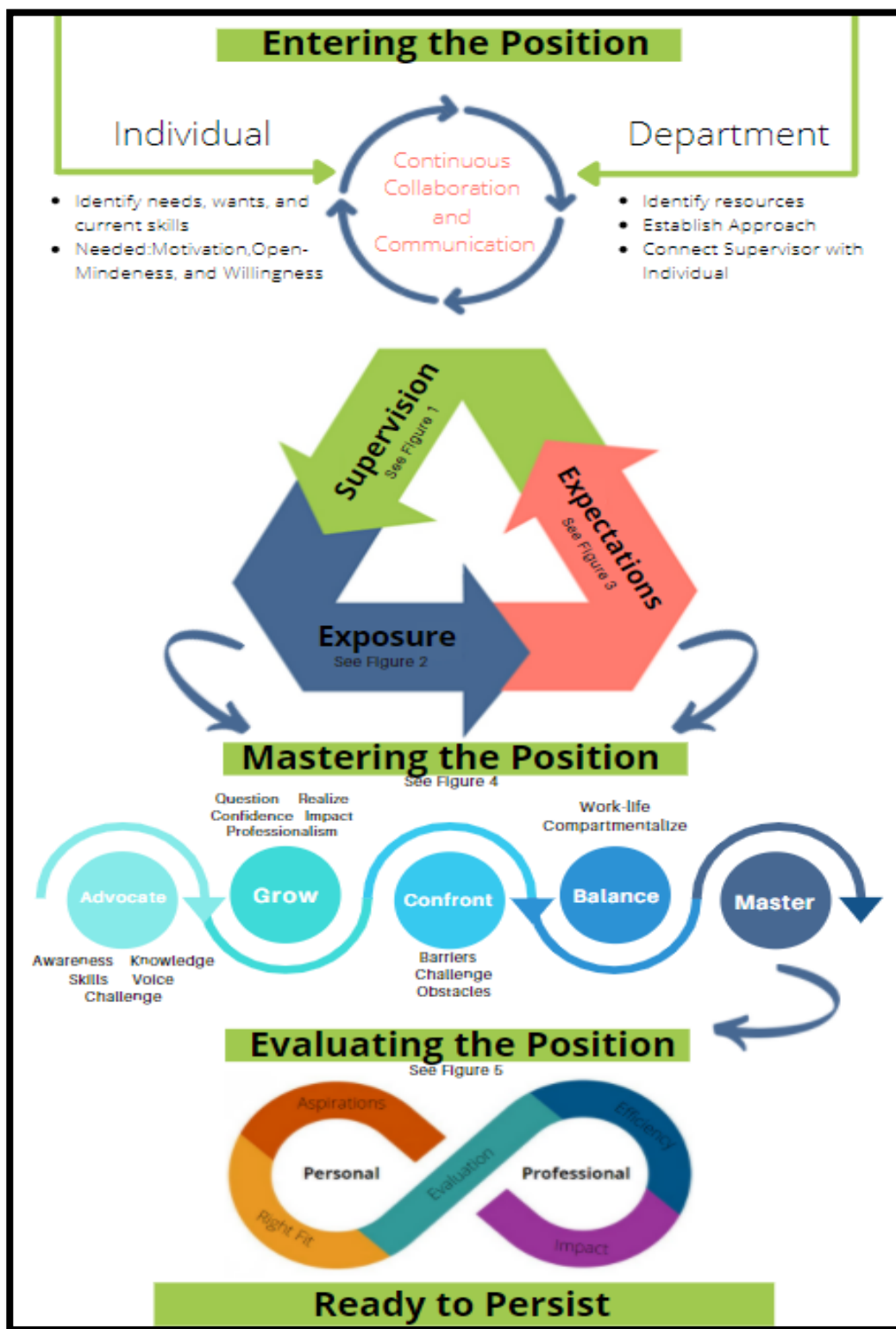
This section discusses the relationship between this study's findings and the current literature. While highlighting my voice and supporting the interpretations of the findings, this section identifies the implications for policy and practice. This section continues with recognizing the theoretical and empirical importance. Lastly, limitations and delimitations are explained, and recommendations are shared for future research.

Interpretation of Findings

My research aimed to develop a career development model for higher education institutions focused on the necessary components to support entry-level women during their first five years in the profession (see Figure 6). Analysis of individual interviews and focus group data determined the essential components required for an entry-level professional to persist. One of the main findings of this study was that the capability to persist after the first five years in the profession resulted in a phase-like model seen in Figure 6, starting with how the new professional enters the field, how they master the position, and how they evaluate the position.

Figure 6

Development Model for Entry-level SA Professional Women Career



The model in Figure 6 demonstrates a four-phase process for entry-level professionals to navigate during their first five years of the profession. The support needed within this model comes from the multiple stakeholders involved, including the entry-level professional themselves, the supervisor, the department, and the institution. I derived many interpretations from the current literature and analyzed my participant's perspectives of the phenomenon. Each bolded area is a process, beginning with entering the field, continuing with mastering the position, evaluating the position, and concluding with being ready to persist. Each phase comes with its supports and challenges, depending on the individual. The entering the field phase included three foundational components, as seen in chapter four, supervision, exposure, and expectations. It was discovered that before an entry-level professional can incorporate these three foundational components, the individual (entry-level) and the department must identify the necessary needs, wants, and resources for the SA professional to have continuous collaboration and communication. Once these prerequisites are established, the foundational components can be introduced.

Once the foundational components within the first phase of the model are identified, a thriving balance of supervision, expectations, and exposure to the environment must occur for the entry-level professional to feel ready to master the position. If one of these components is lacking, the entry-level professional will not be prepared to continue comfortably in the field. While not all participants recommended all three components essential for entry-level professionals, each participant shared that throughout their experiences, either as entry or mid to senior, they have recognized each component to their persistence within the field. When I asked when they believe an entry-level professional is ready to move on to mastering the position, all

but two participants answered that the individual must be confident within their supervision, exposed to the environment, and understand their expectations within the field and position.

When I asked about mastering the position, Susan, a mid-level professional, stated, “you have to confront the barriers we face as women, or nothing will change.” This notion resembled five other participants who discussed confronting barriers to move up in the field. Brandon, a mid-level professional, mentioned that to feel confident in one’s position, one must “understand how to balance the position and work-life, or you will never feel accomplished in student affairs.” Additionally, Amy indicated that to master the position is to identify the critical components of what it means to master the position. She recommended, “advocating for oneself by putting everything on the table, including all the knowledge, skills, and challenges you could face at the beginning of the position, will help you continue to grow.”

Although the topic of evaluation was not at the forefront of my questions, the participants continuously explained that evaluation plays an essential part in any entry-level professionals’ experience. All but two entry-level participants mentioned that if continuous evaluation were implemented during their first year or two within the position, it would be helpful. Jordan said, “Why not give us an evaluation, any feedback? It would be nice to know what we are doing wrong, what we are doing right.” Jordan continued, “I think if I had been given feedback in the beginning, I would have known how to work on myself better instead of feeling discouraged all the time.” Mid to senior-level participants also brought up the topic of evaluation. Emily shared, “entry-level professionals are like sponges; they need to absorb everything. Still, we have to see what was absorbed and what leaked out.” She recommended that evaluations should occur after the supervisor believes an entry-level professional “has at least absorbed a little [knowledge and skills].”

Lastly, Figure 6 interprets the individual's persistence by navigating through the model in one direction; the model can be scaffolded, returning to specific phases when needed. Seven of the mid to senior-level professionals and three of the entry-level professionals advised a scaffolded journey, returning to specific responsibilities they did not understand or get trained on properly, roles they did not master, or items they were evaluated on to persist in the position. One entry-level participant, Leslie, stated:

I have been in the field for five years, and what advice I would give someone is don't be afraid to go back to the beginning, relearn things, and ask questions. It is the only way you are going to learn.

Although the scaffolding journey was recommended, the acronym SEE ME (i.e., supervision, exposure, expectations, master, and evaluate) emerged from the findings to help establish the essential themes from Figure 6.

Overall, the model was designed to visualize the theory that emerged from the findings, and I believe that the model can link theory and practice. In other words, the theory of women's early career development in SA emphasizes a continual process when entering the field through which an individual and their department collaborate to achieve professional persistence through mastery and evaluation. Through career development, an entry-level professional woman can be exposed to the foundational components needed to establish the necessary skills and abilities to master the position to evaluate their aspirations and goals to plan their career after their first five years.

Summary of Thematic Findings

My research was informed by current literature and focused on determining a career development model for higher education institutions to provide the appropriate guidance for

entry-level professional women. One main finding of this study was a phase-like process necessary for any entry-level professional woman needed throughout their first five years within the field (see Figure 6). While this model emerged and played an essential role in developing the theory of women's early career development in SA, other findings also emerged from the study. In this section, three thematic findings are discussed, including the lack of self-awareness and self-care for women in SA, applicable findings for men in the field, and a call to SA to respond were identified.

Impact of Burnout on Women in SA. Focusing on women in the SA field was the focal point for my study. Two main themes from Chapter Two were cultivating women leadership in the workplace and the strategies for fostering a women-inclusive culture. Within these sections, the theme of societal expectations discussed women having a nurturing nature (Antoniou & Aggelou, 2019; Hewlett, 2002). My research continued to discuss how women are expected and tend to enter the workforce in jobs where their nurturing nature can be celebrated (Domenico & Jones, 2006; Graf et al., 2018; Schueller-Weidekamm & Kautzky-Willer, 2012; Watson et al., 2002). Since the SA field is comprised of women professionals, it has been overwhelmingly nurturing in its approach to the student population. This perception was also observed throughout this study and throughout my time working in SA as a woman. For example, recruiting and retaining the student population is at the forefront of any higher education institution. Experienced SA professionals are an essential factor in the calculation of improving and maintaining positive student perceptions of quality-of-life surveys on campuses (Connor, 2021). Although recognizing student perceptions through quality of life (QOL) surveys is at the forefront of any institution, the administration does not appear to view employee burnout or best performance practices similarly. By perceiving burnout from SA professionals as an individual

employee issue, the administration signals a lack of awareness that focuses on their women employees as essential as focusing on QOL from their students. From my experience working in SA, I have noticed a change of caring more about supporting students and the QOL than focusing on SA professionals' self-care and self-awareness. I have witnessed and contested that our nurturing behavior may be getting taken advantage of in the field, and administrators are focusing more on the students and less on their employees, expecting them to go above and beyond supporting students and forgetting what a well work-life balance is looks like. The women participants in this study also emphasized this idea by reflecting on not having enough time to focus on their career and career development because their work is consumed by topics like student retention and student mental health.

Applicable Theory for Men. An interesting observation throughout this study was how applicable the career development theory that was developed could be for men in the SA field. Although the study focused on women, the themes that emerged were not gender-specific and should work for any person entering the field of SA. However, this observation addresses another concern within the SA field, namely, equal representation. The SA field is more diverse than any other college profession and relatively lacks pay-equity issues (Bauer-Wolf, 2018). Anecdotal observation suggests that most SA departments promote diversity, and the SA division celebrates this achievement. But how does SA define diversity? If it is known that the SA field is more diverse than any other college professional, why are white men slightly underrepresented in SA? Compared to overall student demographics, white men represent only 33% of top jobs in SA, while 56% of top officers are female and 11% are unidentified. The SA field has now ensured that the SA workforce represents the rich diversity of college students. However, as the student population consists of both men and women students, the SA field must

represent equally. From my experience, there is a lack of cisgender men in the field, especially in entry-level positions. How can the field advocate for diversity if it underrepresents heterosexual men? As SA promotes progressive and inclusive worldviews, it leans too heavily to one side. It is clear that more progress is needed to ensure that the SA profession truly represents the rich diversity of students who attend our universities. If we want a college experience for all, we must appropriately define diversity, open the field to more diversity, and equal representation to mirror this mission.

Call for Action – The Field of SA. I have seen many qualified, brilliant, talented SA professionals leave the field throughout my career because they were treated poorly in their positions and universities. I have considered SA to be a promotional pyramid scheme, where administrators who hold power in their position recruit new SA professionals promising them a high return in a short period without the support, or training, they need to succeed. While this may seem promising, this has caused many qualified and talented SA professionals to leave the field early in their careers because their worth was not recognized. As a result, SA professionals who are left are known as the survivors of SA, just getting by and who may not be as capable as those who left the field. Overall, this may be causing high attrition for well-qualified entry-level professionals and high retention of the SA professional survivors over their first five years.

While many mid-senior level SA professionals are excellent, some are less well-suited for mid-senior level positions and survived than earned promotions in the field. A possible hypothesis that emerged from this study is that the SA profession has become more of a corporate business, lacking the elevation of the caliber of those moving up and advancing those who may not be as qualified to lead at higher levels. This may explain a lack of strong current campus leadership willing to provide appropriate career development for new professionals.

Another observation that emerged from this study, and my experience working in the SA field, is how the SA profession as a whole continues to promote national competencies from NASPA and ACPA with a lack of action (Henning & Roberts, 2016; Munsch & Cortez, 2014; Reason & Kimball, 2012). Although the national conferences of both NASPA and ACPA encourage SA professionals to use these competency areas (i.e., personal and ethical foundations; values, philosophy, and history; assessment, evaluation, and research; law, policy, and governance; organizational and human resources; leadership; social justice and inclusion; student learning and development; technology; and advising and supporting), there is no competency on self-awareness and self-care. The competencies, having not been updated since 2015, are outdated; since 2015, we have worked through a pandemic political crisis and have adjusted to working longer than 40 hours a week working from home. During this time, we also have seen an increase in professionals reevaluating priorities, values, and decisions about work life. Recently, 37% of workers under the age of 40 left their current job due to burnout, poor work-life balance, and stress (Stebbleton & Buford, 2021), and one out of three women in the workplace considered changing or leaving their positions (Burns et al., 2021). This persistent retention problem may cause the current vacancies in SA, and if these issues continue, a call for action is needed.

