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Mismatch and Burnout: An Exploration of Burnout and Work Passion Amongst Academic Affairs Professionals Through an Organizational Lens

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Mismatch and Burnout: An Exploration of Burnout and Work Passion Amongst Academic
Affairs Professionals Through an Organizational Lens

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Dissertation **submitted to the** College of Education and Human Services
at West Virginia University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy **in Higher Education**

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academic affairs, work life, organization, mismatch

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ABSTRACT

Mismatch and Burnout: An Exploration of Burnout and Work Passion Amongst Academic Affairs Professionals Through an Organizational Lens

Alexa Cecil

Though the concept of burnout is well developed, there is less research on burnout in higher education, especially on specific staff populations, and loss of work passion. The current study aimed to understand burnout and work passion for academic affairs professionals who work with undergraduate students on academic probation and students conditionally admitted to the institution, including impacts, how these experiences have been navigated, and organizational supports that help alleviate these outcomes. Utilizing a sequential mixed methods research design, the study collected survey responses from identified professionals working with these student populations at a specific institution type. Demographic and t-test statistics were conducted. Then, interviews were conducted with professionals in an academic support department at a case study institution. Results suggest differences in general passion, emotional exhaustion, cynicism, value, and control between entry level and supervisory positions. Qualitative findings suggest high workload and lack of institutional support are among major influences on staff burnout and identify the cyclical nature of burnout for academic support staff during a semester. Variations in support, feeling valued, reward, and community were identified between departmental, institutional, and student contexts. Findings also shed light on how COVID-19 influenced the work experience and burnout of academic support staff. The study includes scholarly and practical implications for departments and institutions, including strategies for employee and institutional support, as well as a more developed understanding of burnout and work passion for this population of academic support staff.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

According to a 2015 Gallup study, 67% of surveyed employees reported feelings of burnout at work, ranging from sometimes to very often or always (Wigert & Agrawal, 2018). Burnout is particularly a concern for occupations that work often and directly with other persons and for both employee and employer, as it can lead to negative personal and organizational effects (Mullen et al., 2018; Marshall et al., 2016; Brewer & Clippard, 2002; Rosser & Javinar, 2003). One such effect is employee turnover. The same 2015 Gallup survey also reported that employees experiencing burnout were almost thrice as likely to actively be looking for another job than employees not experiencing burnout (Wigert & Agrawal, 2018). Turnover is costly and disruptive (Marshall et al., 2016), and both impacts are even more dangerous at institutions of higher education in a time of financial turmoil and declining enrollment. Particularly for university staff members who work in student support programs, a concern of burnout and turnover is a reduction in the quantity and quality of student support.

Previous research has identified various causes and influences of burnout and has focused on helping professions, such as nursing, counseling, and teachers within the K-12 context (Mullen et al., 2018). In higher education, similar research has focused primarily on Racial Battle Fatigue and experiences of Black faculty, specifically Black female faculty (Chancellor, 2019; Walkington, 2017; Johnson et al., 2018). More recently, some higher education research has studied attrition, burnout, and job satisfaction among student affairs professionals (Mullen et al., 2018; Marshall et al., 2016); nonetheless, much of the research in this area is outdated and does not consider significant changes to the higher education landscape since the Great Recession, as well as impacts from the COVID-19 Pandemic, including those already being seen and those yet unknown (Brewer & Clippard, 2002; Rosser & Javinar, 2003). The financial impacts of the Great Recession included significant reductions in state appropriations, philanthropy giving, and

endowments. Effects were felt deeply by universities, and many increased tuition in the following years to attempt to mend the revenue loss (Friga, 2020). Now, higher education institutions are facing another battle, one of reductions in enrollment and more revenue loss. To manage such losses, universities have turned to a reduction of their own by reducing faculty and staff members (Friga, 2020), an occupational stressor that could reduce support and increase burnout for employees.

While existing literature has focused heavily on causes of burnout and attrition, there is limited research on additional practices that support staff by reducing negative outcomes, such as burnout, job stress, and turnover, and increasing job satisfaction. In addition, little research has focused specifically on such issues for staff who work specific student populations and staff working in academic affairs. In order to address these gaps, I will contribute to research on burnout in higher education by examining burnout and work passion for academic affairs professionals who work with at-risk students and identifying practices that reduce or exacerbate these outcomes.

Academic affairs professionals working with at-risk students are at risk for burnout and loss of passion, or at least factors that could lead to these outcomes, because they work directly and intensely with others (students in this case), which is a common characteristic of burnout among helping professions (Maslach, et al., 1996). Additional factors, such as organizational culture and, more specific to this field, the current financial state of higher education can increase feelings of burnout and loss of passion. If universities are reducing faculty and staff (Friga, 2020), this could lead to fewer staff having to deal with greater issues.

Furthermore, with loss in enrollment comes loss in revenue, and continuing to increase tuition

may no longer be an option due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic (Friga, 2020). Thus, institutions may have even less means to support staff.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this sequential, mixed methods study is to understand the causes of burnout and loss of passion for academic affairs professionals who work with probation and conditionally admitted students and how these professionals navigate these experiences. A secondary purpose is to explore the role of institutional culture and support in alleviating staff burnout and loss of passion.

Research Questions

1. What are the causes of burnout and loss of passion for academic affairs professionals who work with probation and conditionally admitted students?
2. How do academic affairs professionals navigate the experience of burnout and/or loss of passion?
3. What organizational aspects of universities support staff by reducing or preventing burnout and loss of passion and how so?

Theoretical Framework

In this study, burnout will be defined as “a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with other people in some capacity” (Maslach et al., 1996, p. 192). Furthermore, burnout is viewed not necessarily as an achieved state, but as one end of a continuum. On the other end is engagement, and an employee’s personal state and relationship with their employer is a fluid state and can be anywhere on this continuum (Leiter & Maslach, 2003).

Work passion has been studied in recent years; however, the loss of passion and how that occurs is highly understudied, as it only appears in one study thus far and is identified as a reason for turnover (Marshall et al., 2016). Thus, there is a need to understand this more and how it relates to burnout, especially within the higher education context. As described in Marshall et al.'s (2016) study, loss of passion is experienced when a person has “lost their passion and desire to connect with students” and/or their “passion for the work left” (p. 116).

However, burnout and work passion only partially frame the research questions of this study by examining the individual context and, thus, must be incorporated into a broader framework that also incorporates the organizational context. The Areas of Worklife Model (Leiter & Maslach, 1999) will serve as the larger theoretical framework for the current study. This model focuses on the organizational context of burnout and a person's relationship with their work in the following six areas: workload, control, rewards, community, fairness, and values. Increasing workload and workload that exceeds time and resource constraints has a positive relationship with burnout. This relationship is even stronger for work that is emotionally taxing. To contribute to burnout, such workload must be chronic; isolated events of overloaded work are less likely to lead to burnout (Leiter & Maslach 1999; 2003). Control relates to the desire of individuals to have input on and some sense of authority over their work. Control “includes employees' perceived capacity to influence decisions that affect their work, to exercise professional autonomy, and to gain access to the resources necessary to do an effective job” (Leiter & Maslach, 2003, p. 96). Control is influenced by role ambiguity, in which job expectations are unclear, and role conflict, which includes contradictory demands from authority figures (Leiter & Maslach 1999; 2003). Rewards include financial, institutional, social, and intrinsic benefits and opportunities. Problems arise within this area when individuals

feel there is “insufficient reward” (Leiter & Maslach, 1999, p. 478). Leiter and Maslach (2003) argue that “both material rewards and opportunities for intrinsic satisfaction” are important for individuals (p. 97). Community includes social interaction, teamwork, and social support. An increased quality in social interaction among coworkers is related to higher engagement, and thus, lower burnout. In terms of support, community focuses on “social support from supervisors, coworkers, and family members” (Leiter & Maslach, 2003, p. 98). The area of fairness is understood as “the extent to which decisions at work are perceived as being fair and people are treated with respect” (Leiter & Maslach, 2003, p. 98). Fairness includes a consideration of others and their perspectives (Leiter & Maslach, 1999; 2003). The final area is values, which Leiter and Maslach (2003) argue is “at the heart of people’s relationship with their work” (p. 99). This area focuses on the alignment of organizational and individual values. Issues arise when there is continued and significant mismatch between an employee’s values and those of their workplace.

Leiter and Maslach’s (2003) Areas of Worklife Mediation Model proposes not only that the more mismatches between a person and the organization in these six areas, the more likely a person is to experience burnout, but also that there are more complex relationships between the six areas and the three dimensions of burnout. According to this model, control is the central factor that influences all areas of burnout except for values, and workload leads directly to emotional exhaustion. Their model also argues that values is the mediating factor between the organizational areas and the dimensions of burnout. See Figure 1.

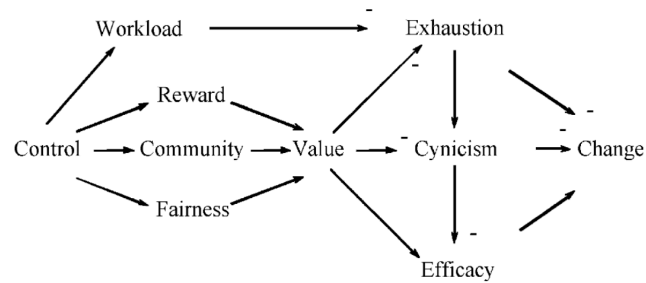


Figure 1. Mediation Model (Leiter & Maslach, 2003)

Connecting this theoretical model with outcomes of burnout and loss of passion, rather than employee perception of organizational change as in the model above, leads to the following conceptual model of organizational influences on burnout and loss of passion (Figure 2). Similar to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which states there are five interconnected systems or contexts that make up an individual's ecological environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1995), the current model argues there are multiple systems an academic affairs professional must navigate and is impacted by in the larger organizational context of the college or university at which they work (context 1). In addition to the university itself, these professionals also work within a department or program within that university (context 2). Because these professionals work directly with students, students are also an important context (context 3). Different cultures can exist within these three different areas of the organizational context, and the areas of work life identified by Leiter and Maslach (1999; 2003) can exist within each context. Thus, as Leiter and Maslach (1999; 2003) generally hypothesized, mismatch within these areas influences burnout and these areas influence one another. It is hypothesized that mismatch between work life areas in multiple contexts will increase the likelihood of burnout and loss of passion.

What individuals bring with them into these contexts will impact their experiences. Such inputs include personality traits (Tarver et al., 1999; Berwick, 1992), including level of work passion one initially has (Vallerand et al., 2003; 2010); prior work experience, including total

years of experience in the field and functional area, years of work in one's current position, and the amount and quality of training one has received for their current position (e.g. Mullen et al., 2018; Scott, 1992; Fore et al., 2002); education, including level and type of degree and relevant training received in one's graduate program (Renn & Hodges, 2007); and demographic characteristics like gender, as differences have been noted between males and females in the three subscales of burnout (e.g. Howard-Hamilton, 1998; Scott, 1992; Gong et al., 2013).

Currently, burnout and loss of passion are both listed as outcomes, though the relationship between work passion and burnout will be explored within the study to understand if they are separate outcomes or more interrelated, as suggested by Carbonneau et al. (2008). In addition, more positive outcomes, such as job satisfaction and engagement, are included because positive experiences and matches between an individual's and organization's work areas could reduce burnout and loss of passion and lead to such positive outcomes.

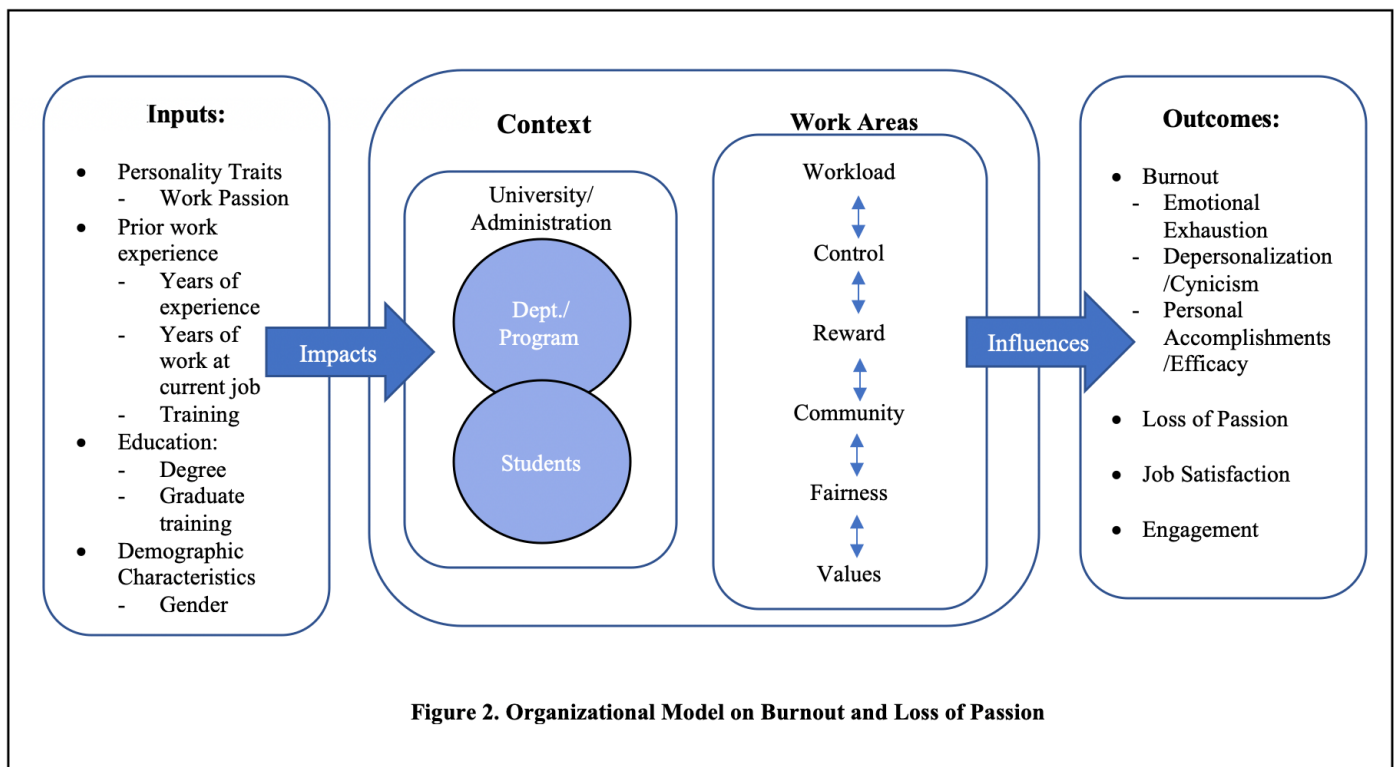


Figure 2. Organizational Model on Burnout and Loss of Passion

Significance of the Study

Previous literature on burnout and attrition has focused on causes of these outcomes and has yet to address practices that support staff by reducing negative outcomes, such as burnout and job stress. This gap has been noted in previous and more recent literature (Brewer & Clippard, 2002; Mullen et al., 2018). In one study that examined burnout and job satisfaction among professionals who work in Student Support Services (SSS), a branch of the federally funded TRIO programs, Brewer and Clippard (2002) state that organizational policies “within [SSS] programs that decrease the likelihood of burnout and increase job satisfaction” for professionals is an important avenue for future research (p. 184). While the population in Brewer and Clippard’s (2002) study was very narrow, the question of what practices can help reduce burnout and increase job satisfaction for higher education professionals is still being asked almost two decades later. In their study on job stress, burnout, and job satisfaction for student affairs professionals, Mullen et al. (2018) notes areas of future research to include “the effectiveness of professional development or educational training interventions at preventing job stress and burnout” and “to qualitatively examine strategies to prevent stress among” this population (p. 105).

Little research has focused specifically on issues of burnout for staff who work specific student populations and staff working in academic affairs. The closest research found thus far is Brewer and Clippard (2002), who studied SSS professionals; other research on burnout in higher education has studied student affairs professionals (Mullen et al., 2018; Marshall et al., 2016) and related research on Racial Battle Fatigue has focused on faculty (Chancellor, 2019; Walkington, 2017; Johnson et al., 2018).

Related to burnout is job stress and job satisfaction, and these terms, as well as the relationship between them, have been well studied in the literature (e.g., Marshall et al., 2016; Mullen et al., 2018). In addition to burnout, loss of passion was also identified as a reason for student affairs professionals' turnover, though it was not clearly defined (Marshall et al., 2016). Work passion has been studied within the last two decades and has been applied to fields such as entrepreneurship (Cardon et al., 2009), nursing (Vallerand et al., 2010), and K-12 Education (Carbonneau et al., 2008; Fernet et al., 2014). Some studies have examined the relationship between passion and burnout and have found passion to be a mediator of burnout (Vallerand et al., 2010), as well as other factors such as job satisfaction being a mediator between passion and burnout (Fernet et al., 2014). Thus, an area of future research is understanding more about work passion within higher education and its relationship with burnout.

In order to address these gaps, I will contribute to research on burnout in higher education by examining burnout and loss of passion for academic affairs professionals who work with at-risk students and identifying practices that reduce these outcomes. Thus, the current study will add to existing literature on burnout in higher education by studying a new population (academic affairs professionals who work students on probation and in conditional admission programs), understanding how previously identified causes of burnout apply to and are experienced by this population, and exploring the concept and experience of work passion, as well as connecting it to the areas of worklife within the higher education context.

The current study is important for higher education professionals who work directly with at-risk student populations so they can better understand their job and the personal impacts their profession can have. The more aware professionals are, the more they can intentionally seek support and practices to help reduce burnout. In addition, the current study is significant to

university administrators as they consider programs and policies regarding university employees and their overall institutional culture. It is also important for supervisors of such professionals in assigning and balancing job responsibilities, creating a supportive departmental culture, and considering support and development for their employees.

Case Study Description

The qualitative section of the current study interviews professionals working with academic probation and conditionally admitted students at a single institution, which is referred to as “Southeast University” throughout the study in order to maintain anonymity and protect participants’ identities. A relatively young institution in higher education, Southeast University is a public, 4-year institution that serves approximately 10,000 undergraduate (who make up the majority of the student population) and graduate students. Accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges & Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), Southeast University is classified by the Carnegie Classifications of Institutions of Higher Education as a Master’s – Larger Programs institution. The institution offers a wide array of bachelor and master’s degree programs, as well as a small number of doctoral programs added in recent years. Academic programs include education, theater, marine science, and a range of other business, science, and humanities programs.

In addition to academic degree programs, Southeast University has two conditional admission programs and other academic support programs, including an honors college, accelerated degree programs, and academic probation programs. The institution employs approximately 500 full-time faculty members and 900 full-time staff members. The academic support department that is the focus of the qualitative case study includes 12 full-time staff members and houses both conditional admission programs (though admission decisions are made

through the admissions office) and two academic support programs, one of which is an academic probation program. Staff members work primarily with these populations of students, as well as students referred to their office by faculty and staff. With the exception of supervisory level professionals, who have different primary job responsibilities, staff members' primary job responsibilities include teaching and working with students in one-on-one meetings that focus on academic skill development (distinguishing their positions from academic advising).

Definition of Terms

- *Academic probation*: within the context of the case study department at Southeast University, students on academic probation have earned less than 30 credit hours at the institution and have less than a 2.0 cumulative GPA (the GPA required for good academic standing at the institution).
- *Academic support department*: case study department at Southeast University; description provided above.
- *At-risk students*: undergraduate college students who are either on academic probation and/or are students admitted to the institution via a conditional admission program.
- *Conditional admission program 1*: one of two conditional admission programs at Southeast University; based on standardized test scores.
- *Conditional admission program 2*: one of two conditional admission programs at Southeast University; based on standardized test scores and high school GPA.
- *Southeast University*: case study institution; case study description provided above.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Overview

The purpose of this literature review is to better understand the concept of burnout and how this concept is currently understood within higher education. Decades of prior research on burnout is far reaching and applies primarily to helping professions, such as nursing, social work, and counseling (e.g., Belicki & Woolcott, 1996; Aiken et al., 2002; Drake & Yadama, 1996; Mullen & Gutierrez, 2016). In the field of education, research has focused on elementary and secondary education teachers with a large emphasis on special education (e.g., Schwab et al., 1986; Russell et al., 1987; Fore et al., 2002). There is less research, however, on burnout within higher education. Even within the higher education burnout research, most literature focuses on student affairs professions, such as housing and residence life (e.g., Howard-Hamilton, 1998; Mullen et al., 2018). In terms of methodology, a vast majority of studies are quantitative. While this provides statistical significance and has contributed greatly to the understanding of burnout, including operationalized definitions, measurement, and causes, there lacks a deeper understanding of the experiences of individuals navigating burnout. The current study will fill such gaps in the literature by exploring burnout and loss of passion for academic affairs professionals, particularly those who work with at-risk populations, and by conducting qualitative research, in addition to quantitative measurements of burnout and work passion, in a mixed methods study.

The following sections outline research on burnout and related concepts, sense of calling and work passion, and theoretical framework. The first section describes the history and evolution of the study of burnout, models of burnout, and related concepts, including job satisfaction, job stress, and individual and organizational factors, within the field of higher education and significant findings from other helping professions. The second section describes

work passion and related concepts (sense of calling) and the relationship between burnout and work passion. The third section examines work within the context of the Areas of Worklife Model, which is the theoretical framework used in the current study.

Burnout

Background & History

“Where there used to be a vital spark and the flame of life was burning bright, it is now dark and chilly.” – Schaufeli & Enzmann (1998, p. 1)

Research on burnout first emerged in the 1970s. The first well-known study on burnout was conducted by American psychiatrist Herbert Freudenberger, the “originator of the burnout syndrome,” in 1974 (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998, p. 2). His study examined the experiences of volunteer staff at a free addiction clinic in New York City; he found staff experienced a gradual reduction in motivation and commitment, as well as diminishing levels of energy. Freudenberger was the first to use the term “burnout” to label the syndrome and to describe it and its emotional and physical impacts, such as headaches, sleeplessness, and anger (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). During the mid-1970s, social psychologist Christina Maslach, also (and independently) identified burnout among human services professions she was studying, including day-care workers and policemen. Maslach has since become a preeminent researcher on burnout and developer of the Maslach Burnout Inventory, the most widely used measurement scale of burnout (Schaufeli et al., 1993). In her early work, Maslach studied the consequences of burnout, including “a deterioration in the quality of care or service that is provided by... staff” and poor physical and mental health, as well as its connection to other factors including “job turnover, absenteeism, and low morale” (Maslach & Jackson, 1981, p. 100). This early, pioneer phase of burnout research was much less empirical and relied more on descriptions of burnout based on individual cases

and anecdotal evidence. In the 1980s, burnout research entered a second, empirical phase during which models and measurement scales, like the Maslach Burnout Inventory and the Tedium Measure, were developed and burnout began to be studied internationally. Most research during this time focused on job factors, such as job satisfaction and job stress, which have since been commonly studied, along with other personal and demographic factors (Schaufeli et al., 1993).

Conceptual Definition & Models

The most commonly used definition of burnout comes from Maslach's three-dimensional conceptualization, which includes emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment (Maslach, 2003). Maslach (2003) argues that emotional exhaustion is at the core of burnout and involves feeling emotionally drained and overwhelmed, often resulting from an over emotional involvement. Emotional exhaustion is also described as feeling that one's emotional resources have been depleted and one is unable to give their self fully anymore (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998; Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). Depersonalization involves an emotional detachment towards others, often viewing others negatively and cynically (Maslach, 2003). Maslach (2003) describes this concept with a metaphor, in which she explains "the individual is viewing people through rust colored-glasses – developing a poor opinion of them, expecting the worst of them, and even actively disliking them" (p. 5). The third dimension, personal accomplishment, involves a reduction in, rather than an increase in, like emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. A reduction in personal accomplishment often includes feeling like a failure and as if a person performs their job inadequately (Maslach, 2003).

The order in which these three dimensions of burnout occur and their independence from one another has been contested in the literature (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Drake & Yadama, 1996). Maslach (2003) originally describes burnout as beginning with emotional exhaustion,

then developing depersonalization, and lastly, the emergence of feelings of reduced personal accomplishment. Though she later argues it is not a “process model,” she does reiterate “the appropriateness of this original sequencing” (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993, p. 624). Other research has also supported this order of the dimensions of burnout (Leiter, 1988; Leiter & Meechan, 1986; Leiter & Maslach, 1988; Lee & Ashforth, 1993), particularly in support of emotional exhaustion preceding depersonalization (Drake & Yadama, 1996). However, personal accomplishment is often seen as independent from emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Other research has found no support and has argued instead that the dimensions are completely independent of one another (Schwab & Iwanicki, 1982).

A different model of burnout, noted from here on out as the Phase Model, argues a different sequential ordering of the dimensions and that burnout occurs in phases (Golembiewski et al., 1986). The Phase Model argues that depersonalization occurs first and is required in order to feel reductions in personal accomplishment, which is necessary for and is followed by emotional exhaustion (Golembiewski et al., 1986). The model includes eight phases, each of which includes a high or low level of each dimension of burnout. The higher the phase, the higher level of burnout. In a study on a large, federal agency, Gabris and Ihrke (1996) used the phase model as their theoretical framework for burnout and found 545 of their participants were in phases six through eight of burnout. Older participants were found to have higher burnout while adequate staffing and training, higher job satisfaction, and meaningfulness at work were associated with lower phases of burnout. Cordes and Dougherty (1993) note limitations with some studies that utilize the phase model, which include the use of cross-sectional design and determination of causality or order of burnout.

In a longitudinal study, Lee and Ashforth (1993) test these two competing models of burnout and found the Leiter and Maslach (1988) model to be slightly more valid for new employees and supervisors/managers, as well as for longitudinal studies. Echoing Maslach (2003), Lee and Ashforth (1993) also stress the significance of emotional exhaustion in burnout. They found emotional exhaustion was impacted by role stress via social support and by work autonomy. Furthermore, emotional exhaustion directly affected turnover and was a mediator between autonomy, social support, and role stress and depersonalization and personal accomplishment. The authors also note the role of organizational practices and how that affects burnout for professionals, an aspect of burnout that the current study will be exploring (Lee & Ashforth, 1993). Utilizing hierarchical regression and structural equation modeling, Lee and Ashforth (1993) found emotional exhaustion preceded and lead to depersonalization; however, no support was found for personal accomplishment, thus providing partial support of Leiter and Maslach's (1988) model. Lee and Ashforth (1993) argue that the Leiter and Maslach (1988) model fit the data in their study slightly better than the Golembiewski et al. (1986) model, but that neither model fit well. In their revised model, Lee and Ashforth (1993) adjusted the Leiter and Maslach (1988) model and found emotional exhaustion led to both depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment.

Job Satisfaction and Morale

Job satisfaction is one of the most commonly studied factors in burnout research and its relationship with burnout and intent to leave is often assessed. A similar construct to job satisfaction that has also appeared in higher education research is morale. Rosser and Javinar (2003) note differences in the literature between these two terms and argue for further and clearer distinction between them. According to Rosser and Javinar (2003), job satisfaction is

most often defined as an individual's attitude towards and feelings about their individual job. In contrast, morale has often been described as an individual's attitude towards the organization and how they perceive overall working conditions (Rosser & Javinar, 2003).

In their national study on mid-level student affairs administrators, Rosser and Javinar (2003) studied the quality of work and intent to leave of 1,166 student affairs leaders. They wanted to understand professional and institutional issues that could affect satisfaction, morale, and intention to leave. Via structural equation modeling, Rosser and Javinar (2003) found that work life, job satisfaction, and job morale had direct and indirect impacts on intent to leave. They found years working at an institution and salary each had statistically significant, negative relationships with job morale. Salary also had a significant, negative relationship with intent to leave (Rosser & Javinar, 2003).

In an earlier study on student affairs professionals, Berwick (1992) conducted a smaller quantitative study on 240 middle- and upper-level student affairs professionals from four-year comprehensive universities in Minnesota. Utilizing Pearson Correlations, stepwise regression, and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (among other scales), the study examined the relationship between job satisfaction and burnout. The study found job satisfaction to be one of the largest predictors of lower stress levels. There was a statistically significant and positive relationship between job satisfaction and commitment to the organization, as well as between strength of organizational culture and commitment to the organization (Berwick, 1992). In relation to burnout, the study found a significant, negative relationship between job satisfaction and each subscale of the Maslach Burnout Inventory, which includes emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced levels of personal accomplishment. In addition, in the regression model, job satisfaction explained 19% of the variance for emotional exhaustion (Berwick, 1992).

Berwick (1992) notes changes in higher education, including financial impacts like increasing costs of tuition and reductions in state support and social issues like a poor racial climate, and hypothesizes that such contexts negatively impact professionals by increasing stress. Though the study is now almost 30 years old, higher education is still battling the challenges it describes. State support of higher education has continued to decrease, and the country simultaneously is facing the COVID-19 pandemic (which has worsened the financial state higher education was already in) and an extremely negative and tense racial climate (Friga, 2020; Horowitz et al., 2020). Thus, the author of the current study also expects higher education professionals to be experiencing high levels of stress and burnout related to such impacts.

In a study on both student and academic affairs professionals, Tarver et al. (1999) explored the relationship between personality characteristics and job satisfaction by studying locus of control for 327 student affairs professionals, specifically those in director position levels and above, and 199 academic affairs professionals. Though the study was quantitative, Tarver et al. (1999) used both random and snowball sampling; random sampling was used to identify the student affairs professionals in the study, but snowball sampling was used to identify the academic affairs professionals in the study by asking those in student affairs to provide names of those in academic affairs who held similar position levels. The study reported a statistically significant, positive relationship between internal locus of control and job satisfaction for both student and academic affairs professionals at four-year institutions (but not for those at two-year community colleges). Among student affairs professionals, Tarver et al. (1999) found a similar relationship for professionals who were Caucasian, male, female, younger, older, had a doctorate degree, did not have a doctorate degree and worked at a university, which suggests no gender, age, or education differences. Among academic affairs professionals, Tarver et al. (1999)

reported a similar relationship for professionals who were Caucasian, male, younger, older, had a doctorate degree and worked at a university, implying potential gender and education differences for those in academic affairs. The study also reported a statistically significant difference between older administrators, finding the relationship between internal locus of control and job satisfaction to be strongest for student affairs administrators.