Implications for the Higher Education Community

The findings of this study have implications for the higher education community policies and practices. These policies and practices require administrators, SA leadership, and staff to play an essential role. These implications also require stakeholders to be open-minded and adjust current practices within departments and universities. Some of these implications require

individuals to change their practices intentionally, while other implications recommend setting specific policies for change.

Implications for Policy

This study provides insight into how the SA community can create the most supportive environment for entry-level professionals to advance in the field during their first five years. SA organizations must first implement career development practices and communicate these opportunities to their current staff. This means departmental leadership must understand the needs of their employees and what needs to be addressed for them to receive career development opportunities. Peggy and Julie stressed that departmental leadership needs to implement monthly career development workshops to provide opportunities for their current employees and learn how to advance their careers, grow as professionals, and evaluate their growth. This monthly opportunity could be offered as an in-service or workshop initiative through the department, serving as a launchpad for entry-level professionals to start asking questions on how they can work on their professional growth and feel more confident in their current role. I believe that within this career development program, a mentorship component can be introduced where the department mandates mid to senior-level professionals to mentor entry-level professionals. Alex and Amy recommended a mentorship program where the mentor is outside the supervisor role to give an entry-level professional another chance to connect with someone outside their required supervisor. This career development initiative can also allow entry-level women professionals to gain the necessary resources, connections, and exposure to feel committed to the position and the field.

This study revealed that the SA profession lacks the support systems needed to elevate the caliber of those staying in SA and becoming leaders in the field. I consider implementing a

career development program or mentorship initiative may result in greater retention of entry-level professional women. One essential finding that emerged from my study was the SEE ME acronym for supervision, exposure, expectations, mastering, and evaluation. Within this acronym, models surfaced that can also support supervisors and entry-level professionals to know the best approach to supervision and evaluation. These models can be used as a resource or an onboarding technique, setting expectations for the supervisor and the individual. Lastly, the theory can be introduced as a career development initiative for departments, strategizing different ways to incorporate the essential components within the theory to provide the support an entry-level professional woman needs to grow in the field.

Implications for Practice

The findings from this study may also be helpful to the regional and national associations within SA, including ACPA and NASPA, that provide career development opportunities for individuals in SA. I believe the model developed from this study could serve as a topic area for workshops and conferences for mid to senior-level SA professionals looking to support entry-level professionals and build on retention in their departments. The categories within the model, including supervision and evaluation, can also be used as topic areas for workshops and conferences for individuals at all levels in SA. Additionally, graduate students and entry-level professionals often are not aware of the necessary components needed to succeed in the field. Presenting this model at regional and national associations could provide the context graduate student and entry-level professionals need to persist in the field. This model presented at regional and national conferences has a two-fold effect. First, it is a way to introduce the model to the field and test the effectiveness of the community. Secondly, all professionals could benefit from

this career development model since, as mentioned earlier in the chapter, all stakeholders must participate in the model for the career development model to succeed.

The findings of this study can also be added to graduate school curricula, possibly as an elective that prepares women graduate students to navigate through their first five years in their new SA positions. According to the career development model I developed, graduate students must know how to enter the field with the necessary prerequisites, including identifying needs, knowing their motivation, and being willing to learn. If these are identified during the graduate program, an entry-level professional might have a smoother transition into the first phase of the model. This implication concerns that SA grad students may already be working in the field through assistantships or practicums while enrolled in graduate programs. If one counts those years within the graduate program while working, they would be further in their first five years in the field. While I suggest this model be implemented in graduate programs, it can also be introduced for any level of professionals, specifically existing professionals, as they advocate for themselves. Although this model focuses on entry-level professionals, I believe it can be transferrable for those ready to persist through the mid- to senior levels.

Entry-level professional women will benefit from mentoring programs implemented by the department. As women are known for their nurturing behavior, and as I mentioned above, they may be taken advantage of by the SA field, why not use this behavior at the peer level. Nurturing, supporting, and mentoring entry-level professional women might provide the necessary assistance needed for the population to continue in the field. Another practice can be introducing a better onboarding program for all entry-level professionals. Leslie recommended a mandatory onboarding program that implements all necessary factors when starting a position. The models discovered through the *SEE ME* model can be used as an onboarding tool for SA

departments when introducing entry-level professionals to their department and the field and would be helpful for their persistence.

Theoretical and Empirical Implications

This study has various implications that can provide context for how this research and findings fit within existing literature, current theories, and the SA field. Theoretically, the study has extended the current SA professional's theories that focus on student development and have shed new light on how these theories can be used for professionals in the field. Empirically, this study extends previous research and bridges the literature gap for SA. The following discussion discovers the theoretical and empirical implications of the research and what emerged from the findings that can contribute to previous research.

Theoretical

The purpose of this study was to challenge and extend many of the current SA profession theories that focused on student development, specifically cognitive (Belenky et al., 1986), environmental (Evans et al., 2009), identity (Josselson, 1994), and moral theories (Gilligan, 1993). The first theoretical implication derived from my study was that entry-level SA women professionals continue to conform their own experiences to others in the field. This verifies how these women process and understand information through comparative thinking and symbolic representation (Evans et al., 2009; Gallos, 1995). Specifically, Belenky et al.'s women's way of thinking theory asserts that women tend to conform to men's experiences to adapt to their environments. My research extends this theory specifically to entry-level SA women professionals.

Cognitive theories identify how people process and understand information through comparative, symbolic, and logical structures (Evans et al., 2009; Gallos, 1995). This study

illuminates how entry-level professionals can grow in the field without conforming to the current culture in the department and institution (see Appendix S). Belenky et al. (1986) believed that women are expected to conform to their own experiences to relate to men's experiences. As identified in Chapter Two, Belenky et al.'s limitation was that the study focused solely on women leaders who never attended college, and the participants of this study were all college-educated women. While the participants of this study did not specifically indicate conformity, they did mention the challenges they encountered while attempting to receive expectations during their onboarding experiences. Anecdotal observation is that SA still practices the outdated onboarding technique of shadowing. Some participants explained how department chairs and supervisors would have them shadow their colleague or supervisor instead of taking the time to train them properly (see Appendices T and U). Since I can recall working in the field, this technique has been highly utilized, and no progress has occurred to change techniques to assist better the new women professionals entering the field. Many questions arise, including (a) If entry-level professional women are expected to shadow their peers, are they shadowing the best behavior? (b) If this technique suggests shadowing the behavior of your current supervisors, how can we as SA professionals be certain the behavior being shadowed is beneficial. This study has shown that many traditional style onboarding practices use conforming techniques when SA introduces new innovative ways to provide the best training and support for the new professionals in the field.

The second theoretical implication for this study extends Sanford's (1967) theory of challenge and support, which claimed that student success relates to balancing challenging them in the curriculum and supporting them in the environment. My research applies Sanford's theory to a new population by providing a career development model that incorporates a balance of

challenge and support to SA professionals (see Appendix X). This career development model was grounded in data collected from relevant stakeholders involved who had experience in persisting in the field. The career development model in Figure 6 demonstrates this by providing applicable times when it is appropriate to support the entry-level professional and when it is appropriate to challenge them.

The third theoretical implication for this study expands on how women focus on relationships and how women benefit from solid supervision and mentorship. This research extends Gilligan's (1993) theory by providing a theme within the career development model related to supervision and how supervision must incorporate relationship-building for the woman professional to develop by building connections (see Appendix S). Specifically, the study extends on Gilligan's theory of women's moral development where Gilligan asserted that women tend to focus solely on relationships with others and how those relationships impact one's understanding of self (Evans et al., 2009). Lastly, an essential theoretical significance to this study was the lack of career development models focusing on entry-level professional women. My research offers a model as a foundational framework to extend previous research and provide the proper support, resources, and skills needed for entry-level SA women professionals to persist in the field.

Empirical

This study bridges the gap between literature on leadership development opportunities for women professionals and literature on SA needs at institutions while navigating through their first five years in the profession. Current literature has only identified the current challenges and barriers women face and how women leaders have obtained the leadership role (Antoniou & Aggelou, 2019; Fitzgerald, 2013; Glass & Cook, 2018; Longman & Anderson, 2011; Young &

McLeod, 2001). However, the literature lacks the necessary components on overcoming the challenges to move into a senior leadership position. Participants have shared that to succeed; one must enter the field with an open mind, master the position, and evaluate if the position is the right fit for them to persist. The developed career development model demonstrates the essential elements for the persistence of entry-level SA women professionals beyond their first five years.

Limitations and Delimitations

There were intentional delimitations that I chose to narrow the scope of the study and set boundaries. First, I limited participants to entry-, mid-, and senior-level professionals from regionally accredited universities in the northeast and southeast regions. The rationale for this decision was based on convenience, generalizability, and diversity (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Knigge & Cope, 2006; Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019). Convenience had a two-fold justification; first, I am located in the northeast region, it was easier for me to travel if necessary. Second, accessibility was at the forefront of this study for any participants who needed assistance. Diversity was also considered as I chose regionally accredited universities because they were projected to have a more diverse student and staff population. They are also known to have a more student-centered focus and have a reputation of staff speaking more freely about their experiences in the field (Bowen et al., 2009; Boyne, 2002; Feeney & Stritch, 2019).

Another delimitation of this study involved participant selection. Specifically, all entry-level professionals were women, while the mid to senior level participant group was open to men and women working in SA. My rationale was to focus on supporting the specific population of entry-level women professionals from the perspectives of those who will or have worked with them. If I were to open the study to entry-level professional men, the focus would be on the overall population, not specific to women in the field. However, I allowed men to participate in

the study as mid to senior-level participant group because they have had experience working with entry-level women, which justifies experiencing the same phenomenon as the other participants. However, mid to senior-level participants, regardless of gender, had to work in the field for more than 15 years. I decided to protect the integrity of the study and give enough time for the participants to have the most experiences.

There were a handful of limitations that occurred during this study. One limitation was the number of participants between entry and mid to senior-level professionals. Despite various recruiting efforts and platforms, I only received nine entry-level professional participants. Compared to my 13 participants in the mid to senior-level group, my perspective from entry-level professionals was limited. It is possible that additional information could have been observed if I had additional entry-level professionals participating. Another limitation was the lack of current research for this topic, which led to my focus. As this study needed to be the foundation for future studies, my questions were limited to generic rather than women-specific questions. As I could not ask women-specific questions, the research resulted in a model that was not gender-specific. Although the theory that emerged from the study will be beneficial for future research, it is limited to the findings from this study only.

Lastly, a limitation was the lack of participation in focus groups. Initially, I projected facilitating two to three focus groups from my participant pool. Despite my efforts, I could only get one focus group of participants. This was due to scheduling differences, inconvenience factors, or just participants not wanting to participate in a group setting. If I were to facilitate multiple focus groups, I could have obtained additional information for the study.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study examined the necessary career development opportunities for an entry-level woman to succeed in the SA field. The data collected from the participants from this study provided a glimpse into what awareness, knowledge, and skills are needed to persist in the field after the first five years. Many of the themes and categories that emerged from this study were rich with essential information that provided a framework for offering the appropriate support and guidance needed to succeed; however, there are some areas of recommendation for future research. One area I recommend would be widening the scope of the study. Although the study focused solely on women in SA, many of the findings were non-gender specific and could be used for men who are entry-level professionals. This being said, interviewing both men and women entry-level professionals could develop a more holistic approach and findings.

Conversely, I recommend continuing this study and focusing on women-specific issues and concerns. As I stated earlier, I was limited in my questions as this was the first study of its kind. I recommend focusing more on women's specific needs, barriers, and conflicts (i.e., motherhood and role conflict). Another recommendation is to replicate my current study as a larger-scale study. I could only interview 23 total participants; if this study was expanded to a larger scale, it might enrich the current data and findings.

Another recommendation I have for future research is to study how graduate schools prepare entry-level professionals in the field. Although it was an outlier to this study, graduate preparedness programs could help support entry-level professionals when entering the field. It would be interesting to continue developing the current model created in this study by incorporating additional themes, including graduate programs and their role in supporting this population. Another area to consider is outside the realm of SA and researching other areas of

education, including elementary and secondary teachers and administrators, college professors, and education as a whole. As of right now, there is a retention concern across education, and I recommend digging deeper in the research to see if it is more than just a fiscal issue but also an environmental issue.

During my preliminary research on this study's topic, I noticed many phenomenological studies focusing on the women senior-level professionals within SA and their journey within the field; however, there were not many previous studies on the specific population of women entry-level professionals. A recommendation is to study this population through either phenomenology or a case study. The two recommended qualitative designs focus on the specific people and the phenomenon. Another approach to this study is to make it a quantitative research design. The qualitative focus on participants' perspectives limits the number of participants to interview and is time-consuming. Transitioning this topic to a qualitative approach may interpret findings differently and gather more information from a larger population of participants. A quantitative study can test the veracity of my current model. Another potential for future research may be to determine the effectiveness of the developed model from this study. The model was created using the data collected and related literature but was not tested to see if it would benefit higher education institutions. Research is an ongoing process, and this study only touched on the issue of retention for entry-level professionals in SA. With these recommendations, there could be potential to research this topic in further depth.

Conclusion

Career development refers to many experiences, including education, participation, communication, and socialization related to an individual's work (Fuller et al., 2017). The literature identified career development opportunities as an essential tool to foster the appropriate

knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed to succeed within the field (Fuller et al., 2017; Moodly & Toni, 2017). For women in SA, these opportunities may be limited or not accessible to gain the right experience to succeed after their first five years. This grounded theory study emerged the theory of women's early career development in SA. The theory emphasizes a continual process where entering the field through which an individual and their department collaboration can achieve professional persistence through mastery and evaluation. Through career development, an entry-level professional woman can be exposed to the foundational components needed to establish the necessary skills and abilities to master the position to evaluate their aspirations and goals to plan their career after their first five years.

Throughout the study, participants spoke encouraging words and advice for those entry-level women working in SA. Amy shared, "This field can be difficult at times; you can feel alone and discouraged- but do not give up. You picked student affairs for a reason; remember that reason." From Julie, "We sometimes forget why we chose to work in student affairs, we get consumed by the busy work- do not forget your 'why' and prosper on." From Lucy, "Connect outside your office, network to others in our field, and feel part of something bigger than your four walls." Lastly, Pauline emphasized, "You are not alone; look around; we are here for you."

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Appendix A IRB Approval

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

September 15, 2021

Michele Magliulo
Kristy Motte

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY21-22-81 Wear Your Shoes, Ladies; There Will Be Glass Everywhere: A Grounded Theory Study Of Aspiring Women Leaders In Higher Education

Dear Michele Magliulo, Kristy Motte,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:


The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,


Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

Appendix B
Invitation to Participate: Entry-Level

Dear [Recipient],

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Ph.D. degree. The purpose of my study is to examine the ideal components for a career development opportunity for entry-level student affairs professionals, specifically women, and how this opportunity can persist in the face of the personal, professional, and institutional barriers that prevent women from continuing their career in student affairs and acquiring senior-level positions. I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must currently be working in student affairs and have done so for no more than five years. Participants will be asked to participate in two interviews that will take around 60-75 minutes each. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please click here <https://www.surveylegend.com/s/3f8s> to complete a screening survey. If you meet the participant criteria, I will contact you to schedule an interview.

A consent document will be sent to you by email if you meet the study criteria and choose to participate. The consent document contains additional information about my research. You will need to sign the consent form and return it before or at the time of the interview.

Lastly, please forward this email to others you think may be interested in participating.

Sincerely,

Michele Magliulo
Doctoral Candidate

Appendix C
Invitation to Participate: Mid- to Senior-Level

Dear [Recipient],

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Ph.D. degree. The purpose of my study is to examine the ideal components for a career development opportunity for entry-level student affairs professionals, specifically women, and how this opportunity can persist in the face of the personal, professional, and institutional barriers that prevent women from continuing their career in student affairs and acquiring senior-level positions. I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must currently be working in student affairs and have done so for more than 15 years. Participants will be asked to participate in two interviews that will take around 60-75 minutes each. Once the individual interviews are completed, you may be selected to participate in a focus group. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please click here <https://www.surveylegend.com/s/3f8s> to complete a screening survey. If you meet the participant criteria, I will contact you to schedule an interview.

A consent document will be sent to you by email if you meet the study criteria and choose to participate. The consent document contains additional information about my research. You will need to sign the consent form and return it before or at the time of the interview.

Lastly, please forward this email to others you think may be interested in participating.

Sincerely,

Michele Magliulo
Doctoral Candidate

Appendix D Informed Consent

Title of the Project: WEAR YOUR SHOES, LADIES; THERE WILL BE GLASS EVERYWHERE: A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY OF ASPIRING WOMEN LEADERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Principal Investigator: Michele Magliulo, Liberty University, School of Education

Invitation to be part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be either a female, entry-level student affairs professional (0–5 years) or a male or female, mid- (6–15 years) to senior-level professional (15+ years). Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to participate in this research.

What is the study about, and why is it being done?

The purpose of this grounded theory study will be to develop a model for a career development program for women student affairs professionals based on the perspectives of current entry-level, mid-level, and senior-level student affairs professionals from regionally accredited universities. This model will help provide career development opportunities for new women student affairs professionals to feel connected to their institutions, desire to advance in the field and feel motivated to continue their careers in student affairs.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Participate in an individual interview that will take about 60–75 minutes of your time. The interview will be recorded and transcribed.
2. All individual interview participants will be asked to participate in a second-round interview, around 60 to 75 minutes of your time. The interview will be recorded and transcribed, and you will be asked to respond to the questions honestly.
3. Randomly selected mid- (6–15 years/male or female) to senior-level professional (15+ years/male or female) participants will be asked to participate in a 60-minute focus group that will be recorded and transcribed.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from this study.

Benefits to society include a better understanding of supporting entry-level women professionals pursuing a career in student affairs. Entry-level women professionals may benefit from this study as they reflect on the knowledge, skills, and behaviors entry-level student affairs professionals possess during their first five years within their career. Institutions, current mid-to senior-level professionals, students, and the overall community will also benefit as entry-level professionals' attrition rates and burnout rates decrease because this will reduce the significant challenges and barriers this population incurs when support systems are invested in this population.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews and focus groups will be recorded and transcribed. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings. Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years and then erased.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other focus group members may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you decide to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and not included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Michele Magliulo. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact Michele Magliulo. You may also contact the researcher's faculty advisor, Kristy Motte.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University

Your Consent

By signing this document, you agree to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy of the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the above information.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record/video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

Appendix E
Demographic Profile Survey

<https://www.surveylegend.com/s/3f8s>

1. First and Last Name
2. Preferred Email (this will be the contact that will be used to reach out to potential candidates)
3. Gender
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
 - c. Non-binary
 - d. Transgender
 - e. Intersex
 - f. I prefer not to say
4. Age
 - a. Under 20
 - b. 20–24
 - c. 25–29
 - d. 30–34
 - e. 35–39
 - f. 40–44
 - g. 45–50
 - h. Over 50
5. Ethnicity/Race
 - a. Latinx
 - b. American Indian or Alaska Native
 - c. Asian
 - d. Black
 - e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - f. White
 - g. Other
 - h. I prefer not to say
6. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? If currently enrolled, highest degree received.
 - a. High school diploma, diploma, or the equivalent
 - b. Associate Degree
 - c. Bachelor's Degree
 - d. Master's Degree
 - e. Doctorate Degree
7. Include Majors Received (Bachelors-Doctoral)
8. Current Stage In Your S.A. Career
 - a. Entry-level (0–5 Years)
 - b. Mid-level (6–15 Years)
 - c. Senior-level (15+ Years)
 - d. No Longer in Student Affairs (i.e., career change, academic affairs, and faculty)

9. Current Professional Title (i.e., Director, Dean, VP, Hall Director, etc.)

10. Current Institution Name

11. Current Institution State

- | | | |
|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| a. Alabama | r. Louisiana | ii. Ohio |
| b. Alaska | s. Maine | jj. Oklahoma |
| c. Arizona | t. Maryland | kk. Oregon |
| d. Arkansas | u. Massachusetts | ll. Pennsylvania |
| e. California | v. Michigan | mm. Rhode Island |
| f. Colorado | w. Minnesota | nn. South Carolina |
| g. Connecticut | x. Mississippi | oo. South Dakota |
| h. Delaware | y. Missouri | pp. Tennessee |
| i. Florida | z. Montana | qq. Texas |
| j. Georgia | aa. Nebraska | rr. Utah |
| k. Hawaii | bb. Nevada | ss. Vermont |
| l. Idaho | cc. New Hampshire | tt. Virginia |
| m. Illinois | dd. New Jersey | uu. Washington |
| n. Indiana | ee. New Mexico | vv. West Virginia |
| o. Iowa | ff. New York | ww. Wisconsin |
| p. Kansas | gg. North Carolina | xx. Wyoming |
| q. Kentucky | hh. North Dakota | |

12. Type of Institution currently working at

- a. 4-year private institution
- b. 4-year public institution
- c. Community college
- d. Other

13. Supervision Experience- Past and Current (Select all that apply)

- a. Paraprofessionals
- b. Entry-Level professionals
- c. Mid-Level professionals
- d. Senior-Level professionals
- e. Supervise outside student affairs
- f. No supervision experiences

Appendix F
Social Media Platform: Facebook

ATTENTION STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS: I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education degree at Liberty University. The purpose of my study is to examine the ideal components for a career development opportunity for entry-level student affairs professionals, specifically women, based on the perspectives of entry, mid-, and senior-level professionals, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study. To participate, you must be either an entry-level student affairs professional woman (0–5 years) or a mid- (6–15 years/male or female) to senior-level professional (15+ years/male or female). If selected, you will participate in 2 interviews that will take around 60 to 75 minutes each. Mid- to senior-level professional participants may also be selected to participate in a 60-minute focus group. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential. If you would like to participate and meet the study criteria, please click the link provided at the end of this post to complete a screening survey. If you meet the study criteria, I will contact you to schedule an interview. A consent document will be sent to you if you meet the study criteria and choose to participate.

To take the survey, click here: <https://www.surveylegend.com/s/3f8s>

Appendix G Interview Request

Hello, [Recipient],

Thank you so much for completing the demographic profile survey and your willingness to participate in an individual interview.

I am contacting you to set up an interview. Please send me your available times (general days/times), and then we can narrow down a specific date and time we can virtually meet? Mondays, Fridays, and Saturdays tend to work best for me, but I can work around whatever is best for you.

The interview will take about 60 to 75 minutes to complete and will be recorded and transcribed. This interview will be virtual, using the Zoom platform. If you prefer another platform, please let me know when responding to this email with your availability.

If you wish not to participate at any time, that is no problem at all. Just please email me indicating you will no longer like to participate.

Thank you again for your time and your assistance with my dissertation research.

Michele Magliulo
Doctoral Candidate
Liberty University

Appendix H
Interview Request: Follow Up

Dear [Recipient]:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Ph.D. degree. An email was sent to you inviting you to participate in a research study. This follow-up email is being sent to remind you to complete the screening survey if you would like to participate and have not already done so. The deadline for participation is [Date].

Participants will be asked to participate in 2 interviews that will take around 60 to 75 minutes each. Once the individual interviews are completed, you may be selected to participate in a 1-hour focus group. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please click here <https://www.surveylegend.com/s/3f8s> to complete a screening survey. If you meet the participant criteria, I will contact you to schedule an interview

A consent document will be sent to you by email if you meet the study criteria and choose to participate. The consent document contains additional information about my research. You will need to sign the consent form and return it before or at the time of the interview.

Sincerely,

Michele Magliulo
Doctoral Candidate
Liberty University

Appendix I

Memo Writing Sample

Memo 10/5/2021

While discussing integration to the university, several participants have mentioned the responsibility of the supervisor, department, and the individual. They indicate that all three play an essential role when entry-level onboarding professionals. When asking follow-up questions on the ideal expectations or responsibilities, they all express uncertainty as they have not experienced successful onboarding or integration to the university.

Initially, I expected to find a link between the institution's onboarding process and integration. Although it does play a part, it appears that the relationships, connections, and expectations that relate to the initial onboarding process are what participants consistently referred to.

Across the board, entry and mid to senior, believe entry-level women leave the field because of the lack of connections and investment they make at the institution right away. If they do not feel connected, they become frustrated and annoyed and tend to leave the position because they are not valued.

Morgan, Susan, and Liam brought up a good point regarding shepherding entry-level professionals. Liam explained that as he has been a supervisor and has been supervised by women, he believes supervision needs to change from overseeing the department and the entry-level professionals to taking responsibility for them and their growth. Susan brought up a similar concept that investment plays a key point when supervising entry-levels. If the supervisor knows the entry-level professional may remain in the field, they feel more inclined to invest and be responsible for them.

I want to look more into the connection related to the term shepherding, which has stood out to me. It seems that there is a connection between onboarding, integration, and supervision. I already see connections between what is missing from the entry-level perspective and what needs to be done by the mid to senior level.

Appendix J
Interview Guide
 Open-Ended Interview Guide
 First Round Interviews: Entry-Level Professionals

Thank you for participating in my study. The purpose of this grounded theory study will be to develop a model for a career development program for women student affairs professionals based on the perspectives of current entry-level, mid-level, and senior-level student affairs professionals from regionally accredited universities. This model will help provide career development opportunities for new women student affairs professionals to feel connected to their institutions, desire to advance in the field and feel motivated to continue their careers in student affairs. I want to begin today by asking for your permission to record and transcribe this individual interview? (If yes, proceed).

Opening Questions

While questions one through three do not directly address the research questions studied, they are essential for the interview process to help relax and make the participant feel comfortable (Charmaz, 2014). These questions will provide context for the rest of the interview questions (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The questions will also help the participant feel relaxed and promote further discussion once the interview gets further into the questions.

4. *Describe to me your entry into student affairs?*
5. *What was the driving motivation to pursue the career?*
6. *Who (titles only) contributed to your decision to pursue student affairs?*

Graduate Program

Research believes graduate programs play a role in providing the educational foundation for professionals to be prepared for work-life balance (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008; Young, 2019). Additionally, the literature identifies that practical experience (i.e., assistantships,

practicums, internships) is essential for professional growth over core course requirements (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008; Young, 2019). Questions four through seven provide a foundational context of where the entry-level professional came from and their support before their first professional position (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). This provides the researcher an understanding of the participant's support and guidance before their program ended and their expectations from the field.

7. *Describe your graduate program in student affairs (or related field)?*
8. *What experiences in the program better prepared you for your entry-level position?*
9. *If applicable, how would you describe your connections to other students in your degree program?*
10. *How would you describe your connections to your professors?*

Onboarding

Current literature and a national study of staffing practices in student affairs have found that often student affairs professionals are given cursory treatment and lack new employee orientation, onboarding programs, trainings, and preparedness programs (Carpenter & Stimpson, 2007; Davis & Cooper, 2017; Hall-Jones et al., 2018; Mather et al., 2009; Womack, 2020; Young, 2019). Questions eight and nine provide context on the current entry-level professionals' onboarding experience. This can relate to trainings, introductions, formal meetings, informal meetings, etc.