TRIO Programs Staff

There were two studies found in the literature that examine burnout among professionals who work in TRIO programs, which most closely compares to the population of academic affairs professionals in the current study. Both populations work with at-risk students (which can include disadvantaged students that TRIO programs support, such as low-income and first-generation students (Brewer & Clippard, 2002), as well as students on probation and who are conditionally admitted to institutions) in an academic support capacity and the students these professionals work with may overlap. For example, a student who works with a TRIO program could also be on academic probation at some point. Furthermore, the level of position held by TRIO program professionals is also similar to those who work most directly with conditionally admitted and probation students. Brewer and Clippard (2002) conducted a national study on job satisfaction and burnout for 166 SSS professionals, one of the three programs that comprise TRIO. Similar to Berwick (1992), Brewer and Clippard (2002) also found significant relationships between job satisfaction and burnout. They too found a significant, negative relationship between job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion, but a positive relationship between job satisfaction and personal accomplishment; as job satisfaction increased, emotional exhaustion decreased, and personal accomplishment increased. Brewer and Clippard (2002) also measured burnout using the Maslach Burnout Inventory and used regression analysis to analyze

the data, though they used Spearman Rho and rank transformation rather than stepwise regression as in Brewer's (1992) study. In their regression model, the three dimensions of burnout explained 25% of variance in job satisfaction (Brewer & Clippard, 2002). Though the study hypothesized that SSS professionals would be susceptible to burnout because of close contact with others, role conflict, and a bureaucratic work environment, lower levels of burnout and higher job satisfaction were actually found (Brewer & Clippard, 2002). While this study incorporated a wider range of professionals in terms of location and institution than Berwick (1992), the study also has limited generalizability because of the small sample size.

Using different methodology and focusing more on perception and institutional support, Wallace et al. (2004) conducted a qualitative study on how TRIO offices feel marginalized within their institution and how they experience their work. Though the study does not assess job satisfaction and burnout directly like Brewer and Clippard (2002) and Berwick (1992), the study's findings include themes of dissatisfaction, institutional support, and feeling valued by the institution, which impact burnout and are expected to influence academic affairs professionals' burnout experiences in the current study. Wallace et al. (2004) conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 10 participants, who represented eight different TRIO programs at two different institutions, an R1 university and a comprehensive/regional university. Among both institutions, researchers found staff who work with marginalized students (TRIO staff and students) often felt marginalized by their university. One theme that emerged was institutions' lack of understanding regarding the program. For example, participants noted because the programs are federally funded, they are viewed as revenue generating and so the institution does not provide additional financial support (Wallace et al., 2004). Another theme was lack of recognition of the programs and their successes. Some participants shared that their university

believes having such programs works towards diversity goals, but their institution never attributed any diversity successes or improvements to the TRIO programs. Others shared that their TRIO programs have made great progress, but that they were not included in university reports or included on committees (Wallace et al., 2004). Overall, participants did not feel valued by the university, faculty, other staff, or students; however, they did feel strong support from those who actually understood and/or worked with the program. Related to burnout, participants reported dissatisfaction with their job and reduced opportunities for advancement (Wallace et al., 2004). A third theme that emerged within the data was a marginalization of the programs in relation to other offices on campus. Participants noted they did not usually work together with other support services on campus and there was often competition between them. In addition, participants felt the institution did not understand the office's lack of power and status on campus. The study noted support needed from the institutions included dialogue, recognition and understanding of their program, inclusion on university committees, and networking with other campus partners (Wallace et al., 2004).

Intent to Leave

Related to role perception and job satisfaction, Tull (2014) conducted a national study on 228 senior student affairs administrators' intent to leave. In contrast with the studies above that examined four-year institutions, Tull (2014) studied administrators from two-year community colleges. Like Wallace et al. (2004), Tull (2014) explores role perception, but does so through a quantitative lens and uses Pearson R correlations and regression analysis. The study found a positive relationship between job dissatisfaction and job demands in the sense that participants were more likely to experience job dissatisfaction when they struggled to meet job demands. Regarding intent to leave, Tull (2014) reported participants were more likely to leave when they

viewed their role negatively, were uncertain about job expectations, and had higher job dissatisfaction, the latter of which was previously supported by Rosser and Javinar (2003).

In an earlier study, Tull (2006) had also examined job satisfaction and intent to leave among student affairs professionals, but for new professionals, as opposed to senior level administrators, and they conducted a study on 435 new professionals from a variety of institution types. Supervision is an important organizational component and influence of job satisfaction and stress (Tull, 2006; Shupp & Arminio, 2012; Jo, 2008). Tull (2006) was interested more specifically in the impact of synergistic supervision, a specific approach to supervision. Tull (2006) hypothesized there would be a positive relationship between perceived level of synergistic supervision and job satisfaction and a negative relationship between synergistic supervision and intent to leave, both of which were found to be statistically significant. Tull (2006) also hypothesized that gender and race would influence the relationship a new professional had with their supervisor, which was only partially supported. A positive relationship was expected to be stronger for supervisors and new professionals of the same gender and, independently, of the same race. While there was a statistically significant and positive relationship found for female supervisors and new professionals, opposite gender relationships were actually found to have stronger statistical significance than same gender relationships. Regarding race, the study reported a significant, positive relationship between synergistic supervision and job satisfaction for white supervisors with both white and non-white supervisees.

Institutional Control

One study examined job satisfaction differences between public and private institutions. Volkwein and Parmley (2000) collected 1,200 survey responses from administrators at 120

public and private doctoral institutions. Surveys measured a multitude of factors perceived to influence job satisfaction, including campus characteristics, personal characteristics, perceived work climate, and job satisfaction. Volkwein and Parmley (2000) hypothesized there would be differences between public and private institutions for satisfaction with extrinsic rewards, such as salary and promotion. While initially significant, the relationship between external rewards and job satisfaction was no longer significant once controls were added to the stepwise regression model. Rather than external rewards, teamwork and minimal interpersonal conflict were job factors identified as most important for both public and private institutions (Volkwein & Parmley, 2000).

In another study on job satisfaction and public institutions, the relationship between state regulation and job satisfaction at the managerial level was examined (Volkwein et al., 1999). Volkwein et al. (1999) hypothesized that job dissatisfaction would increase with overregulation in higher education. Like Volkwein and Parmley (2000), this study was conducted with a national sample of doctoral institutions; this study's sample included responses from 122 public, RI or RII or Doctoral I or II universities with at least one university from each state included. This study included multiple organizational and personal factors that impact job satisfaction in the regression models; personal factors included age, sex, level of education, length of service, rank, and area of work (Volkwein et al., 1999). Similar to Volkwein and Parmley (2000), Volkwein et al. (1999) suggested teamwork and interpersonal relationships have significant impacts on job satisfaction, as teamwork and interpersonal stress had the largest influence on job satisfaction across all five regression models included in the study. In their model for intrinsic job satisfaction, 28% of variance in overall job satisfaction was explained by those two factors along with workload stress and a perceived controlling environment. Results included a positive

relationship between administrative teamwork and job satisfaction and a negative relationship between job satisfaction and each of the following: interpersonal work relationships, workload stress, and perceived controlling environment. In their model for extrinsic satisfaction, undergraduate degree quality, teamwork, administrative rank, inadequate funding, and interpersonal stress explained 14% of variance in job satisfaction. There was a positive relationship found between job satisfaction and undergraduate degree quality and teamwork, and a negative relationship between job satisfaction and administrative rank, inadequate funding, and interpersonal stress. Their model on work conditions explained the most variance, as workload stress, interpersonal stress, and teamwork explained 41% of variance in job satisfaction. A positive relationship between teamwork and job satisfaction was found, as in Volkwein and Parmely's (2000) study. In addition, results suggested a negative relationship between job satisfaction and work stress and interpersonal stress. The last regression model focused on work relationships and found a negative relationship between job satisfaction and interpersonal climate and perceived regulatory climate. A positive relationship was reported between job satisfaction and teamwork, undergraduate quality, and administrative rank. 20% of variance in job satisfaction was explained by these five factors.

Job Stress

Another construct often studied in relation to burnout, and often with job satisfaction as well, is job stress. In the most recent higher education study to date related to burnout, job stress, and job satisfaction, authors argued job stress and burnout would be likely among student affairs professionals (Mullen et al., 2018). Mullen et al. (2018) conducted a cross-sectional, national quantitative study on 789 student affairs professionals from across 122 higher education institutions. In contrast with other studies discussed thus far, Mullen et al. (2018) used the

Burnout Measure – short version scale as opposed to the more commonly used Maslach Burnout Inventory scale to measure burnout. Using multiple linear regression analysis and Pearson product-moment correlation, Mullen et al (2018) reported a strong positive correlation between stress and burnout. They found job stress and burnout to be statistically significant and negative predictors of job satisfaction. In their regression model, job stress and burnout predicted 49% of variance in job satisfaction. Burnout was also found to be a statistically significant but positive predictor of turnover intention. In terms of personal characteristics and turnover, there was a small, negative correlation found between age and years of experience and turnover intentions. In other words, younger student affairs professionals were more likely to leave their position than older professionals (Mullen et al., 2018). Though 21% of participants reported moderate to high burnout symptoms, average burnout and job stress was low among the sample and average job satisfaction was high. Though this study was a strong quantitative study, as the authors adjusted for outliers and checked statistical assumptions before proceeding with data analysis, limitations include the self-reported data and a majority white, female sample. In addition, most participants in the study were academic advisors.

In another study on job stress in higher education, Scott (1992) studied job stressors and coping strategies amongst chief student affairs officers and reported gender differences in terms of significant stressors and coping strategies. In comparison to Ward (1995) and Mullen et al. (2018), this study had the smallest sample with only 59 responses to the stress scales used in the study, and the study utilized analysis of variance (ANOVA) rather than regression analysis. Scott (1992) reported that women indicated higher levels of stress than men on all stress questionnaire items. Results indicated the following statistically significant differences among personal and university characteristics: women were more stressed at home and at work compared to men;

professionals in private institutions reported more stress than professionals working at public institutions; professionals at smaller institutions had more stress than professionals working at larger institutions; and professionals who had children living at home reported more stress than professionals without children at home. However, in interpreting these results, demographic characteristics of the sample must also be considered. For example, Scott (1992) also reports differences in gender and in the study's sample; women had slightly more children living at home, more men were employed at public institutions, and more women were employed in private institutions. The most significant stressors for women, in order of significance, were death or serious illness of a family member or close friend, not enough time to complete work, having a serious or repeated illness themselves, change in relationship, and new supervisor. The most significant stressors for men also included new supervisor and having a serious or repeated illness themselves, though the level of significance for these stressors differed. For men, the most significant stressors in order of significance included new supervisor, relocation, unresolved conflict with supervisor, having a serious or repeated illness themselves, or experiencing a change in job position (Scott, 1992). In addition to the questionnaire, participants were also asked to complete a checklist in which they rated the amount of stress they experience in relation to each of their job responsibilities. In contrast with the questionnaire, means among men and women were relatively similar and the highest amount of stress for both men and women was related to personnel decisions, which included hiring, firing, and disciplining employees. Women did, however, report statistically significant more stress regarding preparing reports (Scott, 1992).

Scott (1992) also studied how these male and female student affairs administrators coped with stress. In terms of how these professionals generally handled stress, more men noted that

they had a hobby, more men were willing to take work home than women, and more women than men said they moved to a different location for work, which seemingly reflects that men reported relocation as a significant stressor. In terms of coping strategies, both men and women reported exercise, walking/running, and gardening/yard work as physical coping strategies utilized. Both men and women also reported delegating responsibilities and listening to music as a psychological coping strategy, though men and women had less psychological coping strategies in common. For example, men noted watching television/movies, decision making, and time management as additional psychological coping strategies while women reported the importance of friendships/support groups/networking, goal setting/setting priorities, and eliminating the source of stress.

In an earlier study on new student affairs professionals, Ward (1995) studied the relationship between role stress in terms of role conflict and role ambiguity and job satisfaction and intention to leave. Though the study does not directly study burnout, role conflict and role ambiguity have been noted in other literature as important influences on burnout (e.g., Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Leiter & Maslach, 2003), and thus, the study provides insight into the current study. Role ambiguity is defined as something that “occurs when information needed to guide one’s behavior is incomplete, insufficient, unclear, or absent” (Ward, 1995, p. 36). Role conflict “occurs when two or more incompatible expectations for one’s behavior exists” (Ward, 1995, p. 36). Role conflict can also occur in four different ways: intra-sender, inter-sender, inter-role, and person-role. Intra-sender role conflict occurs when the incompatible expectations come from the same person. On the other hand, inter-sender occurs when the incompatible expectations come from two different people. One experiences inter-role conflict when the expectations for their role with one group is incompatible with the expectations for their role in another group. Lastly,

person-role conflict is experienced when the expectations of one's role is incongruent with a person's personal expectations or values (Ward, 1995). Person-role conflict mostly closely relates to the values area of the Six Areas of Worklife model, which is the theoretical framework for the current study.

A quantitative study that also used Pearson product-moment correlations, like Mullen et al. (2018), Ward (1995) had a much smaller sample and studied specifically new professionals, which are defined as those who hold a professional degree and have been in the student affairs field for less than two years. Ward (1995) also utilized regression analysis, though the study used stepwise regression rather than multiple linear regression. Results suggested strongly statistically significant negative relationships between role ambiguity and job satisfaction and between role conflict and job satisfaction ($p > .01$). Furthermore, results found a statistically significant negative relationship between job satisfaction and intent to leave and between role ambiguity and autonomy. Positive, statistically significant relationships were found between role ambiguity and intention to leave and role conflict and autonomy (Ward, 1995). Overall, Ward (1995) found role ambiguity to be a bigger predictor of job satisfaction and intention to leave than role conflict. In conclusion, Ward (1995) discussed recommendations moving forward, including needing to discuss role stress amongst professionals and the need for managers to create empowering environments with role autonomy for their employees.

Other Individual Characteristics

Much of the literature on burnout, job satisfaction, and job stress so far have focused on organizational influences, such as the supervisor, role conflict and ambiguity, and teamwork and interpersonal conflict. This section will focus on individual characteristics that may influence a

person's susceptibility to burnout and how they experience it, which informs the inputs component of the current study's conceptual framework.

In a quantitative study on 344 student affairs professionals, Howard-Hamilton (1998) studied burnout between men and women and found gendered effects of burnout. The study utilized the Maslach Burnout Inventory and multiple statistical tests to analyze data, including chi-square, t-tests, correlation, and two-way ANOVA, though it was not clearly explained why each test was used. Results suggest that women had significantly higher means on emotional exhaustion, meaning they were more likely than men to experience emotional exhaustion. Furthermore, women who had been in the field for more than five years and earned more than \$45,000 a year were likely to experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion, seemingly corresponding with higher ranked positions that may come with additional job responsibilities and stress. Two-way ANOVA results found two main effects and two interaction effects. The first main effect was gender, as discussed above, and the second was type of institution; higher levels of emotional exhaustion were found for professionals who worked at private institutions (Howard-Hamilton, 1998). Though Scott (1992) studied job stress, and not specifically burnout, the findings from their study are similar to those from Howard-Hamilton's (1998) study in that Scott (1992) found those who worked at private institutions experienced more stress than those who worked at public institutions. In contrast, Volkwein and Parmley (2000) found no significant differences for job satisfaction between those who worked at private and public institutions once controls were included in their model. The interaction effects included marriage and children with gender; married women had higher levels of emotional exhaustion than married men did, and women with children had higher levels of emotional exhaustion than men with children. Overall, emotional exhaustion had a positive relationship with total number of

hours worked, hours spent advising student groups, and evenings worked per week. On the other hand, emotional exhaustion had a negative relationship with the amount of sleep one received and the number of vacation days taken.

Another personality characteristic studied was “hardiness of personality” (Berwick, 1992, p. 11), which is defined as “a combination of personality characteristics that function as a resistance resource when stressful events occur” (Berwick, 1992, p. 13). That combination includes higher levels of “commitment, control, and challenge” (Berwick, 1992, p. 13). In addition to job satisfaction, as previously discussed, Berwick (1992) found “hardiness of personality” to be the other large predictor of burnout (p. 11). In the regression model, this characteristic predicted 11% of variance for the burnout dimension personal accomplishment, and also predicted some variance for emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, though the amount was insignificant.