11. *When onboarding your first position, what orientations or trainings did you have if any, that prepared you for your position?*
12. *What experiences and trainings do you believe have better prepared you for your current role?*

Personal Barriers

To comprehend what contributes to a women's professional advancements, one must identify the personal barriers women face daily in societal settings. Individual experiences and personality traits may impede one's motivation to progress in the workplace (Diehl, 2018; Heinowitz et al., 2012; McNair et al., 2013). Personal barriers are essential to understanding where entry-level professionals' challenges lie. Although this is a minor participant pool, this can build a foundation for women entry-level professionals to support the field.

13. Tell me, how do you handle, if any, personal barriers you have faced while in the profession?

14. Who, if anyone, was involved in overcoming your barriers?

Supervision

Entry-level SA professionals leave the field every year (Davis & Cooper, 2017; Shupp & Arminio, 2012; Tull, 2006), and one common reason for this attrition is job satisfaction (Artale, 2020; Christnacht & Sullivan, 2020; Coddling, 2019; Davidson, 2012). To further understand how supervision plays a role in the attrition rate for entry-level professionals, it is essential to understand their supervision experience so far in the field and what essential components have had a positive and negative impact on them.

15. How have your current supervisors influenced your experience in student affairs?

16. What are essential components a supervisor needs to support entry-level professionals?

Professional Barriers

Although women face many personal barriers, professional and institutional barriers can play a role in the lack of women leaders in higher education institutions. According to Bartel (2018), while gender equality at universities is changing slowly, women leaders in higher education face many influences and biases that are still in place. As entry-level professionals are currently in the

field within the time frame of possibly leaving the field, it is essential to know what professional barriers they face and compare them to the current literature.

17. Tell me about how you learned to handle, if any, professional/institutional barriers you have faced?

18. Who, if anyone, was involved in overcoming your barriers?

Career Development

Research has found that job stress and burnout have negative consequences for work-related issues, such as lower career development of staff, and found that participating in career development can result in career sustaining behavior (Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017; Kuk & Banning, 2009; Mullen et al., 2018; Muller et al., 2018; Taub & McEwen, 2006). For this section of questions, it is imperative to understand where entry-level professionals are in their career development and how they define career development. It can be interpreted in many ways.

19. What career development opportunities have you participated in?

20. What is your perception of career development?

Future in SA

The literature on women in higher education leadership has numerous consistencies, including environmental and personal factors that affect women in their positions in higher education (Diehl, 2018; Ford, 2016; McKenzie, 2018; Teague, 2015). While the criteria are to interview those in the field within the first five years, some candidates started their position within a year, and some were just finishing their fourth or going in their fifth year. It will be critical to understand where they lie in the commitment of SA and their feelings towards the profession as they are currently in the population I am studying.

21. *What trainings or experiences do your current institution provide to new professionals within the field within the first five years?*
22. *How would you describe your commitment to the student affairs profession?*
23. *Where do you see yourself in 5 years?*
24. *Where do you see yourself in 10 years?*
25. *What do you think contributes to your remaining in the profession?*

Closing Question

It is essential to understand the support needed for entry-level SA professionals and how it should be delivered (Barham & Winston, 2006; Davis & Cooper, 2017; Shupp et al., 2018).

26. *Is there anything else we have not covered today that you think is essential to tell someone who is just starting in student affairs to help them persist? And if so, what?*

Appendix K
Interview Guide
Open-Ended Interview Guide
First Round Interviews- Mid and Senior-level Professionals

Thank you for participating in my study. The purpose of this grounded theory study will be to develop a model for a career development program for women student affairs professionals based on the perspectives of current entry-level, mid-level, and senior-level student affairs professionals from regionally accredited universities. This model will help provide career development opportunities for new women student affairs professionals to feel connected to their institutions, desire to advance in the field and feel motivated to continue their careers in student affairs. I want to begin today by asking for your permission to record and transcribe this individual interview? (If yes, proceed).

Opening Questions

While questions one through three do not directly address the research questions studied, they are essential for the interview process to help relax and make the participant feel comfortable (Charmaz, 2014). These questions will provide context for the rest of the interview questions (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The questions will also help the participant feel relaxed and promote further discussion once the interview gets further into the questions.

34. Describe to me how you came to work in student affairs?

35. What was the motivation to pursue the profession?

Personal Barriers

Individual experiences and personality traits may impede one's motivation to progress in the workplace (Diehl, 2014; Heinowitz et al., 2012; McNair et al., 2013). To comprehend what contributes to a women's professional advancements, one must identify the personal barriers women face daily in societal settings. While this question was asked for entry-level, it is also

imperative to understand what barriers mid and senior-level professionals experience and see if there is a connection between what current entry-level professionals are experienced and what mid and senior-level experiences. If barriers are similar, then developmentally, entry-level professionals can benefit from achieving how mid and senior overcame those barriers.

36. When did you first experience any personal barriers while in the profession?

37. Can you tell me the story of overcoming the barrier?

38. How did you happen to overcome these barriers?

39. Who helped you overcome this barrier?

Institutional/Professional Barriers

Although women face many personal barriers, professional and institutional barriers can play a role in the lack of women leaders in higher education institutions. According to Bartel (2018), while gender equality at universities is changing slowly, women leaders in higher education face many influences and biases that are still in place. This section is similar to personal barriers; however, it is essential to understand what institutional and professional barriers mid and senior-level encounter to help support entry-level who may experience the same barriers as they progress in the field.

40. When did you first experience any professional barriers while in the profession?

41. Can you tell me the story of overcoming the barrier(s)?

42. How did you happen to overcome these barriers?

43. Who helped you overcome these barriers?

Career Development

Research has found that job stress and burnout have negative consequences for work-related issues, such as lower career development of staff, and found that participating in career

development can result in career sustaining behavior (Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017; Kuk & Banning, 2009; Mullen et al., 2018; Muller et al., 2018; Taub & McEwen, 2006). For this section of questions, it is imperative to understand how mid and senior-level professionals perceive career development and see if they are at the same level of understanding as entry-level professionals.

44. Could you describe the events that led to you becoming a mid/senior-level professional in student affairs?

45. What contributed to your success in your current position?

46. How have you developed as an individual during your career?

47. How did your advancement into mid to senior-level positions intertwine with your personal life?

48. How would you describe how you viewed career development before becoming a mid to senior-level professional?

49. How do you view career development now?

50. What is your perception of the way entry-level professionals view career development?

Mentors

As supervision was asked for entry-level, mentors were asked for mid to senior-level as literature states supervision plays a key in the development of professionals. If mentors were previous supervisors, this might be a key to what entry-level professionals need (Tull, 2006).

51. Who contributed to the preparedness from entry to mid/senior-level position?

Men

As the criteria allowed men to participate in the study, questions focused on specifically their role in the growth of entry-level professionals, if they have had any women mentors, and

what contributes to success in SA when it comes to women progressing in the field (Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009; Kaley & Deutsch, 2018).

52. What mentors did you have that have prepared you for your current role?

53. In your opinion, what are the markers of successful mid to senior-level women in student affairs?

54. In your opinion, what are the markers of barriers and challenges entry-level women in student affairs face?

Leadership Style

Women's leadership styles and the impact gender has on leadership have become two main focuses for many recent studies, but little is studied on how women leaders lead (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Hopkins et al., 2008; Hoyt, 2010; Oakley, 2000). It was essential for the study to understand current mid-and senior-level leadership styles and see if any similarities could benefit entry-level professionals as they continued in the field.

55. How would you describe your leadership style?

56. What leadership style did you find facilitated your career progression?

57. What key leadership styles do you believe are essential for entry-level professionals to progress in the field?

Experiences and Trainings

As literature has stated, institutions are developing and implementing strategies to bring awareness and attention to providing opportunities for advancement for women leaders (Blackhurst, 2000; Eagly et al., 2000). These questions were focused on seeing if there have been any opportunities implemented at the participants' campuses. Additionally, these questions

focused on the participants' progress in their profession and what led to their success (i.e., training, supervision, workshops, personal growth, etc.).

58. What experiences and trainings have you had before being in your current role that you believe better prepared you for your current position?

59. What are the support systems at your institution?

60. Why do entry-level professionals leave the field within their first five years?

61. Tell me how you learned to handle challenges and barriers in the student affairs field?

62. What positive changes have occurred in your life since you became a mid/senior-level professional?

63. What negative changes, if any, have occurred in your life since you became a mid/senior-level professional?

64. How does your institution develop new professionals and prepare them to become mid-level professionals?

Closing Question

It is essential to understand the support needed for entry-level SA professionals and how it should be delivered (Barham & Winston, 2006; Davis & Cooper, 2017; Shupp et al., 2018).

1. What advice would you give to women just beginning in the student affairs profession?

2. Is there anything else we have not covered today that you think is essential to tell someone who is just starting in student affairs to help them persist? And if so, what?

Appendix L
Interview Guide
Open-Ended Interview Guide
Second Round Interview- Entry-Level Professionals

Reflect

When questions related to personal and professional barriers, many themes came up about reflecting on experiences and opportunities that current entry-level professionals experienced. Since many first-round interviews gravitated towards reflection, this was a focus wanted to address during second-round interviews.

1. *Describe something you have learned during your time in your recent position?*
2. *What is something you still believe you lack professionally?*
3. *Tell me about the strengths that you discovered or developed through any training, career development, or orientation.*

Supervision

These questions were developed to mirror what codes, themes, and categories evolve from the first-round interviews. Specifically, supervision and mentorship were focused on both groups of participants. These questions target what specific areas of supervision and mentorship are needed for entry-level professionals to feel supported. Supervision with mentorship is essential for entry-level professionals to be supported (Davidson, 2012; Davis & Cooper, 2017; Dinise-Halter, 2017; Tull, 2006).

4. *What feedback has your supervisor provided you that has helped you in the field?*
5. *What opportunities has your supervisor provided you?*
6. *What characteristics and skills does your supervisor have that you feel are essential to your success in the field?*

Integration

Many first-round interviews brought up integration and the importance of being intuitive when providing entry-level professionals opportunities (Bartel, 2018). Second-round interviews must collect further data specific to integration and what techniques and practices each department needs to prepare for their entry-level professionals.

7. *What specific components of your onboarding do you believe were essential for your commitment to your continued work in the field?*
8. *What components of your onboarding were lacking that could have provided you more opportunities to feel more valued?*
9. *What does integration into the position look like to you?*

Success

Success was brought up numerous times during first-round interviews, and it is imperative to deep more profound into the meaning of success. Success can relate to future goals and investment in the field (Arbo & Benneworth, 2007).

10. *Can you describe success?*
11. *What do you need to succeed?*
12. *What do you want to succeed?*
13. *Thinking back on what you have learned during your time at your department/institution, what has contributed to your work this year?*
14. *What trainings, workshops, or interactions have given you the proper knowledge and skills that have made you feel successful?*

Institution/Department Role

Many first-round interviews reflected on the institution and department's responsibility in supporting entry-level professionals. Seasoned SA professionals must share the responsibility to

train their new colleagues through supervision and training programs (Davidson, 2012; Davis & Cooper, 2017; Dinise-Halter, 2017; Tull, 2006).

15. What do you believe is the role of the institution or department when onboarding a new professional?

16. What do you believe is the role of the institution or department when it comes to continuous training?

17. What role does your department play in supporting you as a woman in the field?

Investment

Many codes related to the investment of mid to senior-level professionals must have when supporting entry-level professionals. With investment for entry-level professionals, the questions focus on the investment in the field and their responsibility to play a role in career development. Many stakeholders were identified to play a role in career development investment (Arbo & Benneworth, 2007).

18. How invested are you in the field of student affairs?

19. How confident are you to continue in the field as a mid to senior-level professional?

Appendix M
Interview Guide
Open-Ended Interview Guide
Second Round Interviews- Mid and Senior-level Professionals

Supervision/Mentorship

Seasoned SA professionals must share the responsibility to train their new colleagues through supervision and training programs (Davidson, 2012; Davis & Cooper, 2017; Dinise-Halter, 2017; Tull, 2006). These questions were developed to mirror what codes, themes, and categories evolve from the first-round interviews. These questions target what specific areas of supervision and mentorship are needed for entry-level professionals to feel supported. Specifically, supervision and mentorship were focused on both groups of participants, but specifically on the mid and senior-level professional group.

1. *What is the difference between supervision and mentorship?*
2. *What role does a supervisor play in mentoring entry-level professionals?*
3. *How does your supervision style provide guidance and support for women professionals?*
4. *How has your previous experienced prepared you to be a supportive supervisor?*

Investment

Many codes related to the investment of mid to senior-level professionals must have when supporting entry-level professionals. Many stakeholders were identified to play a role in career development investment (Arbo & Benneworth, 2007). With investment, these questions focused more on what strictly investment means and what training, workshops, and opportunities should be provided for entry-level professionals.

5. *What role does your institution or department play in supporting entry-level professionals?*

6. *What role should your institution or department play in supporting entry-level professionals?*
7. *What specific workshops or trainings are essential for entry-level women professionals to experience during their first five years in the field?*
8. *What do you believe is needed to get the institution and department involved in providing entry-level professionals?*

Individualized

One category that presented itself during the first round of interviews was how career development is individualized and how the needs for each entry-level professional may be different depending on their graduate program experiences, strengths, and mentality (Mohr, 2014; Powell, 2018).

9. *What awareness, knowledge, and skills do you believe are essential for an entry-level professional?*
10. *Are there specific characteristics women entry-level professionals need to continue in the field after their first five years, and if so, what are they?*

Integration

Many first-round interviews brought up integration and the importance of being intuitive when providing entry-level professionals opportunities (Bartel, 2018). Second-round interviews must collect further data specific to integration and what techniques and practices each department needs to prepare for their entry-level professionals.

11. *How can departments/institutions be more intuitive with providing entry-level professionals opportunities to integrate into the field?*
12. *What integration techniques/practices are essential for a department to incorporate?*

Career Development

Some training and career development seminar topics can be related to supervision, diversity, inclusion, advising and supporting, personal and ethical foundations, and leadership (Muller et al., 2018). However, this higher education opportunity may be the only career development aspiring SA professionals receive within their SA careers (Lindsay, 2014). To further understand what career development opportunities are needed, these questions focused on why there has been a disconnect between entry-level professionals' expectations for career development and what mid to senior-level are providing.

13. How do you define career development?

14. Why is there a disconnect between entry-level and mid/senior-level professional definitions of career development?

15. What career development opportunities are essential for entry-level professionals to feel connected to the department, institution, and the field?

Appendix N
Interview Guide
 Open-Ended Interview Guide
 Focus Groups with Mid and Senior-level Professionals

Many themes and categories were presented during the individual interviews that resemble a model for career development opportunities for entry-level professionals. The purpose of this focus group is to validate, adjust, alter, or identify any themes or outliers not presented during the individual interviews.

Entering the Position

The SA profession has one of the largest cohorts of new professionals entering the field each year, with nearly half of SA divisions' staff members as new (Johnson, 2017; Longman et al., 2018; Renn & Jessup-Anger-Anger, 2008; Whitford, 2020). However, new professionals exit the field as quickly as they enter, with attrition rates around 50–60% within the first five years (Marshall et al., 2016; Mullen et al., 2018; Renn & Hodges, 2007; Yates, 2019). The questions below were developed to focus on what components, stakeholders, and essential factors were needed to contribute to an entry-level professional's success in entering the position with collaboration and support.

1. *What are the critical components for an entry-level professional to have when they begin a position in student affairs?*
2. *What are the essential factors a department needs to prepare for a new entry-level professional?*
3. *How would you describe the relationship between the entry-level professional and the department during the onboarding of the position?*
4. *What initial key characteristics does a woman entering the field of student affairs need?*

Mastering the Position

Finding ways to decrease the employee turnover and increase preparedness programs for a new cohort of leaders is essential for higher education institutions for numerous reasons (Glass & Cook, 2018; Longman, 2018; Marshall et al., 2016; Mullen et al., 2018; Rosser & Javinar, 2003; Tull, 2006). Evidence indicated a change between entering the field and mastering the field. The questions below focused on setting expectations, relationships, and exposure.

5. *Where do you believe a supervisory relationship falls when supporting entry-level professionals?*
6. *How is setting expectations when acclimating to an entry-level professional essential?*
7. *How is providing an opportunity for exposure essential for an entry-level professional?*

Evaluating the Position

Although the topic of the evaluation was not at the forefront of questions, the topic was continuously brought up amongst different participants. Questions focused on evaluation components that can provide the proper guidance for an entry-level professional to believe they are ready to persist in the field and what stakeholders play a role. The ten competencies include personal and ethical foundations, values, philosophy, and history, assessment, evaluation, and research, law, policy, and governance, organizational and human resources, leadership, social justice and inclusion, student learning and development, technology, and advising and supporting (Kuk & Banning, 2009; Muller et al., 2018).

8. *What evaluation components guide an entry-level professional to know if the field is right for them?*
9. *What have you done as a supervisor to evaluate entry-level professionals?*
10. *What components have you incorporated in your evaluations to provide support and feedback for entry-level professionals?*

Acclimating

The questions focused on many of the themes brought up during the individual interviews. Specifically, how to acclimate an entry-level professional to the department, position, and field. Within the context of entry-level SA women professionals acclimating to the field, stakeholders impacted include current mid to senior-level leaders, their families, community, and the students they serve (Burkinshaw & White, 2017; Covert, 2013; Davies et al., 2017).

- 11. What key characteristic differences have you seen in a women entry-level professional who stays in the field compared to those who have not?*
- 12. How would you provide the necessities for an entry-level professional to continue in the field for more than five years?*

Appendix O

Entry-level Initial Codes

1. "I felt I was drowning in work."
2. "I immediately started with no training."
3. "Intent vs. impact"
4. "Trial by fire"
5. Access: Technology: More available
6. Access: Technology: Resourceful
7. Access: Online opportunities
8. Access: Many career development organizations
9. Advocate: For a change
10. Advocate: For self
11. Advocate: For career development opportunities
12. Advocate: Need to take advantage of opportunities
13. Advocate: Put needs before work
14. Advocate: Speak up during meetings
15. Administration: Never met anyone higher than a supervisor
16. Administration: Supportive
17. Administration: Was not connected
18. Administration: Welcoming
19. Awareness: Self: Needed to change the institution
20. Awareness: Self: Was not the right position
21. Awareness: Self: Had to decide what needed on own
22. Awareness: Supervisor: With career development
23. Awareness: Supervisor: Knew was new in the position and needed patience
24. Awareness: Supervisor: Progressive
25. Awareness: Supervisor: Mythological
26. Assess: Opportunities: Available
27. Assess: Opportunities: Given
28. Assess: Personal: Growth
29. Assess: Personal: Worth
30. Autonomous
31. Anonymous: In the work
32. Background: Graduate program: Did not prepare me for my first job
33. Background: Undergrad: Did not know what to do after college
34. Background: Undergrad: Had supervisor introduce SA
35. Background: Undergrad: Was highly involved in leadership roles
36. Barrier: Lack of support amongst administration
37. Barrier: Small university with limited resources
38. Barrier: Getting fired
39. Barrier: Limited opportunities
40. Barrier: No training

41. Barrier: Unbalanced work-life balance
42. Barrier: Challenging work environment
43. Barrier: Sacrifices: Leaving family
44. Barrier: Sacrifices: Moving to a new state
45. Barrier: Sacrifices: Taking a job did not want, just to have a job
46. Barrier: Pandemic: COVID-19
47. Challenge: COVID: All online
48. Challenge: COVID: Could not meet new people
49. Challenge: Do not put needs first
50. Challenge: Force to pick the first job, do not have time to look into the fit
51. Challenge: The hiring process
52. Challenge: Live on positions
53. Challenge: Onboarding experience
54. Challenge: Entry-level all residential life
55. Challenge: Trusting peers
56. Challenge: Work-life balance
57. Collaboration: Environment
58. Collaboration: With other departments
59. Comfortable: In the department
60. Communication: Essential
61. Communication: Lack of any in the first position
62. Communication: None from administrators
63. Compartmentalized: Career Development
64. Compartmentalized: Training
65. Compartmentalized: Workshops
66. Confident: Self
67. Debrief: After each day of training
68. Defeated: Apply to other jobs
69. Defeated: Did not feel valued
70. Division
71. Environment
72. Environment: Communication: Between department chairs
73. Environment: Communication: Administration
74. Environment: Campus partners: Lack of emails or phone calls
75. Environment: Campus partners: Staying connected
76. Environment: Institutional
77. Environment: Peers
78. Excitement: Being able to help students
79. Excitement: Entering the field
80. Excitement: Flexible work schedule
81. Excitement: Getting a job right out of graduate school
82. Excitement: Starting a new job
83. Feedback: Essential

84. Feedback: Wanting more of it
85. Feedback: It was not appropriate timing
86. Feedback: Was not appropriately given
87. Fortunate: To have a job
88. Fortunate: To grow
89. Frustration
90. Frustration: Colleagues
91. Frustration: Environment: Unhealthy
92. Frustration: Environment: Workload
93. Frustration: Environment: Unsupportive supervisor
94. Frustration: Environment: Institutional: No introduction to campus
95. Frustration: Lack of supervision
96. Frustration: No support
97. Frustration: Thrown right into the position
98. Future: Looking at academic affairs
99. Future: Higher degree
100. Future: Professors are respected more
101. Future: Still in SA
102. Goal Setting: Short term
103. Goal Setting: Long term
104. Graduate Program: Core courses: Irrelevant
105. Graduate Program: Practicums and assistantships: Relevant and essential
106. Guidance: None
107. Guidance: Supervisor support
108. Impact: To students
109. Independent: Alone in office
110. Independent: Youngest: Given most work
111. Institutional: Fit
112. Integration: Work-life balance
113. Integration: Limited connections
114. Integration: Connection to peers
115. Intentional
116. Investment
117. Jarring
118. Justify
119. Knowledge: Graduate program: Assistantships
120. Knowledge: Graduate program: Core courses
121. Knowledge: Graduate program: Practicum experiences
122. Leadership
123. Mentoring: Supervisor
124. Mentoring: Outside the position
125. Mentoring: Essential: Felt connected
126. Mentoring: Essential: Motivated

127. Mentoring: Essential: Can ask questions
128. Mentoring: Limited: Do not have anyone
129. Mentoring: Limited: No one willing
130. Misleading
131. Motivation: Future endeavors
132. Motivation: Working with students
133. Motivation: Family
134. Motivation: Pandemic: Lucky to have a job
135. Motivation: Pandemic: See what could happen
136. Networking
137. Obligation: To the profession
138. Obligation: To themselves: After a master degree
139. Obligation: To themselves: Pushing through
140. Obligation: Supervisor: Should play a role
141. Obligation: Institution: Support
142. Obstacles: No jobs open
143. Obstacles: No growth in the department
144. Onboarding: Hectic
145. Onboarding: Department: Functions
146. Onboarding: Department: Structure
147. Onboarding: Institution: Mission
148. Onboarding: Institution: Philosophy
149. Onboarding: Institution: Values
150. Onboarding: No formal introductions
151. Onboarding: Orientation
152. Onboarding: Practical vs. Practice
153. Onboarding: Training
154. Persistence
155. Personable
156. Philosoph
157. Practical
158. Career Development: Organizations: ACPA
159. Career Development: Organizations: NACA
160. Career Development: Organizations: NASPA
161. Career Development: Organizations: ACHUO-I
162. Relationships
163. Skills: Reflect
164. Skills: Independent
165. Skills: Responsible
166. Skills: Willingness to learn
167. Skills: Open-minded
168. Skills: Availability
169. Skills: Comfortable to be uncomfortable

170. Solidify
171. Stressful
172. Success
173. Supervision: Balance of challenge and support
174. Supervision: Female heavy
175. Supervision: Mentorship: Females
176. Supervision: Mentorship: Role modeling good behavior
177. Supervision: Women: Role model good behavior
178. Supervision: Women: Supportive
179. Supervision: Work Style: Trusting
180. Supervision: Work Style: Supportive
181. Supervision: Work Style: Expressive
182. Supervision: Work Style: Nurturing
183. Supervision: Work Style: Communicative
184. Supervision: Work Style: Approachable
185. Supervision: Work Style: Personable
186. Supervision: Work Style: Negative: Assertive
187. Supervision: Work Style: Negative: Unorganized
188. Supervision: Work Style: Negative: No feedback
189. Supervision: Work Style: Negative: Micromanager
190. Support: Graduate program
191. Support: Mentors
192. Support: Supervisors
193. Support: Women leaders
194. Techniques: Microsoft teams
195. Techniques: None
196. Techniques: Trial run
197. Training: Given
198. Training: Lack of
199. Trust: We need to continue
200. Trust: Supervisor
201. Validated: Supervisor
202. Validated: Other individuals
203. Validated: Need to succeed
204. Workstyle: Competitive
205. Workstyle: Work acholic
206. Work-life balance: Essential
207. Work-life balance: Not practiced in the department
208. Work-life balance: Overworked

Appendix P
Mid- to Senior-Level Initial Codes

1. "10 hours in another field."
2. "Education cannot be the only thing; exposure is essential."
3. "Impact vs. intent"
4. "Made my mark."
5. "Navigating in the grey."
6. "Needs to be a meaningful contribution."
7. "Providing the space to build connections."
8. Accountability: Entry-level: Not comfortable saying no
9. Accountability: Entry-level: Not prepared
10. Accountability: Lack of conversations
11. Accountability: Mid-level: Confident
12. Accountability: Mid-level: Prepared for conversations
13. Accountability: None
14. Adaptable: Being a sponge
15. Adaptable: The institution needs
16. Adaptable: Not every institution is the same
17. Approach: Personal: Understanding
18. Approach: Professional: Interacting
19. Approach: Professional: Engaging
20. Approach: Strong female leaders
21. Approach: Always changing
22. Aspirations: Senior-level professional
23. Aspirations: Supporting SA professionals
24. Aspirations: Student focus
25. Assess: Opportunities: Available
26. Assess: Opportunities: Given
27. Assess: Personal: Growth
28. Assess: Personal: Worth
29. Authenticity
30. Awareness: Supervision: With career development
31. Awareness: Supervision: Knew was entry-level and needed patience
32. Awareness: Supervision: Progressive
33. Awareness: Supervision: Mythological
34. Barriers: Financial stability
35. Barriers: Gender inequality
36. Barriers: Students gravitate towards women: less likely men working in the field
37. Barriers: Students gravitate towards women: overworked
38. Barriers: Lack of support amongst administration
39. Barriers: Small university with limited resources
40. Barriers: Getting fired