Other Organizational Factors

Institutional fit and supervision are two organizational factors that have been noted frequently in the literature as influencers on burnout, job satisfaction, and stress. The following section discusses studies that did not directly address burnout but that do address organizational factors of fit and supervision, which have been noted in other research on burnout and will provide insight into the theoretical framework for the current study. In a longitudinal, qualitative study, Renn and Hodges (2007) studied the experiences of new professionals in student affairs. Using grounded theory and constant comparative analysis, three major themes emerged in their findings, including the importance of relationships, institutional/professional fit, and issues of competence/confidence. Furthermore, findings were also organized into chronological phases: early (before employment started/orientation), transition, and settling in. The study’s 10

participants responded monthly during these phases to open ended interview questions (Renn & Hodges, 2007). Regarding relationships, in the early phase, new professionals were concerned of what students would think of them and their performance and had concerns and anticipation about their relationships with their new colleagues. During the transition period, new professionals became more concerned about their relationship with their supervisor and finding a mentor; many expressed frustrations that their supervisor was not serving as their mentor, as many had expected. During the settling in phase, new professionals showed interest in developing relationships outside of their immediate office (Renn & Hodges, 2007).

In terms of fit, participants in the study noted they knew institutional fit was important, but either found fit hard to identify or only received one job offer and took the job because it was offered to them, not because they necessarily deemed the institution a good fit. In the early phase, participants expressed concerns about personal fit but were more focused on relationships. New professionals showed more awareness about fit and evaluated whether or not the institution was a good fit during the transition phase. During the settling in phase, new professionals decided if the institution itself, geographic location, and the student affairs profession were good fits for themselves and made the decision to stay or leave (Renn & Hodges, 2007). The final theme was competence/confidence. In the early phase, participants were most focused on basic skills and how to perform basic tasks, such as getting into their building. Participants transitioned from focusing on what they knew how to do to focusing what they needed to learn in the transition phase, and, as expected, they felt more confident during the settling in phase (Renn & Hodges, 2007). Renn and Hodges (2007) offer implications for supervisors, which focus on reducing role ambiguity. These implications include providing new professionals with clear

goals and expectations, clarifying the roles of supervisors and mentors, and helping new professionals “read the organizational context” (Renn & Hodges, 2007, p. 387).

In another qualitative study on the experiences of new professionals, Shupp and Arminio (2012) studied the needs of new professionals regarding supervision and argued that synergistic supervision best supports new professionals. Similar to Tull (2006), the current study explores synergistic supervision, but in a qualitative rather than quantitative approach and does not explore variables of race and gender. As does the current study, Shupp and Arminio (2012) apply Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory to their framework to show the multiple contexts their population of interest spans in an institution of higher education. In their study, Shupp and Arminio (2012) argue that supervision covers three contexts, including the supervisor themselves, the supervisee, and the institution. Results were based on autobiographical interviews with five participants (who had been in similar graduate programs in Pennsylvania and had been in the student affairs field for less than three years), which were analyzed using the constant comparative analysis method. The following themes emerged: supervisor accessibility, meaningful interactions, formal evaluations, unique supervision, and priority of professional development (Shupp & Arminio, 2012). Participants in this study wanted a supervisor who was accessible, approachable, communicative, and provided guidance. Furthermore, they desired to have meaningful interactions with their supervisor; some participants noted a lack of focus on job performance, improvement, and needs in their one-on-one meetings (Shupp & Arminio, 2012). Participants also craved formal evaluations and professional development. Regarding formal evaluations, most participants did receive one but were disappointed that was the only time they received feedback from their supervisor and got to discuss their professional goals. This also demonstrated the importance of unique supervision; supervisors need to be aware of

their supervisees' needs, and that needs are different for each person, as well as how each supervisee can best be supported (Shupp & Arminio, 2012). Shupp and Arminio (2012) drew parallels between these themes and the characteristics of synergistic supervision. For example, a characteristic of synergistic supervision is "focus on competence and goals," which the authors relate to "the priority of professional development in the supervisory relationship" (Shupp & Arminio, 2012, p. 167). The authors conclude that because these themes align with these characteristics, that synergistic supervision could be an effective approach for supervisors of new professionals.

In another qualitative study, Jo (2008) studied the effects of office policies on the turnover of female administrators. Through in-depth interviews and a follow-up questionnaire with 30 administrators who had left their position at a large, private research university (the largest sample amongst qualitative studies so far), Jo (2008) found the top three reasons for turnover included conflict with one's supervisor (which was stated by over half of participants), lack of appropriate advancement opportunities (which was stated most often by those who worked in fundraising), and conflicts with their schedule. Conflict with supervisor included feeling disrespected and not being involved in decision-making. The study found that those who reported conflict with supervisor as the reason for leaving did not attempt to transfer to another department within the university, while those who reported something else as their reason for leaving did (Jo, 2008). Another influence on turnover was turnover in upper management; many participants noted frustration with experiencing many different supervisors due to a high volume of turnover above them. Though Renn and Hodges (2007) and Shupp and Arminio (2012) study new professionals and Jo (2008) studied administrators, all three studies highlight the importance

of a positive relationship with one's supervisor and how that can impact job satisfaction (Renn & Hodges, 2007) and turnover (Jo, 2008).

Other Helping Professions

Burnout originally applied to the human services fields, or helping professions, so much of burnout research thus far has focused on professions like teaching, health care, social work, and counseling. Over the last few decades, burnout research has since expanded to other fields, like business, in which some occupations are very helping focused such as customer service representatives.

Teaching

Much of the research on burnout in teaching has been quantitatively focused, has used the Maslach Burnout Inventory to measure burnout, and has used regression analysis to assess the relationship between independent variables and the dimensions of burnout (Schwab et al., 1986; Russell et al., 1987; Sarros & Sarros, 1992; Zabel & Zabel, 2001). In terms of controls within these regression models, many of these studies have included age and sex (Schwab et al., 1986; Russell et al., 1987; Sarros & Sarros, 1992; Zabel & Zabel, 2001).

In their quantitative study, Schwab et al. (1986) developed and tested a model of burnout, including individual sources and consequences of burnout as well as combinations of sources that influence burnout. Participants for this study included 339 elementary and secondary teachers from across the country; participants completed a number of scales, including scales for role ambiguity, role conflict, and the Maslach Burnout Inventory. Sources of burnout included “a combination of the individual's unmet expectations and job conditions of low participation in decision making, high levels of role conflict, a lack of freedom and autonomy, absence of social support networks, and inconsistent reward and punishment structures” (Schwab et al., 1986, p.

14). Those who experienced burnout also considered leaving the field of teaching, were absent from work more often, put in less effort in their job, and had a negatively impacted personal life (Schwab et al., 1986). A stepwise multiple regression model was used to test the relationship between the three burnout dimensions and predictors of burnout, as well as the relationship between burnout dimensions and consequences mentioned above. In the regression model for predictors, the following were found to be significantly related to burnout: “Role Conflict, Role Ambiguity, Colleague Social Support, Contingent Punishment, Participation in Decision Making, Autonomy, and the Individual's Expectations for the Job” (Schwab et al., 1986, p. 22). In this model, after controlling for age and sex, role conflict explained 24% of variance in emotional exhaustion and 12% of variance in depersonalization. Regarding personal accomplishment, role autonomy explained 12% of variance for that dimension. Together, the five organizational predictors explained 33% of variance in emotional exhaustion, 17% of variance in depersonalization, and 13% of variance in low personal accomplishment (Schwab et al., 1986). Colleague social support was found to have a statistically significant relationship with all three dimensions of burnout; specifically, this type of social support had a positive relationship with personal accomplishment and a negative relationship with emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Schwab et al., 1986).

The regression model on consequences and burnout found that teachers “experiencing higher levels of emotional exhaustion were more likely to leave teaching, be absent from work, and have their home and personal life adversely affected” (Schwab et al., 1986, p. 26). Teachers who were experiencing depersonalization and low perceived levels of personal accomplishment “tended to exert less effort and suffered problems with their home life” (Schwab et al., 1986, p. 26). Schwab et al. (1986) provide several suggestions to reduce burnout and associated

consequences. One of those suggestions includes the “Establishing of clear lines of authority and responsibility to help reduce ambiguity and conflict” (Schwab et al., 1986, p. 27). Another suggestion was the “Encouraging of the development of mentor relationships” (Schwab et al., 1986, p. 27). Some 20 years later, both suggestions were also discussed by Renn and Hodges (2007), who noted the importance of mentors and understanding the difference between mentors and supervisors. Lastly, Schwab et al. (1986) note other predictors that had been mentioned in the literature, but had not been included in their study, and thus warrant future research, including “student discipline” and “dealing with the emotional problems of students” (Schwab et al., 1986, p. 27). Related to the current study, these are two factors that academic affairs professionals who work with probation students predominately, as well as those working with conditionally admitted students, are likely to experience due to their role and may affect burnout among this population.

Another quantitative study on elementary/secondary teacher burnout focused specifically on job stress, social support, and burnout (Russell et al., 1987). In addition to age and sex, Russell et al. (1987) included grade level taught as predictors of burnout in their hierarchical regression model. Predictor variables predicted between 8.6 and 19.3% of variance in burnout. Regarding the three dimensions of burnout, emotional exhaustion was higher for younger teachers and for teachers with larger class sizes. Depersonalization was higher for male teachers and those who taught secondary grade levels. Lastly, personalization scores were higher for teachers who were married and for those who taught primary grade levels (Russell et al., 1987). Teachers who had supportive supervisors and who received positive feedback were less likely to experience burnout. After controlling for personal characteristics, the regression model indicated that the number of stressful events a teacher experienced was significantly and positively related to

emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Younger teachers reported a higher number of stressful events at work, which correlated with higher levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization.

Russel et al. (1987) conducted two separate hierarchical regression models. The first model tested social support specifically in terms of support from one's network (supervisor, colleagues, etc.). These measures were the final variables entered into the hierarchical regression model, and results suggested that social support "explained from 5.0% to 6.3% of the variance in burnout scores, over and above the effects of teacher characteristics and job-related stress on burnout" (Russell et al., 1987, p. 272). Of the social support measures, "social support received from supervisors was... the only significant predictor of burnout" (Russell et al., 1987, p. 272). Teachers who had supportive supervisors scored lower on the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization scales and higher on the personal accomplishments scale, indicating "less emotional exhaustion, more positive attitudes toward students, and greater personal accomplishment" (Russell et al., 1987, p. 272). Furthermore, "as the level of supervisor support increased, the strength of the relationship between job-related stress and feelings of depersonalization decreased" (Russell et al., 1987, p. 272). The second hierarchical regression model utilized scores from the Social Provisions Scale, which "explained from 8.6% to 14.6% of the variance in burnout scores after controlling for the effects of teacher characteristics and job-related stress on burnout" (Russell et al., 1987, p. 273). Within this category of social support, teachers who felt others "respected their skills and abilities reported less emotional exhaustion, more positive attitudes toward students, and greater personal accomplishment" (Russell et al., 1987, p. 272).

Like Russell et al. (1987), Sarros and Sarros (1992) also studied social support and burnout in teachers but focused specifically on secondary school teachers and provide an international comparison, as their participants included 491 Australian teachers. Sarros and Sarros (1992) also utilized the Maslach Burnout Inventory but conducted a stepwise regression, rather than hierarchical. Results suggested support of both principal and supervisor is important, and support of one's principal specifically was a significant predictor of burnout. Sex and age were significant predictors of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Younger teachers reported higher levels of burnout, and male teachers reported significantly higher levels of depersonalization than female teachers, echoing the findings of Russell et al. (1987) (Sarros & Sarros, 1992). In their regression model, 6.2% of variance in burnout was explained by support from their principal, faculty head, and friends both within and outside of work. There was a statistically significant and negative relationship between support in these areas and both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. A significant but positive relationship was also found between these areas of support and personal accomplishment. For personal accomplishment, the types of social support teachers offered their colleagues was associated with increases in their own levels of personal accomplishment; "When teachers provided advice/information, listening/concern/trust, and feedback to their peers, their own feelings of esteem and personal accomplishment increased" (Sarros & Sarros, 1992, p. 7). The regression model showed time and listening/concern/trust to be significant predictors of emotional exhaustion and listening/concern/trust to also be a significant predictor of depersonalization. However, the authors noted that the quality of listening is extremely important, as some teachers reported that listening was actually an ineffective coping strategy for burnout (Sarros & Sarros, 1992).

Special Education. A focus of burnout research within elementary and secondary education has been special education. Zabel and Zabel (2001) replicated a study from the 1980s to assess changes in the field of special education and the relationship between individual teacher characteristics and burnout. This quantitative study included a national sample of 301 special education teachers and utilized the Maslach Burnout Inventory, but unlike the literature discussed so far, this study specifically used the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey. In contrast with the other studies methodologically, authors conducted t-tests and chi-square in addition to Pearson correlations (Zabel & Zabel, 2001). Overall, Zabel and Zabel (2001) reported that the average age, years of experience, and amount of preparation for those in their sample have increased in years since the previous study. They found that age, experience, certification, and amount of preparation were not as significantly related to burnout as in previous studies. However, they did note that older teachers reported higher levels of personal accomplishment than younger teachers. There were no significant differences found between age and any of the three burnout subscales, whereas the previous study had found age was a significant predictor for both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Zabel & Zabel, 2001). In terms of experience, Zabel and Zabel (2001) reported a significant and positive relationship between “regular teaching experience” and personal accomplishment; in contrast with Zabel and Zabel’s (2001) study, the previous study reported a similar significant relationship between such experience and all three dimensions of burnout. In further contrast, the earlier study found a significant negative relationship between special education experience and depersonalization, which was not found in the study’s replication. Lastly, the earlier study found those with master’s degrees had higher levels of personal accomplishment and lower levels of depersonalization, whereas the newer study found this relationship only for personal accomplishment; there was no significant

relationship between a graduate degree and emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Zabel & Zabel, 2001). Zabel and Zabel (2001) note that teachers who have burned out could have left special education or teaching in general; teachers in the study could also have additional personal characteristics not explored in the study that helped them cope with burnout or experience less burnout.

In their meta-analysis, Fore et al. (2002) analyzed major findings related to burnout and attrition for special education teachers. General themes found across the literature included job stress and the importance of mentoring. Job stress and burnout were associated with higher caseloads. Other factors often found to influence increased levels of burnout “include increasing paperwork loads, stress associated with the job requirements, a lack of planning time, lack of support from administrators, lack of proper staff development training, as well as the type of disabilities teachers deal with in the classroom” (Fore et al., 2002, p. 39). For younger teachers, mentoring often was reported to be positively correlated with job satisfaction and retention. Fore et al. (2002) concluded their analysis with recommendations to reduce burnout found across the literature; these recommendations include smaller caseloads/classes, more support and interaction with colleagues, mentoring, appropriate amount of planning time, adequate professional development, clearly defined job descriptions, and adequate orientation. They also share “politically risky” recommendations that include higher salaries, hiring older and more experienced teachers, hiring teachers who are fully certified and hold a master’s degree, and paying for graduate courses for teachers (Fore et al., 2002, p. 42).