41. Barriers: Limited opportunities
42. Barriers: No training
43. Barriers: Unbalanced work-life balance
44. Barriers: Challenging work environment
45. Barriers: Sacrifices: Leaving family
46. Barriers: Sacrifices: Moving to a new state
47. Barriers: Sacrifices: Taking a job did not want, just to have a job
48. Barriers: Sacrifices: Pausing on having a family
49. Barriers: Sacrifice
50. Barriers: Pandemic: COVID-19
51. Baseline: Representation: Women staff: Women student
52. Building rapport: Establishing relationships
53. Building rapport: Connections with students
54. Building rapport: Technical
55. Building rapport: Resourceful
56. Bias: Implicit
57. Connections: Networking
58. Connections: Trust
59. Contextualize
60. Continuous: Career development
61. Council of people
62. Cultivate: Sense of belonging
63. Cultivate: Community
64. Disconnected: Supervising: Not staying connected with entry-level
65. Effort: Combined
66. Engaged
67. Environment: Campus partners: Lack of emails or phone calls
68. Environment: Campus partners: Staying connected
69. Environment: Communication: Between department chairs
70. Environment: Communication: Administration
71. Environment: Community: Students
72. Environment: Community: Mentors
73. Environment: Community: Supervisors
74. Environment: Community: Something missing
75. Environment: Institutional
76. Environment: Peers
77. Establishing relationships
78. Evaluate: entry-level professionals: performance
79. Evaluate: entry-level professionals: fit
80. Evaluate: mid-level: accuracy for supervision
81. Expectations
82. Exposure: Environment
83. Exposure: Campus involvement

84. Exposure: Campus partners
85. Exposure: Career development
86. Fell In: To the field
87. Flexible
88. Fostering
89. High impact practices
90. Impact: Students: Seeing young professionals: Feel more connected
91. Impact: Students: Seeing young professionals: Want to persist
92. Impact: University level
93. Implicant Bias
94. Imprint
95. Initiative
96. Institutional: Right fit
97. Intentional
98. Involved: Autonomous projects
99. Involved: Be challenged in the position
100. Involved: Committee work
101. Involved: Feel connected to the department
102. Involved: Stay connected to the university
103. Investment: For the department
104. Investment: For the university
105. Investment: For one's career
106. Leadership: Style: Self-driven
107. Leadership: Style: Jealousy
108. Leadership: Style: Protective
109. Leadership: Style: Supportive
110. Leadership: Style: By example
111. Logistical: Day to day work
112. Logistical: Critical
113. Logistical: Content
114. Mastering: Role
115. Mastering: Position: Career development
116. Mastering: Position: Additional opportunities for growth
117. Meaningful conversations
118. Mentoring: Supervisor
119. Mentoring: Outside the position
120. Mentoring: Essential: Felt connected
121. Mentoring: Essential: Motivated
122. Mentoring: Essential: Can ask questions
123. Mentoring: Limited: Do not have anyone
124. Mentoring: Limited: No one willing
125. Motivated: Supervisors
126. Motivated: Family

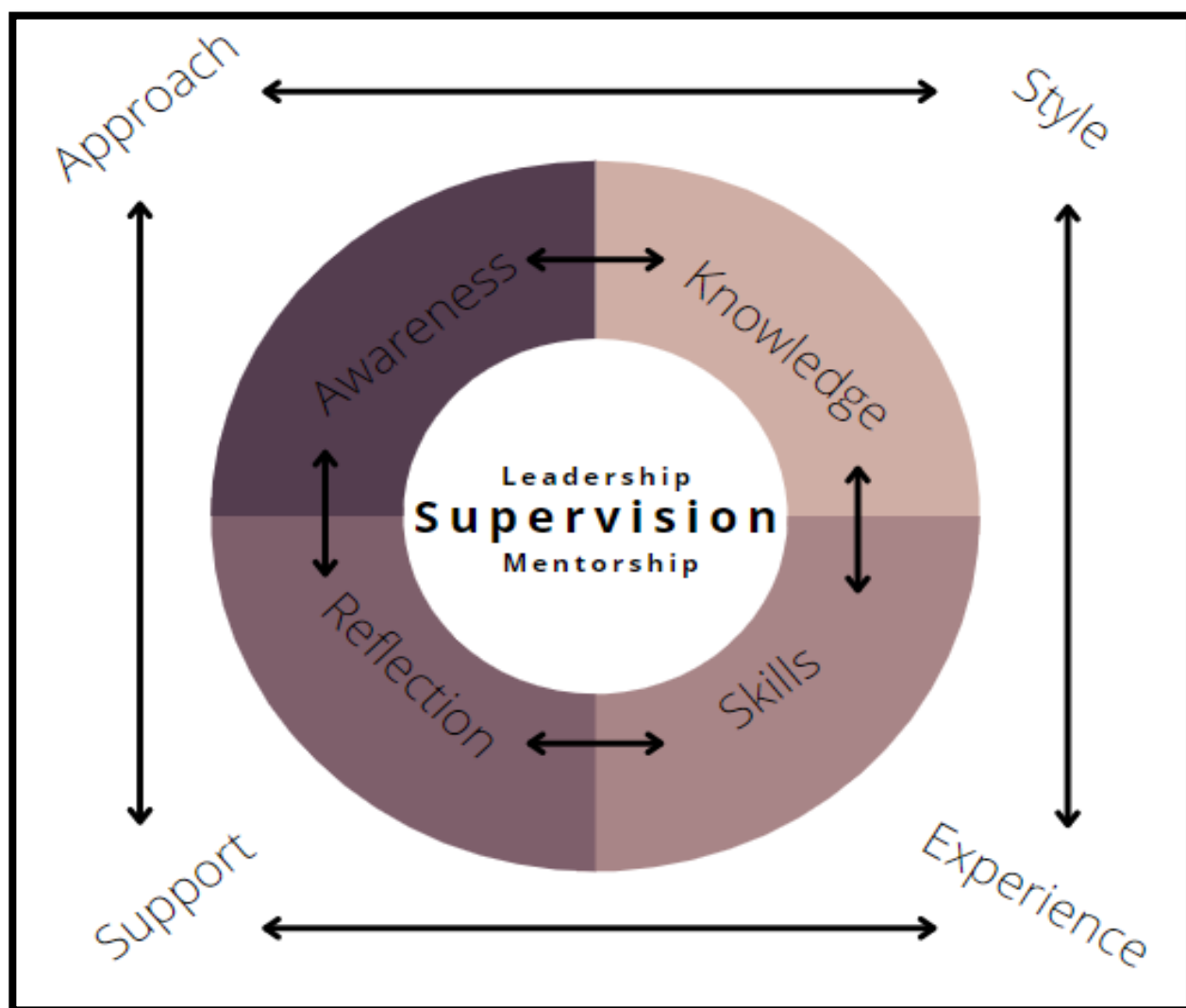
127. Motivated: Peers
128. Motivated: Children
129. Naïve: Entry-level: No experience
130. Naïve: Entry-level: No expectations
131. Naïve: Entry-level: Grad experience is relevant
132. Naïve: Entry-level: Career development will be given to you
133. Naïve: Entry-level: There is a perfect job
134. Niche: University
135. Niche: Department fit
136. Niche: Love going to work every day
137. Normalize: Training
138. Normalize: Supporting others
139. Normalize: Career development opportunities are not just conferences
140. Normalize: Unhealthy work-life balance
141. Normalize: First job might not be a good job
142. Persist
143. Philosophical
144. Political
145. Practice: Proactive
146. Practice: Reactive
147. Priority
148. Career Development: Conferences
149. Career Development: Challenges: Taking on new tasks
150. Career Development: Challenges: Asking instead of telling
151. Career Development: Boundaries: Taking on too much
152. Career Development: Organizations: ACPA
153. Career Development: Organizations: NACA
154. Career Development: Organizations: NASPA
155. Career Development: Organizations: ACHUO-I
156. Reflecting
157. Representation
158. Respect
159. Responsibility
160. Right fit
161. Self-directed
162. Self-starter
163. Shepherd: Supervisor
164. Shepherd: Responsible for entry-level
165. Shepherd: Taken on guiding role
166. Shepherd: Supervisor: Training necessary
167. Shepherd: Supervisor: Start from the top
168. Stuck: In position
169. Stuck: In the field

170. Stuck: No growth to senior-level
171. Status: Entry to mid
172. Status: Mid to senior
173. Stigma
174. Supervision: Gender roles
175. Supervision: Sensitivity
176. Supervision: Balance of challenge and support
177. Supervision: Female heavy
178. Supervision: Mentorship: Females
179. Supervision: Mentorship: Role modeling good behavior
180. Supervision: Work Style: Trusting
181. Supervision: Work Style: Supportive
182. Supervision: Work Style: Expressive
183. Supervision: Work Style: Nurturing
184. Supervision: Work Style: Communicative
185. Supervision: Work Style: Confidence
186. Supervision: Work Style: Approachable
187. Supervision: Work Style: Personable
188. Supervision: Work Style: Negative: Assertive
189. Supervision: Work Style: Negative: Unorganized
190. Supervision: Work Style: Negative: No feedback
191. Supervision: Work Style: Negative: Micromanager
192. Support: Mentors
193. Support: Family
194. Support: Peers
195. Support: Students
196. Support: Supervisors
197. Support: Women leaders
198. Transparency: Honest
199. Women: Leadership
200. Women: Mentorship
201. Women: Role models
202. Work-life: Not supported
203. Work-life: Expectations vs. reality
204. Work-life: Entry-level: expected too much: do not know how to cope

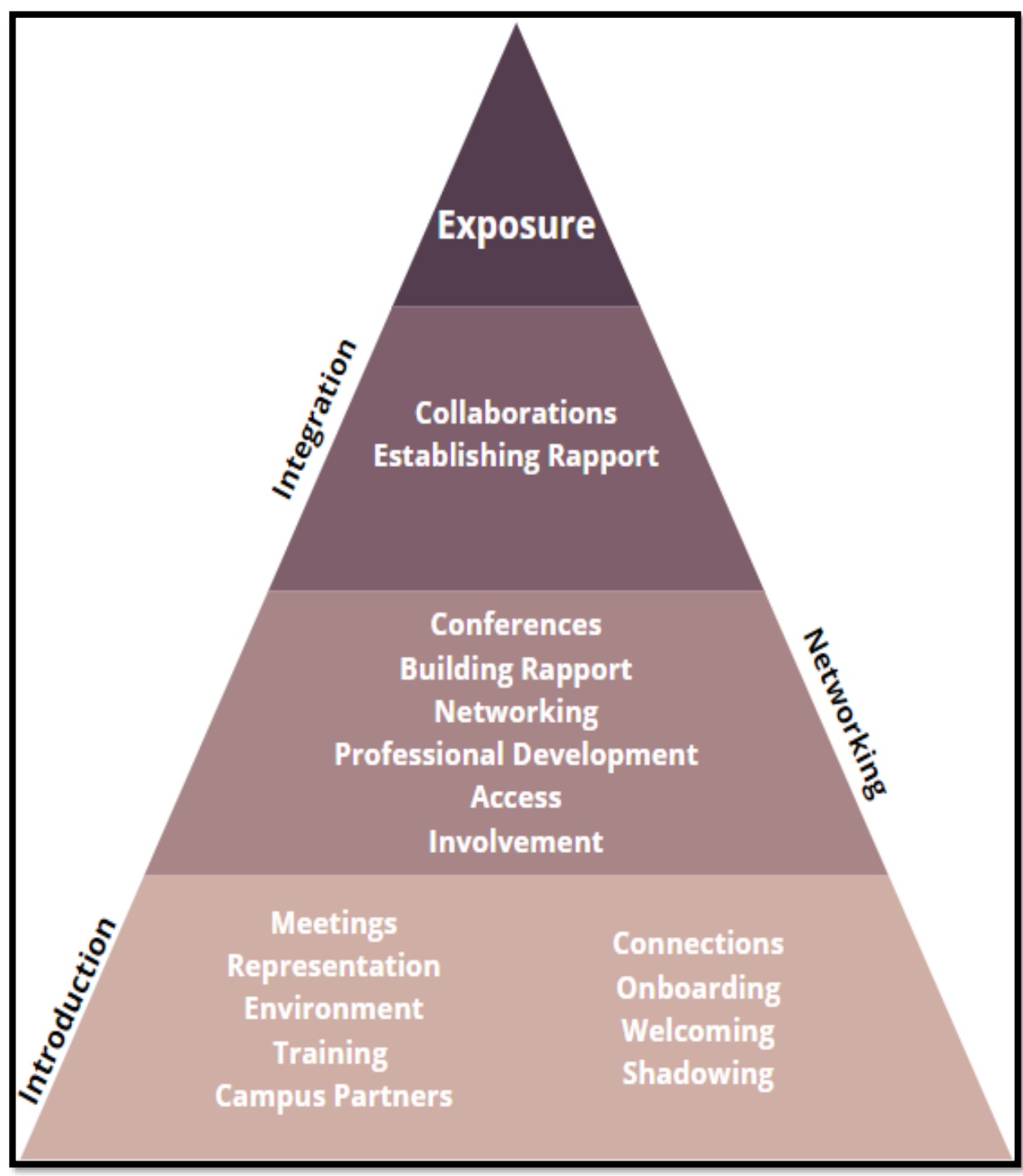
Appendix Q Entry-Level Focused Coding

Entry Focused Coding				
Supervision	Experiences	Expectations	Meaning	Outtake
Supervision: Intent vs impact*	*Immediately started with no training*	*Immediately started with no training*	*I felt I was drowning in work*	*I felt I was drowning in work*
Supervision: Balance of challenge and support	Intent vs impact*	Intent vs impact*	*I immediately started with no training*	Intent vs impact*
Supervision: Female heavy	*Trial by fire*	*Trial by fire*	Intent vs impact*	Awareness: Self: Needed to change institution
Supervision: Mentorship: Females	Access: Technology: More available	Access: Technology: More available	Advocate: For change	Awareness: Self: Was not the right position
Supervision: Mentorship: Role modeling good behavior	Access: Technology: Resourceful	Access: Technology: Resourceful	Advocate: For self	Awareness: Self: Had to decide what needed on own
Supervision: Women: Role model good behavior	Access: Online opportunities	Access: Online opportunities	Advocate: For professional development opportunities	Awareness: Supervisor: With professional development
Supervision: Women: Supportive	Access: Many professional development organizations	Access: Many professional development organizations	Advocate: Need to take advantage of opportunities	Awareness: Supervisor: Knew was new in the position and needed patience
Supervision: Work Style: Training	Administration: Never met anyone higher than supervisor	Background: Graduate program: Did not prepare me for first job	Advocate: Put needs before work	Awareness: Supervisor: Progressive
Supervision: Work Style: Supportive	Administration: Supportive	Background: Undergrad: Didn't know what to do after college	Advocate: Speak up during meetings	Awareness: Supervisor: Mythological
Supervision: Work Style: Expressive	Administration: Was not connected	Background: Undergrad: Had supervisor introduce student affairs	Awareness: Self: Needed to change institution	Access: Opportunities: Available
Supervision: Work Style: Nurturing	Administration: Welcoming	Background: Undergrad: Was highly involved in leadership roles	Awareness: Self: Was not the right position	Access: Opportunities: Given
Supervision: Work Style: Communicative	Environment	Techniques: Microsoft teams	Awareness: Self: Had to decide what needed on own	Access: Personal: Growth
Supervision: Work Style: Approachable	Environment: Communication: Between department chairs	Techniques: None	Awareness: Supervisor: With professional development	Access: Personal: Worth
Supervision: Work Style: Personable	Environment: Communication: Administration	Techniques: Trial run	Awareness: Supervisor: Knew was new in the position and needed patience	Autonomous
Supervision: Work Style: Negative: Assertive	Environment: Campus partners: Lack of emails or phone calls	Training: Given	Awareness: Supervisor: Progressive	Anonymous: In the work
Supervision: Work Style: Negative: Inorganized	Environment: Campus partners: Staying connected	Training: Lack of	Awareness: Supervisor: Mythological	Defeat: After each day of training
Supervision: Work Style: Negative: No feedback	Environment: Institutional	Fortunate: To have a job	Access: Opportunities: Available	Defeated: Apply to other jobs
Supervision: Work Style: Negative: Micromanager	Environment: Peers	Fortunate: To grow	Access: Opportunities: Given	Defeated: Didn't feel valued
Support: Graduate program	Techniques: Microsoft teams	Obligation: To the profession	Access: Personal: Growth	Division
Support: Mentors	Techniques: None	Obligation: To themselves: After master degree	Access: Personal: Worth	Feedback: Essential
Support: Supervisors	Techniques: Trial run	Obligation: To themselves: Pushing through	Autonomous	Feedback: Wanting more of it
Support: Women leaders	Training: Given	Obligation: Supervisor: Should play a role	Anonymous: In the work	Feedback: Was not appropriate timing
Techniques: Microsoft teams	Training: Lack of	Obligation: Institution: Support	Barrier: Lack of support amongst administration	Feedback: Was not appropriately given
Mentoring: Supervisor	Collaboration: Environment	Obstacles: No jobs open	Barrier: Small university with limited resources	Frustration
Mentoring: Outside the position	Collaboration: With other departments	Obstacles: No growth in the department	Barrier: Getting fired	Frustration: Colleagues
Mentoring: Essential: Felt connected	Onboarding: Hectic	Onboarding: Hectic	Barrier: Limited opportunities	Frustration: Environment: Unhealthy
Mentoring: Essential: Motivated	Onboarding: Department: Functions	Onboarding: Department: Functions	Barrier: No training	Frustration: Environment: Workload
Mentoring: Essential: Can ask questions	Onboarding: Department: Structure	Onboarding: Department: Structure	Barrier: Unbalanced work-life balance	Frustration: Environment: Unsupportive supervisor
Mentoring: Limited: Don't have anyone	Onboarding: Institution: Mission	Onboarding: Institution: Mission	Barrier: Challenging work environment	Frustration: Environment: Institutional: No introduction to campus
Mentoring: Limited: No one willing	Onboarding: Institution: Philosophy	Onboarding: Institution: Philosophy	Barrier: Sacrifices: Leaving family	Frustration: Lack of supervision
Guidance: None	Onboarding: Institution: Values	Onboarding: Institution: Values	Barrier: Sacrifices: Moving to a new state	Frustration: No support
Guidance: Supervisor support	Onboarding: No formal introductions	Onboarding: No formal introductions	Barrier: Sacrifices: Taking a job did not want, just to have a job	Frustration: Thrown right into the position
	Onboarding: Orientation	Onboarding: Orientation	Barrier: Pandemic: COVID-19	Future: Looking at academic affairs
	Onboarding: Practical vs Practice	Onboarding: Practical vs Practice	Challenge: COVID: All online	Future: Higher degree
	Onboarding: Training	Onboarding: Training	Challenge: COVID: Could not meet new people	Future: Professors are respected more
	Professional Development: Organizations: ACPA	Professional Development: Organizations: ACPA	Challenge: Don't put needs first	Future: Still in student affairs
	Professional Development: Organizations: NASPA	Professional Development: Organizations: NASPA	Challenge: Force to pick first job, don't have time to look into fit	Goal Setting: Short term
	Professional Development: Organizations: ACHUD-I	Professional Development: Organizations: ACHUD-I	Challenge: Hiring process	Goal Setting: Long term
	Trust: Need to continue	Trust: Need to continue	Challenge: Live on positions	Graduate Program: Core courses: Irrelevant
	Validated: Supervisor	Validated: Supervisor	Challenge: Onboarding experience	Graduate Program: Practicum and assistantships: Relevant and essential
	Validated: Other individuals	Validated: Other individuals	Challenge: Entry level all residential life	Guidance: None
	Validated: Need in order to succeed	Validated: Need in order to succeed	Challenge: Trusting peers	Guidance: Supervisor support
			Challenge: Work-life balance	Knowledge: Graduate program: Assistantships
			Comfortable: In departments	Knowledge: Graduate program: Core courses
			Communication: Essential	Knowledge: Graduate program: Practicum experiences
			Communication: Lack of any in first position	Leadership
			Communication: None from administrators	Skills: Reflect
			Compartmentalized: Professional Development	Skills: Independent
			Compartmentalized: Training	Skills: Responsible
			Compartmentalized: Workshops	Skills: Willingness to learn
			Confident: Self	Skills: Open-minded
			Excitement: Being able to help students	Skills: Availability
			Excitement: Entering the field	Skills: Comfortable to be uncomfortable
			Excitement: Flexible work schedule	Solidify
			Excitement: Getting a job right out of graduate school	Stressful
			Excitement: Skating a new job	Success
			Obligation: To the profession	Motivation: Future endeavors
			Obligation: To themselves: After master degree	Motivation: Working with students
			Obligation: To themselves: Pushing through	Motivation: Family
			Obligation: Supervisor: Should play a role	Motivation: Pandemic: Lucky to have a job
			Obligation: Institution: Support	Motivation: Pandemic: See what could happen
			Obstacles: No jobs open	Networking
			Obstacles: No growth in the department	
			Knowledge: Graduate program: Assistantships	
			Knowledge: Graduate program: Core courses	
			Knowledge: Graduate program: Practicum experiences	
			Leadership	
			Professional Development: Organizations: ACPA	
			Professional Development: Organizations: NASPA	
			Professional Development: Organizations: ACHUD-I	
			Skills: Reflect	
			Skills: Independent	
			Skills: Responsible	
			Skills: Willingness to learn	
			Skills: Open-minded	
			Skills: Availability	
			Skills: Comfortable to be uncomfortable	
			Solidify	
			Stressful	
			Success	
			Impact: To students	
			Independent: Alone in office	
			Independent: Youngest: Given most work	
			Institutional: Fit	
			Integration: Work-life balance	
			Integration: Limited connections	
			Integration: Connection to peers	
			Intentional	
			Investment	
			Justify	
			Workstyle: Competitive	
			Workstyle: Workaholic	
			Work-life balance: Essential	
			Work-life balance: Not practiced in department	
			Work-life balance: Overworked	

Appendix S
Emerging Themes and Categories
Supervision



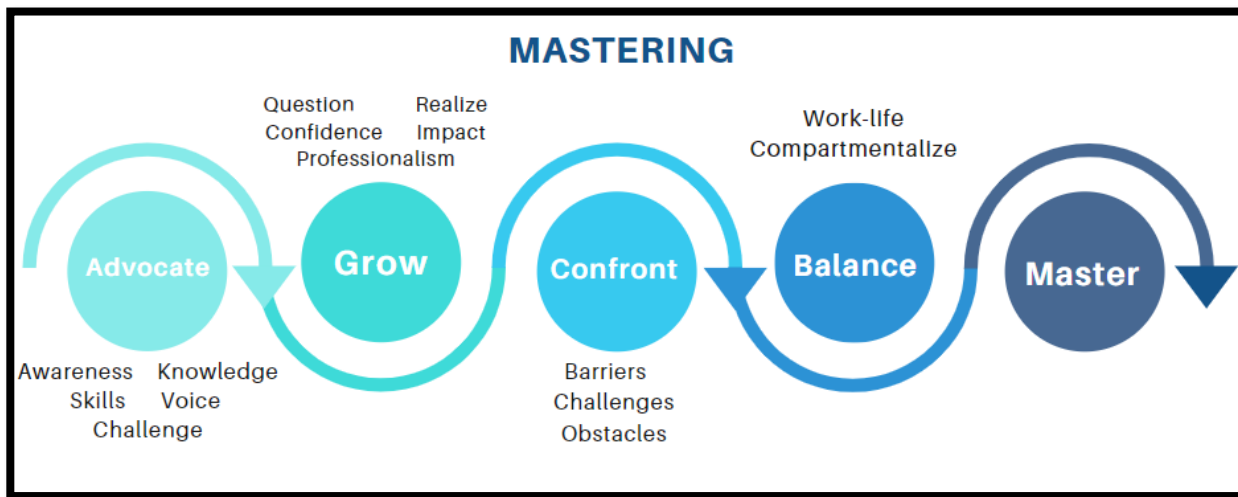
Appendix T
Emerging Themes and Categories
Exposure



Appendix U
Emerging Themes and Categories
 Expectations



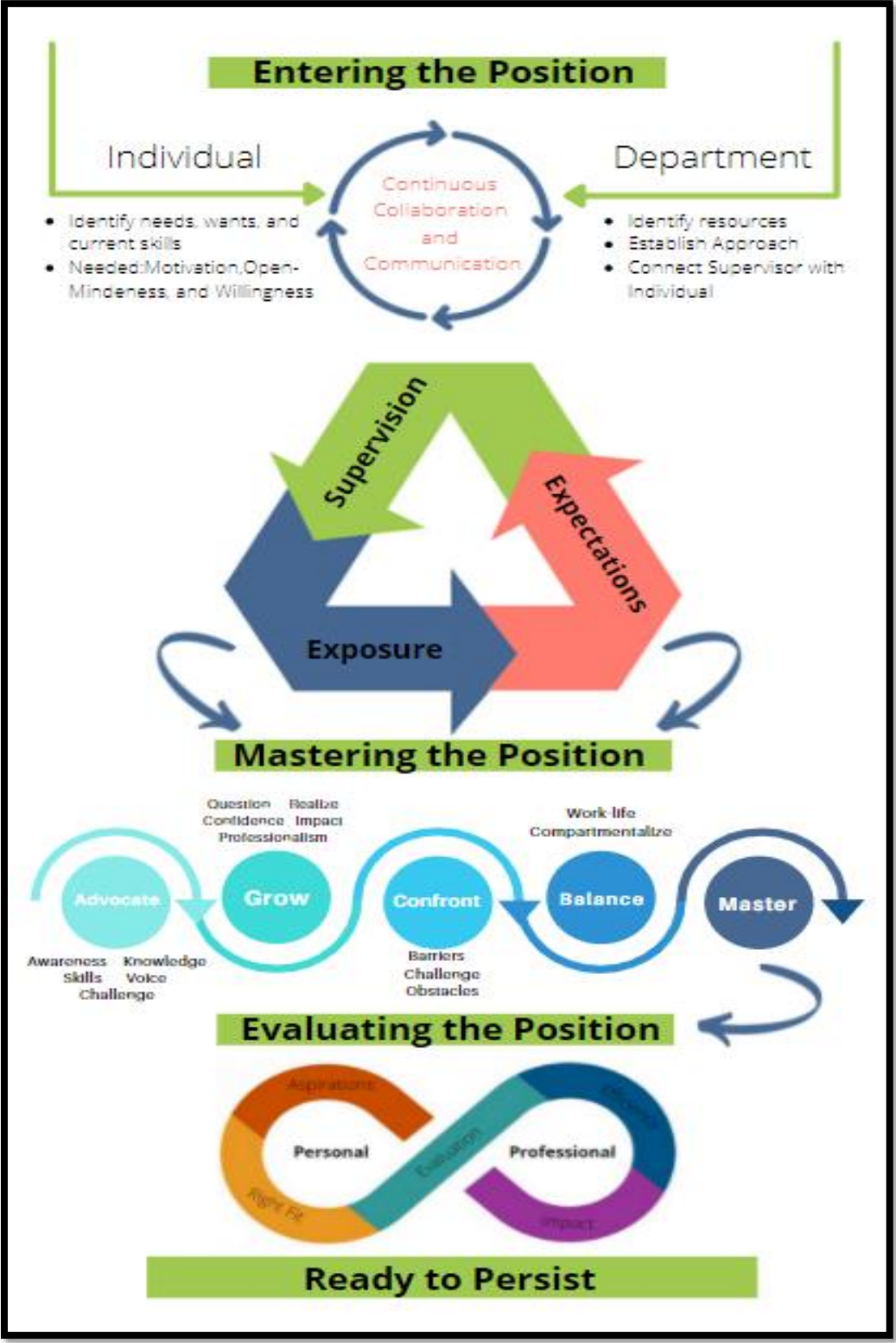
Appendix V
Emerging Themes and Categories
Mastering



Appendix W
Emerging Themes and Categories
Evaluate



Appendix X The Career Development Model for Entry-level Women Professionals Entering the Field of SA