Social Work and Counseling

Research on burnout has also been conducted more traditionally in the fields of social work and counseling, and this research has studied burnout as both main effects and mediators

and in relation to job satisfaction, job exit, and job performance (Koeske & Kelly, 1995; Drama & Yadama, 1996; Mullen & Gutierrez, 2016). In one quantitative study on social workers, Koeske and Kelly (1995) explored the mediating role of burnout with overinvolvement and morale. Burnout was measured using only the emotional exhaustion subscale of the Maslach Burnout Inventory. Similar to research on burnout in education, including elementary, secondary, and higher education, controls used in the regression and stepwise regression models included sex and age. Other controls included salary, years of experience in social work, years of experience in their current position, and workload (Koeske & Kelly, 1995). Koeske and Kelly (1995) hypothesized that overinvolvement increased one's risk of burnout and affected job satisfaction through burnout, and this hypothesis was supported. Overinvolvement was positively related to burnout and indirectly related to job satisfaction, as burnout was found to be a statistically significant mediator between the two variables. Furthermore, social support was found as a significant main effect for burnout, similar to the relationship found between social support and burnout in other literature (Lee & Ashforth, 1993; Schwab et al., 1986; Russell et al., 1987; Sarros & Sarros, 1992; Leiter & Maslach, 1999; Leiter & Maslach, 2003).

In a quantitative study on child protective services workers, Drake and Yadama (1996) used structural equation modeling to test models of the relationship between the three dimensions of burnout and the relationship between the burnout dimensions and attrition (measured by actual job exit rather than intent to leave). Like most other burnout research, they utilized the Maslach Burnout Inventory scale to measure burnout. Drake and Yadama (1996) hypothesized there would be direct positive effects from emotional exhaustion to depersonalization and from emotional exhaustion and depersonalization to job exit; the model supported the direct positive effect of emotional exhaustion to depersonalization and to job exit.

Their findings on emotional exhaustion support the literature that argues this specific dimension is the primary component of burnout (Maslach, 2003). Drake and Yadama (1996) argue that personal accomplishment is exogenous to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and job exit. Personal accomplishment was found to have a direct, negative effect on depersonalization and a significant direct negative effect on emotional exhaustion. In fact, the model found 14% of variance in emotional exhaustion to be explained by personal accomplishment. Personal accomplishment also had a significant, yet indirect effect on depersonalization and job exit, both through emotional exhaustion (Drake & Yadama, 1996).

In a more recent study on 921 school counselors, Mullen and Gutierrez (2016) examined the relationship between stress and burnout and the delivery and quality of counseling services provided to students. In contrast with most studies on burnout, this study did not use the Maslach Burnout Inventory and instead used a scale more specific to counseling (the Counselor Burnout Inventory). Their model, developed via structural equation modeling, found burnout to have a negative relationship with the number of direct counseling activities, number of direct curriculum activities, and the amount of time counselors provided direct student services, though the effect sizes were small to medium. Perceived stress had a statistically significant, positive relationship with burnout. In the model, burnout explained 12% of variance in direct counseling activities, 5% of variance in direct curriculum activities, and 6% in direct student services (Mullen & Gutierrez, 2016).

Health Care

Much burnout research has been conducted in the health care field, particularly in nursing. All studies discussed in this section utilized the Maslach Burnout Inventory to measure burnout. One study examined the impact of patient-nurse ratios on burnout and job satisfaction

(Aiken et al., 2002). Using logistic regression, Aiken et al. (2002) found higher nurse to patient ratios were associated with higher levels of burnout and job dissatisfaction. Emotional exhaustion and job dissatisfaction had a strong, significant relationship with nurse: patient ratio; for every additional patient, burnout increased by 23% and job dissatisfaction increased by 15% (Aiken et al., 2002). Nurse to patient ratio could be similar to student caseloads for academic affairs professionals who manage caseloads of students; this provides additional support that those with higher student caseloads would be more likely to experience burnout, as suggested by Fore et al. (2002).

Another quantitative study examined the relationship between burnout and job satisfaction and work environment factors, such as role ambiguity, supervisor support, and unfair criticism from colleagues, for hospital staff at a chronic care hospital (Belicki & Woolcott, 1996). Using correlations and stepwise regression, the study found statistically significant relationships between several organizational factors and each of the three dimensions of burnout. For example, a significant positive relationship was found between both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and role ambiguity, work pressure, and being criticized by others. A significant negative relationship was found between both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and being respected by others, being able to get changes made, liking one's work schedule, if their opinion was sought regarding job issues, involvement, peer cohesion, supervisor support, autonomy, clarity, innovation, physical comfort, and having the resources to get the job done, though the latter was for emotional exhaustion only (Belicki & Woolcott, 1996). For personal accomplishment, there was a significant positive relationship between this burnout dimension and feeling respected by others, if their opinion was sought regarding job issues, involvement, peer cohesion, clarity, and control. There was also a significant negative

relationship found between personal accomplishment and being unfairly criticized by others and role ambiguity (Belicki & Woolcott, 1996). Regarding job satisfaction, the study reported a significant negative relationship between job satisfaction and being unfairly criticized by others, role ambiguity, and work pressure. There was a significant positive relationship found between job satisfaction and being respected by others, being able to get changes made, liking one's work schedule, having the resources to get their job done, if their opinion was sought regarding job issues, involvement, peer cohesion, supervisor support, autonomy, clarity, innovation, physical comfort, task orientation, and control (Belicki & Woolcott, 1996).

Another health care study on burnout focused on generational differences for burnout between Baby Boomers and Generation X (Leiter et al., 2008). Participants included a total of 448 nurses; 255 were Generation X and 193 were Baby Boomers. In their quantitative study, which utilized correlations, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), and multiple regressions, Leiter et al. (2008) found Generation X nurses were more likely to experience burnout and to leave their jobs. Regarding the three burnout dimensions, results suggest generation had a significant indirect effect on emotional exhaustion, cynicism (or depersonalization), and efficacy (or personal accomplishment). In terms of attrition, organizational tenure (how long a nurse had been employed with the organization) had a significant relationship with intent to leave; nurses who had been there longer were less likely to intend to leave their position (Leiter et al., 2008).

Loss of Passion

In Marshall et al.'s (2016) study on attrition in student affairs, one of the themes for leaving, in addition to burnout, was loss of passion. Marshall et al. (2016) describes how some "participants felt that once they lost their passion and desire to connect with students, it

was time to leave the field” (p. 156). Passion in relation to work and burnout has been studied in recent literature; however, the loss of passion, including how that happens, what contributes to it, and the experience of it, has not been studied directly. Thus, one purpose of the current study is to further understand this construct within higher education and how it relates to burnout. This section of the literature review first explores a construct closely related to passion, sense of calling, and then work passion, striving to more clearly define these two constructs and how passion will be incorporated into the current study.

Sense of Calling

Originally, sense of calling had a very religious connotation. In an early study on sense of calling, Davidson and Caddell (1994) argued that religious factors would influence whether participants viewed their work as a calling, career, or job. In their study, they built their framework upon “Weber’s thesis,” which argues that due to the Calvinistic construct of predestination, people search for evidence that they are among the saved. Thus, as explained in another study, calling was originally “described as a divine inspiration to do good work” (Hall & Chandler, 2005). Davidson and Caddell (1994) hypothesized that those with “a more secular worldview” would view their work as a career and those with a more religious worldview, specifically Calvinist Protestants, would be more likely to view their work as a calling (p. 136). Overall, 15% of participants viewed work as a calling, 56% viewed work as a career, and 29% viewed work as a job. Regarding religious factors, the study reported that “individuals with a high degree of religious commitment who also held social justice beliefs and worked part-time with people were more likely to view their work as a calling than as a career” (Davidson & Caddell, 1994, p. 144). Although religion was found to have some effect, it was not as important as job factors and personal characteristics. Participants in the upper class (defined as capitalist

class in this study), those with higher levels of education, and those who worked with people were more likely to view work as a calling. Davidson and Caddell (1994) found those with higher education and higher incomes, as well as males, were more likely to find their job as a calling because they were “most likely to have been raised to believe they have special roles to play in society, have social networks that reinforce such attitudes, have accumulated the means necessary to perform tasks that they consider important, and have been rewarded most highly in the workplace” (Davidson & Caddell, 1994, p. 136-37).

Hall and Chandler (2005) argue for an expanded view of calling and that it can be religious, secular, or internally driven. They define calling as “work that a person perceives as his purpose in life” (Hall & Chandler, 2005, p. 160). This broader more secular view also describes calling as “the work one was meant to do” and work one believes will contribute to a greater good or make the world a better place (Hall & Chandler, 2005, p. 155). Hall and Chandler (2005) argue that “having a sense of calling is a highly individual, subjective experience” (p. 161). In their Calling Model of Career Success, they argue that subjective success (one’s own view of their success) can be both a result of and an impact on objective success (how others and the outside world views one’s success), and that a person with a calling is more likely to have both subjective and objective success. Furthermore, they argue that for someone with a calling, subjective measures are important in understanding success. They acknowledge that factors, such as socioeconomic status and other demographic characteristics, can influence if someone can actually act on their calling. Hall and Chandler (2005) conducted a case study to help provide clearer understanding of their model. While the case study only includes one participant, the authors do note that the case study is not meant to be evidence for the model. Based on the case study, Hall and Chandler (2005) argue three propositions that are

related directly to sense of calling. First, Hall and Chandler (2005) propose that “Subjective career success will be highly correlated with the extent to which the person has succeeded in pursuing his calling or basic purpose in life,” and that “The connection between subjective career success and pursuing the calling will be stronger than that between objective career success and pursuit of the calling” (p. 169). They also propose that “Self-confidence and the individual’s sense of calling will be mutually reinforcing and will jointly serve as triggers to initiate a new learning/success cycle” (Hall & Chandler, 2005, p. 172). Lastly, Hall and Chandler (2005) propose that “Heightened self-confidence and sense of calling will result as an individual experiences psychological success and identity change from the effective enactment of his or her goals and purpose” (p. 172). The last two propositions highlight what could be an important connection between confidence, sense of calling, and achieving one’s goals; relating to burnout, it could be questioned if the antithesis may occur – if lower levels of confidence and feeling as if one is not making progress towards goals (personal achievement) may be associated with a reduced feeling of purpose and sense of calling.

Another, more recent study examined the relationship between calling and work outcomes, such as job satisfaction (Duffy et al., 2010) in the higher education context. Duffy et al. (2010) argue there is no consensus regarding the definition of calling, and use the definition proposed by Dik and Duffy (2009), which defines calling as “a transcendent summons, experienced as originating beyond the self, to approach a particular life role (in this case work) in a manner oriented toward demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness and that holds other-oriented values and goals as primary sources of motivation” (Dik & Duffy, 2009, p. 427). Duffy et al. (2010) also specify that calling can be experienced or can be something one is in search of. The study’s participants included 370 employees from a large

Western research university. Duffy et al. (2010) hypothesized that calling would be positively related to work outcomes and that career commitment would serve as a mediator, both of which were supported. Using correlations and structural equation modeling, Duffy et al. (2010) found that calling was “moderately correlated with career commitment, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment and weakly correlated with withdrawal intentions” (p. 210).

Furthermore, the model found career commitment “to fully mediate the calling–job satisfaction relation, partially mediate the calling–organizational commitment relation, and act as a suppressor in the relation between calling and withdrawal intentions” (Duffy et al., 2010, p. 210).

Duffy et al. (2010) note their limitations include a mostly female and white sample from one university who earn a higher average salary; thus, they call for future research to include a wider range of work settings and lower salary positions, which the current study hopes to accomplish by conducting quantitative work on professionals from entry level and middle level positions. In a phenomenological study, Tunheim and Goldschmidt (2013) studied the role of calling for 15 female university presidents and found that 12 of the participants felt they had a calling, three of whom said it was a spiritual calling. After analyzing the data from in-depth interviews, Tunheim and Goldschmidt (2013) found three themes regarding participants’ “journey to the presidency,” which include identifying, interpreting, and then pursuing the calling (p. 34).

Some studies have studied the relationship between sense of calling and burnout, but not within higher education. A recent study examined the relationship between leadership styles, sense of calling, and burnout among special education teachers (Gong et al., 2013). In this quantitative study, the Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educators Survey and the Marcow and Klenke (2005) calling scale were administered to 256 special education teachers in non-public and public separate day schools in a county in Maryland. Scores from the burnout inventory

indicated teachers “felt emotional exhaustion at least once a month,” “felt depersonalization a few times each year,” and “felt personal accomplishment more than once a week” (Gong et al., 2013, p. 192). As noted in other research (Howard-Hamilton, 1998; Russell et al., 1987; Sarros & Sarros, 1992), gender differences were found among the burnout dimensions; female teachers reported higher average emotional exhaustion levels and “slightly lower average” depersonalization levels than male teachers (Gong et al., 2013, p. 983). Age differences were also reported; teachers 26-30 years old also reported higher average emotional exhaustion levels than other, older age groups, supporting findings from Russell et al. (1987) and Sarros and Sarros (1992). Using Pearson Product-Moment Correlations, Gong et al. (2013) reported a negative relationship between transformational leadership and emotional exhaustion and depersonalization; a positive relationship was found between transformational leadership and personal accomplishment.

Gong et al. (2013) also tested a Mediation Model, controlling for age, gender, and number of years in the profession (teaching). Results from the model suggest the relationship between leadership and burnout is mediated by sense of calling. Gong et al. (2013) argued that transformative leadership could help foster a sense of calling, reduce the risk of experiencing emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, and increase feelings of personal accomplishment. Regarding sense of calling, survey results “indicated that teachers felt the sense of calling quite a bit” but “that 60% of the respondents had a sense of calling lower than the average” (Gong et al., 2013, p. 982). Correlations suggested a significant positive relationship exists between transformational leadership and sense of calling, and a significant negative relationship between sense of calling and both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Furthermore, a positive relationship was found between sense of calling and personal accomplishment.

Another study examined the relationship between burnout and sense of calling, but for health care physicians (Jager et al., 2016). 28.5% of physicians in the study reported some level of burnout, and those experiencing burnout were less likely to view medicine as a calling. Jager et al. (2016) explains there was an “erosion of the sense that medicine is a calling,” indicating these physicians had one viewed medicine as a calling, but that feeling had diminished for those experiencing burnout (p. 415). Multivariate logistic regression results showed physicians who “were completely burned out... had lower odds of finding their work rewarding..., seeing their work as one of the most important things in their lives..., or thinking their work makes the world a better place” compared to those who reported no burnout (Gong et al., 2013, p. 415). Furthermore, “Burnout was also associated with lower odds of enjoying talking about their work to others..., choosing their work life again..., or continuing with their current work even if they were no longer paid if they were financially stable” (Gong et al., 2013, p. 415). A limitation of this study is that burnout was measured using only a single item measure, as opposed to the more commonly used Maslach Burnout Inventory. A second study that examined the relationship between burnout and sense of calling for physicians reported that 42% of participants reported feeling a calling, and those who had a high sense of calling were less likely to report burnout, to regret choosing their career, to want to switch specialties, or to leave field within next few years. In addition, those who reported a high sense of calling also reported higher job satisfaction (Yoon et al., 2017). Like Jager et al. (2016), Yoon et al. (2017) also utilized a single item measure of burnout.

Work Passion

In Marshall et al.’s (2016) study on attrition of student affairs professionals, loss of passion was identified as one reason why professionals had left the field. One participant from

the study explained: “My passion for the work left and I did not want to be one of those professionals that stayed for the job” (p. 156). However, passion is not clearly defined as a construct within this study. What is “passion for work” (Marshall et al., 2016)? How is that experienced? What characteristics does it entail? In comparison to sense of calling, the study of passion is less extensive and has become more popular in the research within the last decade.