**Appendix Y
Audit Trail**

Date	Action Taken	Notes
9/15/2021	Liberty University IRB approval received	
9/15/2021	Recruitment post on social media	Facebook Pages- Student Affairs Professionals, Residential Life Professionals, Entry-level Student Affairs Professionals, and Millennials in Student Affairs
9/25/2021	Recruitment emails to potential candidates (Entry-level)	Looked at Universities in CT, PA, NY, MA, NJ, VA, and NC
9/26/2021	Recruitment emails to potential candidates (Mid to Senior-level)	Looked at Universities in CT, PA, NY, MA, NJ, VA, and NC
9/27/2021	Pilot entry-level interview with “Amy”	<i>Wording for specific opening questions needs to be reworded. Add more about entry-level questions.</i>
9/28/2021	Pilot mid to senior-level interview with “Lauren and Joel”	<i>Add specific questions to ask men candidates. Experience and Training section needed in-depth questions.</i>
9/28/2021	Contacted participants from demographic profile survey to schedule interviews	
10/2/2021	Interviewed, Transcribed, and Reviewed “Jordan” interview	<i>Added question regarding supervision Experienced working at two different institutions- Was fired first institution, no onboarding or training, and very small institution/no support. The second institution- implemented an onboarding tool for new professionals, feels more connected to the institution</i>
10/2/2021	Interview with “Morgan”	
10/3/2021	Transcribed and Reviewed “Morgan” interview	<i>Experienced working at two different institutions but with similar onboarding and lack of training experience. Work-life balance essential and support from supervisors. Believes the institution plays a role in the melting of entry-level professionals in SA</i>
10/4/2021	Interview, Transcribed and Reviewed “Susan” interview	<i>Added questions regarding supervision, leadership style, and intentionality. Had many women mentors while transitioning from entry to mid-level, questioned the position and career path multiple times during entry-level, did not feel supported or connected to the university when onboarding. Believes support for entry-level is very individualized, but department plays a role.</i>
10/4/2021	Interview, Transcribed and Reviewed “Lisa” interview	<i>Had a unique transition in SA because of COVID but has had only virtual positions at an all-online institution. I got an exciting perspective of supervision and support while being all virtual. Spoke about supervision expectations and leadership experience.</i>

10/5/2021	Interview, Transcribed and Reviewed “Liam” interview	<i>Added questions regarding mentorship and responsibility.</i> Male candidate: Had many women leaders and mentors, felt connected to them over men, gender-blind, believes the department should shepherd their entry-level professionals to support them into the transition.
10/6/2021	Interview, Transcribed and Reviewed “Alex”	Had many women mentors during their time in SA. Think making connections is essential for buy-in. Beliefs institutions and departments need to play a role in investment. Believes the supervisor plays a role in shaping and supporting the entry-level professional in their first five years. <i>Thought about potential second-round interview questions on goal setting and supervision techniques.</i>
10/6/2021	Interview, Transcribed and Reviewed “Pauline”	Experienced burnout immediately in the field, felt like they could not catch up, had no onboarding or training—just thrown right into the position. She has female mentors, but her current supervisor is too busy to focus on her career development. Was given many responsibilities without any support or validation. <i>Thought about second-round interview questions about institutional and department support and professional needs.</i>
10/7/2021	Interview, Transcribed and Reviewed “Leslie”	The Felt graduate program prepared them for mid-level over their entry-level position. The first interview with a good onboarding experience with intentional training sessions focusing on personal and professional growth— <i>wants to look more into this.</i>
10/7/2021	Interview, Transcribed and Reviewed “Tara”	Received their doctoral degree in higher education administration to feel like they have more options. Was always told that if they wanted to grow, they had to leave the institution. Believes it is the supervisor and the institution’s responsibility to help the entry-level professional feel they belong.
10/8/2021	Interview, Transcribed and Reviewed “Cory”	They received their doctoral degree in higher education administration and have worked in the SA field for their entire work lifespan. During their time, Believes have created focused training for entry-level professionals to help them grow in the profession. Believes it is the supervisor’s responsibility to help the entry-level professional find their fit/passion.
10/9/2021	Interview, Transcribed and Reviewed “Kelly”	Had no onboarding experience and has felt disconnected from the institution. They do not feel connected to their supervisor— who is male-identified—seeing a trend between lack of supervision and a sense of belonging.

		Has thought about leaving multiple times and does not feel like SA is the right fit.
10/10/2021	Interview, Transcribed and Reviewed “Nina”	Has changed its position in SA every year for the past three years. Believes it is the lack of support that makes them leave. They are constantly thrown into positions with no training or career development. Has not had a supportive supervisor and has had all men supervisors. Is currently questioning their commitment to the field and looking for other options.
10/11/2021	Interview, Transcribed and Reviewed “Jasmin”	Supervisor- male. Works at a smaller institution with no budget. Has had to have intentional conversations with supervisors on their needs since they feel they are not being heard. Questioning their commitment. Jasmine recommended more intentional training and workshops to commit to the field.
10/11/2021	Interview, Transcribed and Reviewed with “Brandon”	Has been a supervisor for the majority of women entry-level professionals. Believes it is the supervisor, regardless of gender, responsibility to support the entry-level professionals, but it is also the department and institution responsibility. Feels they do have to adjust their supervision style for them as they need to be more supportive outside the job. Has noticed the “workaholic” personality women entry-level professionals have but believe this may cause burnout early on.
10/12/2021	Interview, Transcribed and Reviewed “Sophia”	They had a very supportive graduate program experience and believed it prepared them for their first position. Is still committed to the profession and is passionate about supporting students but believes there may be no growth in their institution, so they may need to leave. Has a women supervisor who has been very supportive in their potential growth. She wishes she had more intentional training and career development opportunities.
10/12/2021	Interview, Transcribed and Reviewed “Sandy”	Believes supervisor plays an essential role in supporting entry-level professionals. Believes career development definition has evolved. <i>They are seeing a disconnect of the career development definition between entry-level and mid/senior.</i> Philosophical and political training needs to be implemented to help prepare professionals for the “real world.” Beliefs entry-level professionals believe that working for a university is all about supporting students. Still, in reality, the university is a business and needs to abide by its rules and policies even if they disagree.
10/12/2021	Interview, Transcribed and Reviewed “Emily”	Supervision is essential for entry-level growth. Believes it is a combined effort between institutional,

		department/supervisor, and individual to get buy-in within the profession. A good supervisor will make it or break it for entry-level from her experience. Having intentional and meaningful relationships will build confidence and commitment in the field.
10/13/2021	Interview, Transcribed and Reviewed “Amy”	Had a successful onboarding experience which helped transition to a mid-level position. Felt more prepared after onboarding and career development opportunities. Believes it is the responsibility of the individual, supervisor, and department.
10/14/2021	Interview, Transcribed and Reviewed “Lucy”	Believes it is the responsibility of the senior level to help support the new professionals. Career development, successful onboarding, and supervision are crucial to entry-level success.
10/15/2021	Interview, Transcribed and Reviewed “Julie”	Has had success supervising entry-level professionals, and focusing on the first two weeks is crucial. Supervision is essential. Had meaningful conversations with the mid-level to help them transition into a role model role for entry-level. Has had many barriers as a woman in SA and believes that as leaders, women need to support other women and help them transition into the position.
10/16/2021	Interview, Transcribed and Reviewed “Carla”	They had a challenging onboarding themselves at two different institutions, and it took them a while to realize they were responsible for their happiness. Found a mentor, who was a woman, who helped them transition into their third position (still entry-level). Believes mentorship is crucial to feel connected to the department and field. Has mentored other entry-level professionals to help them transition. Believes the culture at universities is that to grow, you must leave, which causes an issue. Shared those graduate programs prepare entry-level professionals on essential student development and how to work with students, but they do not share how to do the actual job.
10/24/2021	Interview, Transcribed and Reviewed “Peggy”	Has been a role model and believes women should support other women. Has had numerous women role models and mentors during their time in SA. Many personal and professional barriers have been overcome during their time, and they had to fight up the ladder to be in their current position. All supervisors have been men and felt it was their responsibility to leave their mark for other women professionals.
10/25/2021	Rough draft of themes formulating acronym SEE ME.	Focus second round interview questions into the categories formulated in individual interviews, including

		supervision, investment, individualization, integration, and career development.
All first-round participants, except for one, scheduled second-round interviews during their initial interview. <i>Second round- focus on emerging categories and themes from the first round</i>		
10/30/2021	Interview and Transcribed “Morgan”	She reflected on the definition of career development. Believes it is a trifold of responsibility between the individual, supervisor, and department. <i>This has been the main point many have addressed.</i>
10/31/2021	Interview and Transcribed “Kelly”	Indicated being intentional about the campus culture and what to expect is essential for one to feel successful in their position. <i>How does one train on-campus culture? What specific sessions should there be?</i>
11/1/2021	Interview and Transcribed “Nina”	Believes the supervisor influences decision to continue in the position and field, and they should have more supervision experience or specific training on how to support entry-level professionals.
11/2/2021	Interview and Transcribed “Jasmin”	Wonders what could done differently to help support entry-levels at an institutional level. Believes it is particular and individualized. Career development is a mixture of intentional and accidental experiences from both the department and the field of SA when one gains knowledge outside their comfortability skills. <i>Define career development differently- more transferrable experiences.</i>
11/2/2021	Interview and Transcribed “Brandon”	After the first-round interview reflected on their own experience and looked into being intentional with their one-on-one with supervisees, they have received more feedback on being a better supervisor and believe it is their responsibility to encourage them in the field and feel wanted. SEE ME
11/3/2021	Interview and Transcribed “Julie”	Supervision- the responsibility of whom you are supervising. <i>“A good mentor hopes you move on. A great mentor knows you will.”</i> Investment for department and field overall. Responsibility of individual and department (including supervisors). Career development opportunities should always be available.
11/3/2021	Interview and Transcribed “Carla”	Communication, supervision, and investment. They are being proactive and intentional. Exposure to the community is essential—awareness, knowledge, and skills. Career development is relevant. Onboarding and continuous training.
11/4/2021	Interview and Transcribed “Jordan”	Supervision, institution and department responsibility, no feedback from supervisor (current or previous), integration- support, workshops, continuous career

		development, connections with other departments, and leadership.
11/5/2021	Interview and Transcribed “Peggy”	They formulated- an intentional structure to support entry-level professionals. Women should support other women. Career development- not only how to be comfortable in the field, but be comfortable as a strong, independent women
11/6/2021	Interview and Transcribed “Emily”	Small institution- lack of resources limits how to support entry-level professionals. It should be an investment to keep professionals at the institution. Supervisor techniques are all different, but some are forced to be supervisors without the proper training. Not all meant to supervise.
11/6/2021	Interview and Transcribed “Cory”	Career development- definition varies who speak to- should be a well-rounded experience of intentional workshops and training from organizations and different workplace experiences. Suggestion- hire during downtime to leave more time to train and onboard. Should start in residential life departments since most entry-level professionals come from there. <i>Is this statistically accurate?</i>
11/8/2021	Interview and Transcribed “Leslie”	Integration-essential. Expectations- goal setting and processes. Evaluation and feedback- future goals, knowing what they want, working towards work-life balance and values. Supportive supervisors- during training, guidance, and shepherding, responsibility versus overseeing.
11/8/2021	Interview and Transcribed “Sophia”	Women-specific support. Women supporting others- however, not enough resources and need to buy-in. Feeling wanted- can go a long way. Graduate programs do not prepare you to do the physical job- just work with students/populations. Success- feeling they belong and have values that make them better people—well-rounded work-life balance.
11/9/2021	Interview and Transcribed “Lisa”	Support-essential. Women are supporting other women—expectations- set early, supervisor role.
11/10/2021	Interview and Transcribed “Pauline”	Well balance of informal and formal support, training, and career development. Assumed career development was implemented, not sought. Communication is imperative to feel supported. Supportive supervisor- motivated to continue work.
11/11/2021	Interview and Transcribed “Lucy”	Comfortable talking about the issues with career development. Informal and formal support. Introductions and onboarding are essential.

11/11/2021	Interview and Transcribed “Sandy”	Supervisors need to train on being supervisors— characteristics of women entry-level professionals- confidence, resilience, and empathy.
11/12/2021	Interview and Transcribed “Tara”	Workshops and training are essential to precisely how to advocate for yourself, imposter syndrome, strategic planning, the value of emotional intelligence, managing stress, and work-life balance.
11/13/2021	Interview and Transcribed “Alex”	Work-life balance is essential. In-house career development, skill-building, and time to connect with peers on campus. Cross-train entry-level professionals provide opportunities for them to shadow. Work in residential life.
11/13/2021	Interview and Transcribed “Liam”	Discussed the previous mention of shepherding and agree that professionals need to know they are guiding and supporting the tomorrow of higher education. Men play an important role in SA to provide women professionals to feel heard.
11/15/2021	Interview and Transcribed “Amy”	The initiative, ability to know boundaries, creativity, emotional intelligence- awareness, knowledge, and skills entry-level professionals need to have. Institutions and departments need to be forward thinkers.
11/17/2021	Focus Group with “Emily, Alex, Sandy, Julie, Peggy, and Cory”	Support, communication, responsibility between the individual and supervisor, limitations- money, resources, and willingness. Intentional conversations and understanding entry-level needs and wants. Reflection and evaluation- are essential to continue growth. Exposure- to the campus culture and campus partners is vital for integration. Expectations were set immediately and reflected.
11/22/2021	Rough Draft of Emerging Themes	SEE ME - Supervision, Exposure, Expectations, Mastering, Evaluate
11/24/2021	Drafted Model	
11/30/2021	Changed Title to Manuscript	Emailed chair to make sure this was okay with IRB