Three Avenues of Research

There are three main avenues of work passion research: general passion, the dualistic model of passion, and entrepreneurial passion (Pollack et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2020). General passion is characterized by positive affect, or love, towards one’s work. Pollack et al. (2020) argues that “The core premise of general passion—that passion for work provides employees with the perseverance and drive to achieve work goals and sustain positive feelings from work—builds on arguments from theories of both motivation... and affect” (p. 313). The work of Baum and Locke (2004) has been consistently referred to within general passion research, seemingly serving as a seminal piece. In their quantitative, longitudinal study, Baum and Locke (2004) studied 335 employees and CEOs from architectural woodwork firms. Though the study is within an entrepreneurial context (e.g., venture growth as an outcome), Baum and Locke’s (2004) research is recognized for its positive affect focused construct of passion. They define passion for work as “love of one’s work,” and it is measured “in terms of the emotions of love, attachment, and longing” (Baum & Locke, 2004, p. 588). Furthermore, people who have a passion for work are enthusiastic and zealous about their work, and they “[confront] opportunities and challenges with fervor and ardor” (Baum & Locke, 2004, p. 588). The study “found that entrepreneurs’ passion, tenacity, and new resource skill affect venture growth through communicated vision, goals, and self-efficacy” (Baum & Locke, 2004, p. 597).

The second, and more highly studied, avenue of research is the dualistic model of passion developed by Vallerand et al. (2003). In this model of passion, passion is defined as “a strong inclination toward an activity that people like, that they find important, and in which they invest time and energy;” furthermore, “for an activity to represent a passion for people, it has to be significant in their lives, something that they like, and something at which they spend time on a regular basis” (Vallerand et al., 2003, p. 757). However, Vallerand et al. (2003) argue that there are two types of passion: harmonious passion, which more closely relates to the positive passion described by Baum and Locke (2004), and obsessive passion, which results in more negative impacts. Harmonious passion is defined as “an autonomous internalization that leads individuals to choose to engage in the activity that they like” while obsessive passion is “a controlled internalization of an activity in one’s identity that creates an internal pressure to engage in the activity that the person likes” (Vallerand et al., 2003, p. 756).

Within this study, Vallerand et al. (2003) studied 900 participants across four individual studies. The purpose of the first study was to validate the Passion Scale developed by Vallerand et al. (2003) and to examine the types of passions and outcomes that result while engaged in a passionate activity. In this first study on 539 college students, the Passion Scale was validated through exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. Results suggested that “HP [harmonious passion] was associated with positive emotions, concentration, and flow, whereas OP [obsessive passion] was associated with experiencing negative emotions and conflict with other aspects of one’s life” (Vallerand et al., 2003, p. 761). In the second study, Vallerand et al. (2003) wanted to know how long lasting and generalizable the differences between harmonious passion and obsessive passion found in the first study were and if these two types of passion were independent of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. The second study was a three-month

longitudinal study that included 405 college football players who completed the Passion Scale, along with three other scales to measure motivation, affect, and behavior intention (intending to play football the next season). Findings supported results from the first study regarding the type of passion and associated affect; “HP [harmonious passion] was associated with increased general positive affect over the course of a football season whereas OP [obsessive passion] was associated with increased levels of general negative affect” (Vallerand et al., 2003, p. 762).

Despite the association of obsessive passion with negative affect, results also indicated obsessive passion was a moderately significant predictor of intentions to play football the following season and harmonious passion was unrelated to behavior intentions. Vallerand et al. (2003) reason that those with harmonious passion are flexible and take a lot of time to weigh options and consider factors before making decisions while those with obsessive passion may be more rigid in their initial decision. In the third study, Vallerand et al. (2003) wanted to see if obsessive passion led to “rigid persistence” of an activity even when the activity was unsafe (Vallerand et al., 2003, p. 763). This study included 59 cyclists who took an adapted version of the Passion Scale.

Vallerand et al. (2003) examined the association between type of passion and if cyclists continued outdoor training in the winter, despite Canada’s harsh weather conditions. Findings suggested those who cycled in the winter had higher obsessive passion scores than those who stopped cycling during the winter and that “OP [obsessive passion] leads to rigid persistence of activity,” even when it may be unsafe (Vallerand et al., 2003, p. 764). In the fourth study, Vallerand et al. (2003) built off of findings from the third study and wanted to see if obsessive passion would “lead to rigid persistence in extreme forms of self-defeating behavior, such as gambling, that qualify as self-destructive” (p. 764). This study’s participants included 146 self-identified gamblers from a single casino and participants took the Passion Scale. Findings

supported the initial hypothesis, as participants who had “severe gambling problems displayed significantly higher levels of OP than regular casino gamblers, whereas no difference was found for HP” (Vallerand et al., 2003, p. 765). Furthermore, for those who self-excluded themselves from the casino, “OP was significantly higher than HP, whereas the reverse was true for the regular casino players. These findings suggest that OP is implicated in self-destructive behavior” (p. 765).

The third avenue of work passion research is entrepreneurial passion. Cardon et al. (2009) argues previous work on entrepreneurial passion either does not define the construct clearly or explain its role within entrepreneurship. Thus, to fill that gap in the literature, they conducted a meta-analysis and draw on existing literature to develop a definition and model of entrepreneurial passion. Cardon et al. (2009) defines “entrepreneurial passion as consciously accessible, intense positive feelings experienced by engagement in entrepreneurial activities associated with roles that are meaningful and salient to the self-identity of the entrepreneur” (p. 517). In the model, these roles include inventor, developer, and funder; each role is associated with certain goal-related cognitions, entrepreneurial behaviors, and entrepreneurial effectiveness. For example, Cardon et al. (2009) argue that “When an entrepreneur's founder identity is dominant entrepreneurial passion will influence the entrepreneur's effectiveness in venture creation, mainly because of its effect on persistence [entrepreneurial behavior] and creative problem solving [entrepreneurial behavior]” (p. 521). The work within this avenue of research is specific to the entrepreneurial context and thus is not generalizable to other professions or to work in general.

Conceptual Breakdown

Though they have different definitions and contexts, all three avenues of research on work passion agree that the concept has a positive affect, that people who experience work passion tend to strongly and personally identify with their work (i.e., a teacher who says “I am a teacher” rather than “I teach” or “I work at X school as a teacher”), and that the concept has a motivational component (Chen et al., 2020). Chen et al. (2020) argue there is a lack of consensus regarding the definition of work passion and reliable, validated, and generalizable measure of passion that is based on scientific work. In their three-part study, Chen et al. (2020) develop a definition of work passion based on the three avenues of research and a phenomenological qualitative study in which they asked participants how they define work passion and then created initial items for their Work Passion scale. As a result of previous research and themes from the phenomenological study, Chen et al. (2020) define work passion as “strong identif[ication] with a line of work that one feels motivated to engage in and derives positive affect from doing” (p. 140). In the second part of the study, Chen et al. (2020) used exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis and two samples of English-speaking, working adults (1 from U.S. and 1 from Singapore) to test and reduce items as necessary; the final scale is 10 items.

In the third part of the study, Chen et al. (2020) test validity and stability of the Work Passion scale in a longitudinal study. Researchers tested convergent validity by seeing how work passion was related to other variables, like grit, optimism, and harmonious and obsessive passion. Correlation tests show work passion was significantly positively related to optimism and to grit, but confirmatory factor analysis confirmed that these concepts were separate. Work passion scale scores were strongly positively related to harmonious passion scores and moderately related to obsessive passion scores. Researchers also tested for divergent validity and

found that work passion was unrelated to people's search for meaning. Lastly, in testing predictive validity of their scale, researchers found higher levels of passion predicted lower levels of burnout and higher levels of career commitment. Furthermore, those with higher passion scores were less likely to experience work-life conflict and were more likely to experience fewer physical symptoms. Work passion scores predicted levels of burnout and career commitment "over and above the control variables, optimism, grit, harmonious passion, and obsessive passion" (Chen et al., 2020, p. 153).

As highlighted in Chen et al.'s (2020) research, work passion is closely related to other similar constructs, like engagement, grit, and meaning, but are distinct. In another study, Zigarmi et al. (2009) responded to a lack of consistent definition of work engagement and framework and proposed a separate construct called work passion. For example, Zigarmi et al. (2009) states sometimes work engagement refers to job commitment while other times it refers to organizational commitment. Within the framework of the Job-Demands Resources Model, Schaufeli & Bakker (2004) "define engagement as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption" (p. 295). In their Areas of Worklife Model, Leiter and Maslach (2003) refer to engagement as the other end of the burnout continuum. According to this multidimensional model of burnout, "engagement consists of a state of high energy (rather than exhaustion), strong involvement (rather than cynicism), and a sense of efficacy (rather than inefficacy)" (Leiter & Maslach, 1999, p. 94). Commonalities that appear across most definitions of engagement include awareness of need satisfaction (for the employee and from the job or organization), some feeling or emotion, and behavior. Zigarmi et al. (2009) argue a definition of work should involve these three components, but that the term "engagement" is already associated with burnout, is too related to organizational commitment in

the literature, and does not encompass the complexity and depth of such components. Thus, they developed their own definition of work passion, which is “an individual’s persistent, emotionally positive, meaning-based, state of wellbeing stemming from reoccurring cognitive and affective appraisals of various job and organizational situations that results in consistent, constructive work intentions and behaviors” (p. 310). Work passion is also a separate construct from sense of calling and is more in line with the passion identified by Marshall et al. (2016) as a reason for attrition for student affairs professionals. While sense of calling does refer to meaning or purpose and contains a motivational component (Dik & Duffy, 2009), similar to passion, it lacks focus on behavior and need-based fulfillment. Furthermore, individuals may have multiple passions that can apply to both professional and personal interests (i.e., teaching as a profession and hiking as a hobby) and has a far less religious or spiritual connotation while calling seems to apply to one’s religious or professional context.

Work Passion and Burnout

Some literature studied the relationship between work passion and burnout, and most of this research utilizes the Dualistic Model of Passion framework and Passion Scale. Vallerand et al. (2010) utilized the Dualistic Model of Passion (Vallerand et al., 2003) as a framework for their two-part study that tested a model on the relationship between work passion and burnout. In their model, Vallerand et al. (2010) predicted that obsessive passion would produce conflict between one’s work and home/outside work life, that conflict would lead to burnout, and work satisfaction would prevent burnout. In addition, Vallerand et al. (2010) predicted that harmonious passion would prevent conflict and increase work satisfaction. In the first study, which was cross-sectional, obsessive passion was found to be a positive predictor of conflict, which was positively related to burnout. In addition, harmonious passion was positively related

to work satisfaction, which was negatively related to burnout. Vallerand et al. (2010) explained such “findings provided preliminary support for the role of passion in burnout” and that “conflict and work satisfaction proved to be strong mediators of the relationship between passion and burnout, with the former playing a facilitative role and the latter a protective role in burnout” (p. 300).

Using the Dualistic Model of Passion and the Job-Demands Resources Model, Trépanier et al. (2014) argued that harmonious passion and obsessive passion would “intervene simultaneously in the relationship between (1) job demands and burnout/engagement, and (2) job resources and burnout/engagement” (p. 353). The study included two samples: nurses and teachers, and utilized the Passion Scale, Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (MBI-GS), Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, and a fourth scale to assess job-demands resources. Using structural equation modeling and MANOVA, researchers found the following the relationships: “job demands [we]re positively related to obsessive passion... and negatively related to harmonious passion,” “job resources [we]re positively related to harmonious passion,” “obsessive passion [wa]s positively related to burnout,” and “harmonious passion [wa]s negatively related to burnout... and positively related to work engagement” (Trépanier et al., 2014, p. 356-57). Furthermore, both harmonious and obsessive passion partially mediated the relationship between job demands and burnout. Harmonious passion partially mediated the relationship between job demands and engagement and the relationship between burnout and job resources and engagement (Trépanier et al., 2014).

In another study on passion and burnout, Fernet et al. (2014) studied the impact of job autonomy and work passion on burnout for new teachers and argued that the type of passion (harmonious or obsessive) would affect the three components of burnout (emotional exhaustion,

depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) differently. Of the 689 teachers who participated in the study, 94% of teachers in study one and 93% of teachers in study two reported a moderate level of passion or higher. Fernet et al. (2014) hypothesized that harmonious passion would prevent burnout while obsessive passion would increase burnout. The first study (a cross-sectional study) found “harmonious passion negatively predicted all three components of burnout, whereas obsessive passion positively predicted emotional exhaustion and depersonalization” (Fernet et al., 2014, p. 270). In addition, job autonomy was found to positively predict harmonious passion and negatively predict obsessive passion (Fernet et al., p. 270). The second study was longitudinal and found both harmonious and obsessive passion mediated “the relationship between job autonomy and emotional exhaustion and depersonalization” (Fernet et al., 2014, p. 278).

Carbonneau et al. (2008) also used the Dualistic Model of Passion as the framework in their study on the relationship between passion and burnout among teachers. They wanted to examine how passion would impact teachers’ burnout, work satisfaction, and perception of student behaviors. Findings from their three-month longitudinal study found “increases in harmonious passion for teaching predicted increases in work satisfaction and decreases in burnout symptoms over time” and “increases in both harmonious and obsessive passion predicted increases in teacher-perceived adaptive student behaviors over time” (Carbonneau, 2008, p. 977). Similar to Fernet et al. (2014), most teachers in the study were passionate about their work. Lastly, Carbonneau et al. (2008) wanted to understand the directionality of passion and outcomes of burnout, work satisfaction, and teacher-perception of student behaviors; findings indicated passion was more likely to be a precursor to these outcomes rather than a

result of, which is helpful in understanding the relationship between passion and burnout that are important for the current study and its conceptual framework.

Theoretical Framework

In a meta-analysis, Schaufeli, Leiter, and Maslach (2009), the three most prominent burnout researchers, argue “Two distinct contributors to the experience of work life explain burnout’s persistence as an experience, a matter of social importance, and a focus of scientific inquiry:” 1) when demands outweigh resources and 2) when conflict exists between the values of the employee and the employer (Schaufeli, Leiter, & Maslach, 2009, p. 208). This section of the literature review will expand on the theoretical framework of the current study. The section first discusses the Jobs-Demands Resources Theory, a theory which has been used as a framework in many studies on burnout, particularly those in the field of business, and explains the first contributor mentioned by Schaufeli, Leiter, and Maslach (2009). The section then discusses the Areas of Worklife Model, developed by Leiter and Maslach (1999; 2003). This theory is more widely encompassing than Jobs-Demands Resources because it incorporates both organizational and individual factors that affect work life, such as values, and is the basis of the theoretical framework for the current study.

Job-Demands Resources Theory

Business is another field in which burnout has been heavily studied in recent decades, spanning from more traditional helping positions like customer service representatives and human services to positions within federal agencies. Much of the research in this field has studied burnout within the framework of the Job Demands-Resources Theory. This theory argues that demands reduce one’s energy while resources increase energy, and engagement is negatively affected when one faces high demands without adequate resources (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

When demands outweigh resources, emotional exhaustion is more likely to occur (Leiter & Maslach, 1999). Two studies discussed in this section that explore the relationship between job demands, job resources, and burnout are international in context (taking place in the Netherlands). While it reduces generalizability to the American context and while burnout may not be defined exactly the same way, the fact that research on burnout has expanded internationally suggests burnout “is not exclusively a North American or Western phenomenon” (Schaufeli, Leiter, & Maslach, 2009, p. 210). Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) explore burnout and engagement at four different Dutch service organizations. They argue that burnout and engagement are inverses of one another, but are independent states, have different patterns, and, thus, should be measured separately and be treated with different intervention strategies. Schaufeli, Bakker, and Van Rhenen (2009) also study burnout and engagement in the context of Jobs-Demands Resources, but in contrast to Schaufeli and Bakker’s (2004) larger, cross-sectional study, Schaufeli, Bakker, and Van Rhenen (2009) conducted a longitudinal study on participants at one Dutch telecommunications company. Longitudinal studies on burnout have been much rarer and provide support for burnout as a chronic state. Both studies use the Maslach Burnout Inventory to measure burnout (a Dutch translated version) and find that an increase in job demands and a reduction in job resources are significant predictors of burnout and that an increase in job resources is a significant predictor of work engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Van Rhenen, 2009). Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) also found that both burnout and engagement are related to one’s intention to leave and that burnout was related health issues.

Areas of Worklife Model

In the Areas of Worklife Model, the focus is on the relationship between individual and organizational needs, and the model argues mismatches between needs often lead to burnout. A mismatch is defined as an unresolved issue or an unacceptable working relationship. Leiter and Maslach (1999; 2003) support the multidimensional model of burnout, which views burnout as occurring on a continuum between engagement and burnout. Furthermore, burnout is viewed as cumulative; it builds up as a result of combining influences. In terms of the relationship between the three dimensions, the most consistent finding among the literature is that emotional exhaustion mediates organizational characteristics with depersonalization and personal accomplishment. The relationship between emotional exhaustion and depersonalization has had less consistency; some scholars have argued a direct path from emotional exhaustion to depersonalization (or cynicism) and some have argued a direct path from depersonalization to emotional exhaustion, while others have found no direct path. However, regardless of path, personal accomplishment always seems to occur third (Leiter & Maslach, 1999; Leiter & Maslach, 2003).

In their meta-analysis, Leiter and Maslach (1999) examine the current literature at the time that fits within the six areas of work life, as there was no workplace model at the time. The first two areas of work life, workload and control, are related to the demand-control theory of job stress. Research has suggested increasing workload is related to a higher likelihood of burnout, especially emotional exhaustion (Leiter & Maslach, 1999; Leiter & Maslach, 2003).

Furthermore, emotional exhaustion is impacted by the emotional component of work; for example, when work is more emotional (e.g., counseling), it is harder to separate work and life. As a chronic outcome itself, burnout increases when high workload and emotional exhaustion are

chronic. In terms of control, role conflict is associated with lower control and higher burnout; while role ambiguity is also associated with lower control and higher burnout, research has shown role conflict to have a stronger relationship with burnout (Leiter & Maslach, 1999; Leiter & Maslach, 2003). For control, emotional exhaustion was found to be a mediator between workload and depersonalization and personal accomplishment (Leiter & Maslach, 2003).

In terms of reward, inadequate rewards (which can be financial, institutional, and/or social) are related to higher burnout, and specifically to all three dimensions. A lack of recognition was also found to be associated with lower efficacy, or personal accomplishment (Leiter & Maslach, 2003). In terms of community, social support has been found to be a mediator between workload/demands and emotional exhaustion. When people have social support, emotional exhaustion is less. Supervisor support has been specifically found to impact emotional exhaustion while coworker support has been related with personal accomplishment (Leiter & Maslach, 1999; Leiter & Maslach, 2003). The quality of social interaction is particularly important. Chronic, unresolved conflict has been associated with burnout (Leiter & Maslach, 2003). Fairness, the fifth area of work life, is closely related to community and reward. White (1987) noted that fairness is an important part of administrative leadership and supervisor decisions. Furthermore, equity theory plays into fairness and argues that people want their inputs, or effort, to match outputs, or reward, and burnout is more likely to occur when that relationship is not equitable (Leiter & Maslach, 2003). If people feel heard, that they are treated with respect, and that their supervisor is fair and supportive, they are less likely to experience burnout and more likely to be acceptive of organizational change. The final area of work life is values. Research has found idealistic expectations are often related to burnout and occurs when there is a mismatch between expectations and experience. This more often seems to affect younger

professionals (Leiter & Maslach, 1999). Leiter et al. (2008) also found generational differences between individual and organizational mismatch for values; Generation X nurses were more likely to have higher mismatch in this area compared to Baby Boomer nurses in the study.

Leiter and Maslach (2003) followed this meta-analysis up with a study that collected and analyzed data for an Areas of Worklife measurement scale and tested a model using structural equation modeling. In their model, they found the greater the mismatch in an area, the greater likelihood of burnout. In addition, the greater the match in an area, the greater the engagement. The six factor Areas of Worklife scale was supported by principal components factor analysis and EQS Confirmatory Factor analysis. T-tests showed gender differences among scale results; men rated the areas of workload, control, and fairness more positively than women, while women more positively rated the values area (Leiter & Maslach, 2003). Non-supervisory employees reported the highest levels of cynicism, the lowest levels of fairness, and the highest mismatch between organizational and individual values. In terms of age, age had a positive relationship within the areas of reward, control, and values; as age increased, so did the positive rating for each area. Workload match steadily declined with age, while the areas of fairness and community were higher for younger and older professionals, but lower for middle-aged professionals (Leiter & Maslach, 2003). In this longitudinal study, Leiter and Maslach (2003) hypothesized that emotional exhaustion would predict cynicism (depersonalization), which would predict efficacy (personal accomplishment). They also hypothesized that workload would have a direct effect on burnout through emotional exhaustion, that values would be a mediator between all other work life areas and the three components of burnout, and that control would be related to all work life areas except for values. Results suggest a relationship between the three dimensions occurred within the first time period, indicating the burnout relationship happens

quickly. Furthermore, in the first time period, the areas of workload, fairness, values predicted the occurrence of burnout in the second time period. Workload was found to have both short- and long-term effects (Leiter & Maslach, 2003). Lastly, Leiter and Maslach (2003) argue workload and values are two areas where organizations can really work on developing better practices that support their employees.

Contribution to the Literature

While decades of research have studied burnout and contributed to the body of knowledge by defining burnout, understanding its physical and psychological consequences for the individual, identifying influences and impacts, like job satisfaction, job stress, and supervisor support, and expanding its application internationally and across job fields, there is still knowledge left to be gained about burnout in additional contexts, like higher education, for different populations, like academic affairs professionals, and in relation to the organizational context. Furthermore, the concept of work passion has been rarely studied in the literature within the higher education context and how it is lost is not understood.

In terms of burnout, the Maslach (2003) dimensions of burnout are widely accepted, and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) is the most commonly used measurement. However, it seems there is still a lack of consensus regarding the relationship between burnout dimensions. Furthermore, most research in the field is quantitative and it is limited in terms of higher education. The burnout research within higher education has focused mostly on student affairs; the research on academic affairs professionals has largely focused on upper-level administrative positions (i.e., Chief Academic Affairs Officers). The research most closely related to academic affairs professionals working with at-risk students is one study that studied burnout for staff members of TRIO programs at one university. Regarding work passion, there is also a limited

scope within higher education and the understanding between work passion and burnout is limited. Furthermore, the concept of “loss of passion” is not well defined, or well-studied, in the literature.

The current study offers many contributions to the field of higher education and the study of burnout. By using a mixed methods approach, the study can compare its own quantitative findings to that of the literature and contribute to the understanding of burnout by following up on the quantitative results via qualitative research that will focus on the experiences of individuals on the burnout continuum. Furthermore, the current study studies specifically academic affairs professionals who work with probation and conditionally admitted students, a population that has yet to be studied in relation to burnout (at least in comparison to current studies found). In terms of conceptual and theoretical frameworks, the current study examines both individual and organizational factors that may influence burnout in multiple contexts by applying Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems theory to the context of this type of academic affairs professional. Finally, this study also examines how work passion relates to burnout for this population and context.

Chapter 3: Methods

Research Design

The current study utilized a sequential, mixed methods research design. First, the quantitative portion was conducted using survey results (one survey comprised of three individual survey scales) to produce descriptive statistics and t-tests. The goal of the quantitative component of this study was to understand the prevalence of burnout and work passion for academic professionals working with academic probation and conditionally admitted students. Then, the qualitative component was conducted via in-depth, semi-structured interviews with professionals at a case study institution. The goal of the qualitative inquiry was to learn about the experiences of these professionals, how they have navigated burnout and potential loss of passion, and how organizational factors impact those experiences.

Creswell (2015) argues that mixed methods can be viewed as an epistemological position or as a research design, but states that he views mixed methods as the latter. The current study defines mixed methods according to Creswell (2015), who explains it is “an approach to research... in which the investigator gathers both quantitative (closed-ended) and qualitative (open-ended) data, integrates the two and then draws interpretations based on the combined strengths of both sets of data to understand research problems” (p. 2). The researcher believes both quantitative and qualitative data together provide a richer understanding of burnout and work passion and contribution to this body of knowledge than either type of inquiry on its own. The research study sought to address the following research questions:

1. What are the causes of burnout and loss of passion for academic affairs professionals who work with probation and conditionally admitted students?
2. How do academic affairs professionals navigate the experience of burnout and/or loss of passion?

3. What organizational aspects of universities support staff by reducing or preventing burnout and loss of passion and how so?

Quantitative Inquiry

Sample

The researcher first sent out surveys via a list serv to the 191 members of the American College Personnel Association (ACPA)'s Commission of Academic Affairs and the Commission for Academic Support in Higher Education. Although ACPA is defined as a student affairs organization, this organization was selected because of its inclusion of academics and academic support in higher education via these commissions within the organization (ACPA, 2018). However, the response rate was extremely low so the researcher identified individuals who may work with the student population of interest by searching university websites and online directories and contacted them directly via email regarding participating in the study. In order to identify a focus, the researcher first began researching institutions based on Carnegie classification and region. A Google Sheets spreadsheet was used to record professionals' names, institution of employment, email, position title, student populations they did or may have worked with, and participant response (i.e., if they completed the survey, if an "out of office" message was received, and if there was an error in email delivery). The next round of surveys was sent to 416 individuals identified at 4-year public Master's – Larger Programs institutions (as defined by the Carnegie Classifications of Institutions of Higher Education) in the southeast region of the United States that were SACSCOC accredited. Because response rate was still very low after this second round, the researcher expanded data collection regionally and sent a third round of surveys to 266 individuals identified at 4-year public Master's – Larger Programs institutions in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States that were accredited by the Middle States

Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). All potential participants received at least 1 reminder email sent 2 weeks after the initial email inviting them to participate in the survey was sent. An additional email was sent to 16 participants who had started the survey inviting them to complete it. Lastly, an incentive to win 1 of 2 \$25 Amazon gift cards was offered to participants who fully completed the survey.

Data Collection

Quantitative data was collected via three individual surveys that were combined into one online survey via Qualtrics, which was selected because it was a survey tool provided by the researcher's institution for academic research that allowed for secure sign-on and protection of data as well as the ability to create multiple survey question types. The Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (MBI-GS), the Areas of Worklife Survey (AWS), and the Passion Scale (Vallerand et al., 2010) were combined along with 14 demographic questions into the single survey that was emailed to participants. The researcher sent the survey to 873 participants with a goal of receiving responses from 130 participants in order to obtain a standard response rate of at least 15%.

The MBI-GS scale is the most commonly used scale in the literature to measure burnout; it has been validated across contexts and has been used specifically within the higher education research on burnout. The MBI-GS is comprised of three subscales: emotional exhaustion (which “measures feelings of being overextended and exhausted by one's work”), cynicism (which “measures an indifference or a distant attitude towards ... [one's] work”), and professional efficacy (which “measures satisfaction with past and present accomplishments, and it explicitly assesses an individual's expectations of continued effectiveness at work”) (Mind Garden, Inc., 2019b, para. 3). Sample items include “I feel emotionally drained from my work” and “In my

opinion, I am good at my job.” The scale includes 16 survey items, which participants rate on a 7-point frequency scale (“Never,” “A few times a year or less,” “Once a month or less,” “A few times a month,” “Once a week,” “A few times a week,” and “Every day”) (Mind Garden, Inc., 2019b, para. 5).

The AWS “was created to assess employees’ perceptions of worksetting qualities that play a role in whether they experience work engagement or burnout” (Mind Garden, Inc., 2019a, para. 3). The 28-item survey is categorized into the six areas of worklife: workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values. Sample items include “I do not have time to do the work that must be done” (workload), “Resources are fairly allocated here” (fairness), and “My values and the Organization’s values are alike” (values). Participants rate each survey item using a 5-point Likert scale (“Strongly Disagree,” “Disagree,” “Hard to Decide,” “Agree,” and “Strongly Agree”) (Mind Garden, Inc., 2019a, para. 5).

The Passion Scale was originally developed by Vallerand et al. (2003) to measure passion of an activity. Developed within the Dualistic Model framework, the 16-item scale has also been used to measure work passion in fields such as nursing and teaching (Vallerand et al., 2010; Fernet et al., 2014; Trepanier et al., 2014; Carbonneau et al., 2008). In some studies, questions have been adapted to reflect the work which they are asking about (e.g., “My job as a teacher is very important to me”) (Carbonneau et al., 2008, p. 986). The scale includes four items that measure general passion (which ask about importance of work, love of work, and time spent doing work; an example is the sample item previously listed), six items that measure harmonious passion (e.g., “My work is in harmony with other activities in my life”), and six items that measure obsessive passion (e.g., “I have difficulties controlling my urge to do my work”)

(Vallerand et al., 2010, p. 297). Participants respond to each item “on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*do not agree at all*) to 7 (*completely agree*)” (Vallerand et al., 2010, p. 297).

Demographic data was also collected from participants. The following questions related to participants’ higher education experience were included in the combined quantitative survey: if they work with academic probation and/or conditionally admitted students (Y/N), what percentage of their day-to-day job responsibilities was spent working with academic probation and/or conditionally admitted students, if their position was considered supervisory or entry level, amount of time spent working in current position, amount of time spent working at current institution, amount of time spent working in higher education, their current position title, and the institution they work for (in case the department was selected to be part of the qualitative research portion of the study).

Data Analysis

Survey responses from the MBI-GS, AWS, and Passion Scale surveys were analyzed and scored via directions from the survey developers in order to assess level of burnout (MBI-GS), matches and mismatches between worklife areas (AWS), and level of work passion (Work Passion Scale). In some research that has utilized the MBI-GS, it was noted that higher scores on each of the three subscales indicate higher levels of burnout (Howard-Hamilton, 1998; Russell et al., 1987). Leiter and Maslach (2003) explained that on each of the six subscales of the AWS, a score less than three indicates mismatch between an individual and the organization (the lower the number, the greater the mismatch) and a score higher than three indicates a match (the higher the number, the greater the match). For the Passion Scale, a mean score of four or higher each subscale indicates the following: on the general passion items indicate passion, on the harmonious passion items indicate harmonious passion, and on the obsessive passion items

indicate obsessive passion (Vallerand et al., 2010). Descriptive statistics were then calculated via Microsoft Excel and reported for gender, race, ethnicity, and the higher education questions listed above. Lastly, a series of t-tests were conducted via SPSS (Version 28.0.0.0 [190]) to assess if there were differences in burnout, passion, and/or areas of worklife between position type, student populations participants worked with, percentage of day-to-day job responsibilities spent working directly with students, and new professionals in higher education, in their position, and at their institution of employment. SPSS was utilized for t-test analysis, as this was a software the researcher already had access to and familiarity with due to previous quantitative analysis experience.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity of the MBI-GS has been well documented over the past four decades. Test-retest reliability and internal consistency have been supported (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998; Schaufeli et al., 1993). Construct validity has been found via factor structure analysis and factor invariance (Trepanier et al., 2014; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). More specifically, confirmatory factor analysis has been confirmed for each subscale of the MBI-GS (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). Validity for the AWS and its six subscales have been supported via confirmatory factor analysis and consistent factor structure. Furthermore, consistency has been found across different professionals and organizational settings (Leiter & Maslach, 2003). Reliability for the Passion Scale has been supported via internal construct analysis (Vallerand et al., 2010; Trepanier et al., 2014). Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis have supported the validity of the Passion Scale, its bifactorial structure, and the scale has been supported in studies of passion for work (Vallerand et al., 2003;

Vallerand et al., 2010; Carbonneau et al., 2008). More specifically, construct, convergent, and discriminant validity have been found for the Passion Scale (Trepanier et al., 2014).

Qualitative Inquiry

An important focus of qualitative research is understanding individuals' experiences and how they make meaning of those experiences. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explain that "qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 6). Since people's experiences and the meaning they make of their experience can differ from one another, qualitative research also assumes that multiple realities exist, rather than just one.

Sample Selection

Purposeful sampling was utilized to select participants for the qualitative portion of the current study. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), purposeful sampling is "based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (p. 96). In order to gain insight into the experiences of academic affairs professionals who work with academic probation and conditionally admitted students, their experiences specifically with burnout, and how organizational culture impacts their work life and burnout, purposeful sampling must be used to select individuals who work with these specific student populations.

Furthermore, the following criterion was used to select participants to interview: currently worked or had worked with academic probation and/or conditionally admitted college students; worked as an academic advisor, academic coach (often also referred to as success coach), or supervisor of such positions; and worked at a 4-year public Master's – Larger Programs institution (as defined by the Carnegie Classifications of Institutions of Higher

Education) that was either SASCOC or MSCHE accredited. These positions were selected as they most often and most directly work with the student population of interest. The researcher identified four schools that most closely resembled one another in terms of position types, student populations served, and services provided by a singular academic support department. Directors or heads of the department were reached out to via email inviting them to speak with the researcher about further participation in the research study. Of the four schools, two responded back and had a meeting with the researcher via Zoom to discuss the study. Additional professionals within the department of interest at one of these two schools were willing to participate in interviews. Of the 5 participants in the single case study, one participant was a new professional in higher education (defined as working within higher education for less than five years), three were supervisors, and all participants were female.

Data Collection

Qualitative data was collected for the current study via semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explain that “interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them” and “when we are interested in past events that are impossible to replicate” (p. 108). While some behaviors regarding burnout and loss of passion may be observable and measurable, interviews are the most appropriate form of qualitative data collection for the current study because professionals’ feelings of burnout and interpretation of their department and university culture cannot be adequately understood without hearing directly from those individuals and in their own words. To Merriam and Tisdell’s (2016) second point, it would be unethical to put participants in situations that are likely to create feelings of burnout; thus, such events cannot be replicated.

Semi-structured interviewing includes an interview guide that includes a “list of questions or issues to be explored” and these questions are “a mix of more and less structured questions” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 109). While semi-structured interviewing uses flexibility, of both the wording of questions and the order in which they are asked, in order to allow “the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic,” “specific information is [still] desired from all respondents” (p. Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 111). Semi-structured interviewing was selected because 1) enough is known from the literature about burnout to be able to ask questions about it and 2) it will allow the researcher to ask questions about participants’ job experiences and their experiences with burnout and work passion but still allow the participants to expand or to provide additional data that may have gone unstated in a highly structured interview (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The Interview Guide is included in Appendix C.

Data Analysis

One tenant of qualitative research is that data collection and data analysis are conducted simultaneously. Because qualitative analysis is largely inductive and comparative, the current study used constant comparative analysis, in which the researcher “compare[ed] one unit of information with the next, looking for recurring regularities in the data” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 203). In order to develop categories and then themes, open and axial coding were used. First, interview transcripts were analyzed using open coding to identify segments of data that were striking and potentially useful in answering the research questions. Then, axial coding was used to combine open codes into categories (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). These codes and the process of axial coding was documented for the audit trail.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

In order to increase credibility of the current study's findings, the researcher's position was disclosed, and member checking was used for data collected from interviews. Discussing the researcher's positionality helped to ensure reliability, along with keeping an audit trail throughout the qualitative analysis process. In order to enhance the transferability of the current study's findings, rich, thick description was used to describe the context of the case study institution and department in which participants work (to an extent in order to protect participant and institution confidentiality) and to describe the findings "with adequate evidence presented in the form of quotes from participant interviews" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 257). In addition, maximum variation was used with position level, as participants included both supervisors and new professionals/those in entry-level positions, which helped "to identify important common patterns that are common across the diversity (cut through the noise of variation) on dimensions of interest" (Patton, 2015, p. 267), like position level.

Researcher's Position. I resonate with the participants in this study as I am a member of the population this sample represents. In my current professional position, I work in academic affairs and work with both students on academic probation and students conditionally admitted to the institution. Thus, my professional work and experiences influenced my interest in this topic and population of higher education professionals.

Limitations

One limitation of the current study's research design is the limited number of institutions being compared and analyzed in the qualitative portion of the study. Another limitation is the analysis of responses from one institution type. While these both allow for deeper analysis of the organizational context, which is important to answering the research questions, not interviewing

participants from more institutions and institution types does limit transferability. Another limitation is the difficulty of defining the population of interest; because job responsibilities differ among positions, position titles (i.e. academic coach, success coach), and institutions, it was difficult to assess the number of academic affairs professionals who work with academic probation and conditionally admitted students and to distinguish among those who work with such students predominantly and those who may work such students periodically or as a very small percentage of their work load. The use of self-report questionnaires is also a limitation of the current study, as it relies on participant honesty and willingness to disclose potentially sensitive information (like feelings of burnout) as well as understanding of the questions and survey instructions in order to answer questions accurately.

Chapter 4: Results

Quantitative

This study utilized a sequential, mixed methods research design. First, the quantitative part of the study was conducted, which included sending participants a survey and then conducting descriptive statistics and t-tests to understand quantitatively how these professionals were experiencing burnout, passion, and match/mismatch in the areas of worklife.

Survey

In total, the combined quantitative survey was sent to 873 participants. The overall return rate was 11.80%, with 103 survey responses received. After duplicate responses (some participants partially completed the survey more than once) and responses with only demographic information were dropped, the overall response rate was 9.17% (80 responses). Participant responses (8) for those who responded “No” to both “Do you work with students on academic probation?” and “Do you work with students conditionally admitted to the university?” were then dropped from the data because the professionals did not work with the student populations of interest. The response rates for each survey (in addition to demographic questions) are as follows: 8.26% for the Passion Scale, 8.03% for the MBI-GS, and 7.80% for the AWS.

Demographic Statistics

Descriptive statistics were broken down for each of the three, individual surveys since some participants did not fully complete the entire survey but did complete at least demographic questions and 1-2 of the individual surveys and, thus, still produced usable data. 68 participants completed the survey in its entirety, including demographic questions, the Passion Scale, MBI-GS, and AWS. 70 participants completed the Passion Scale and MBI-GS, in addition to demographic questions, and 72 participants completed the Passion Scale, as well as demographic

questions. Of these participants, 53 (73.36%) females completed the Passion Scale, 51 (72.86%) completed the MBI-GS, and 49 (72.06%) completed the AWS. 18 males (25% of Passion Scale respondents, 25.71% of MBI-GS respondents, and 26.47% of AWS respondents) and 1 participant who identified as non-binary/third gender completed each individual survey (1.39% of Passion Scale respondents, 1.43% of MBI-GS respondents, and 1.47% of AWS respondents). Regarding race and ethnicity, respondents identified as White (Passion Scale, $n = 55$, 76.39%; MBI-GS, $n = 53$, 75.71%; AWS, $n = 52$, 76.47%), Black or African American (Passion Scale, $n = 13$, 18.06%; MBI-GS, $n = 13$, 18.57%; AWS, $n = 12$, 17.65%), American Indian or Alaska Native ($n = 1$ for all 3 surveys; 1.39% of Passion Scale respondents, 1.43% of MBI-GS respondents, and 1.47% of AWS respondents), Other ($n = 3$ for all 3 surveys; 4.17% of Passion Scale respondents, 4.29% of MBI-GS respondents, and 4.41% of AWS respondents), Not Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin (Passion Scale, $n = 67$, 94.27%; MBI-GS, $n = 65$, 94.20%, ; AWS, $n = 64$, 95.52%), or Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin (Passion Scale, $n = 4$, 5.63%; MBI-GS, $n = 4$, 5.80%; AWS, $n = 3$, 4.48%) with 1 participant choosing not to identify their ethnicity. Table 1 provides an overview of participant gender, race, and ethnicity demographics.

Table 1

Demographic Variable	MBI-GS		AWS		Passion	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Gender Identity						
<i>Female</i>	51	72.86	49	72.06	53	73.36
<i>Male</i>	18	25.71	18	26.47	18	25
<i>Non-binary/Third Gender</i>	1	1.43	1	1.47	1	1.39
Race						
<i>White</i>	53	75.71	52	76.47	55	76.39
<i>Black or African American</i>	13	18.57	12	17.65	13	18.06
<i>American Indian or Alaska Native</i>	1	1.43	1	1.47	1	1.39
<i>Other</i>	3	4.29	3	4.41	3	4.17
Ethnicity						
<i>Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin</i>	65	94.20	64	95.52	67	94.27
<i>Not Hispanic or Latino</i>	4	5.80	3	4.48	4	5.63

Descriptive statistics were also collected for the following related to participants' higher education experience: if they work with probation/conditionally admitted students (Y/N), what percentage of their day-to-day job responsibilities were spent working with academic probation and conditionally admitted students, if their position was considered supervisory or entry level, amount of time spent working in current position, amount of time spent working at current institution, amount of time spent working in higher education, their current position title, and the institution they work for (in case the department was selected to be part of the qualitative research portion of the study). 51 (70.83%) respondents to the Passion Scale, 49 (70%) respondents to the MBI-GS, and 48 (70.59%) respondents to the AWS reported "Yes" to working with both students on academic probation and students who have been conditionally admitted to the university. 20 (27.78%) respondents to the Passion Scale, 20 (28.57%) respondents to the MBI-GS, and 19 (27.94%) respondents to the AWS reported "Yes" to working with students on academic probation and "No" to working with students who have been conditionally admitted to the university. 1 respondent to each individual scale (1.39% of Passion Scale respondents, 1.43% of MBI-GS respondents, and 1.47% of AWS respondents) reported "No" to working with students on academic probation and "Yes" to working with students who have been conditionally admitted to the university.

Participants reported the percentage of day-to-day responsibilities spent working directly with academic probation and/or conditionally admitted students on a sliding scale from 0-100%. These percentages were then grouped together in ranges for analysis purposes. 58 (80.56%) respondents to the Passion Scale reported working directly with academic probation and/or conditionally admitted undergraduate students up to 50% of their day while 14 (19.44%) respondents to the Passion Scale reported working directly with this population of students more

than 50% of their day. 56 (80%) respondents to the MBI-GS reported working directly with this population of students up to 50% of their day while 14 (20%) respondents to the MBI-GS reported working directly with this population of students more than 50% of their day. 54 (79.41%) respondents to the AWS reported working directly with this population of students up to 50% of their day while 14 (20.59%) respondents to the AWS reported working directly with this population of students more than 50% of their day.

Participants were also asked to report their position title. The researcher then grouped positions into one of two categories: academic success and academic advising. Though both types of supports are essential for student success, these groups were created to identify academic support staff, which include positions such as academic/success coaches and learning center/tutoring center support staff, and differentiate those roles from academic advising, which is what much of the previous literature has focused on in terms of burnout in higher education. Of the 72 respondents to the Passion Scale, 43 (59.72%) reported academic advising or related positions, 27 (37.5%) reported academic success related positions, and 2 (2.78%) were classified as “Other” because they did not fit into either academic advising or academic success categories. Of the 70 respondents to the MBI-GS, 42 (60%) reported academic advising or related positions, 26 (37.14%) reported academic success related positions, and 2 (2.86%) were classified as “Other.” Of the 68 respondents to the AWS, 41 (60.29%) reported academic advising or related positions, 25 (36.76%) reported academic success related positions, and 2 (2.94%) were classified as “Other.”

Regarding position level, participants reported if their position was entry level, Supervisor/Management (First Level), Management (Middle) or Management (Senior). Of the 72 respondents to the Passion Scale, 27 (37.5%) held entry level positions, 23 (31.94%) held

Supervisor/Management (First Level) positions, 15 (20.83%) held Management (Middle) positions, 6 (8.33%) held Management (Senior) positions, and 1 (1.39%) did not report their position level. Of the 70 respondents to the MBI-GS Scale, 26 (37.14%) held entry level positions, 23 (32.86%) held Supervisor/Management (First Level) positions, 14 (20%) held Management (Middle) positions, 6 (8.57%) held Management (Senior) positions, and 1 (1.43%) did not report their position level. Of the 68 respondents to the AWS, 26 (38.24%) held entry level positions, 22 (32.35%) held Supervisor/Management (First Level) positions, 13 (19.12%) held Management (Middle) positions, 6 (8.82%) held Management (Senior) positions, and 1 (1.47%) did not report their position level. For data analysis purposes, “Supervisory/Management (First level),” “Management (Middle),” and “Management (Senior)” position levels were combined into one “Supervisory/Management” category to compare to entry level professionals. Data for student populations worked with, percentage of day spent working with academic probation and/or conditionally admitted students, and position type are included in Table 2.

Table 2

Demographic Variable	MBI-GS		AWS		Passion	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Student Populations Worked with						
<i>Academic Probation</i>	20	28.57	19	27.94	20	27.78
<i>Conditionally Admitted</i>	1	1.43	1	1.47	1	1.39
<i>Academic Probation & Conditionally Admitted</i>	49	70	48	70.59	51	70.83
% of Day to Day Spent with Students						
0-49%	56	80	54	79.41	58	80.56
50-100%	14	20	14	20.59	14	19.44
Position Type						
<i>Academic Success</i>	42	60	41	60.29	43	59.72
<i>Academic Advising</i>	26	37.14	25	36.76	27	37.5
<i>Other</i>	2	2.86	2	2.94	2	2.78
Position Level						
<i>Entry Level</i>	26	37.14	26	38.24	27	37.5
<i>Supervisory</i>	43	61.43	41	60.29	45	62.5

Participants were asked to identify time spent in or at each of the following: their current position, the institution they work at, and higher education overall, as seen in Table 3. Time intervals included 0-6 months, 6 months-1 year, 1-2 years, 3-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, and 21+ years.

Table 3

Demographic Variable	MBI-GS		AWS		Passion	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Time Spent in Position						
<i>0-6 months</i>	7	10	7	10.29	7	9.72
<i>7-11 months</i>	6	8.57	6	8.82	6	8.33
<i>1-2 years</i>	21	30	20	29.41	21	29.17
<i>3-5 years</i>	22	31.43	21	30.88	23	31.94
<i>6-10 years</i>	7	10	7	10.29	8	11.11
<i>11-15 years</i>	3	4.29	3	4.41	3	4.17
<i>16-20 years</i>	2	2.86	2	2.94	2	2.78
<i>21+ years</i>	2	2.86	2	2.94	2	2.78
Time Spent at Institution						
<i>0-6 months</i>	1	1.43	1	1.47	1	1.39
<i>7-11 months</i>	3	4.29	3	4.41	3	4.17
<i>1-2 years</i>	14	20	14	20.59	14	19.44
<i>3-5 years</i>	20	28.57	20	29.41	21	29.17
<i>6-10 years</i>	13	28.57	12	17.65	13	18.06
<i>11-15 years</i>	8	11.43	8	11.76	8	11.11
<i>16-20 years</i>	6	8.57	6	8.82	6	8.33
<i>21+ years</i>	5	7.14	4	5.88	6	8.33
Time Spent in Higher Education						
<i>0-6 months</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>7-11 months</i>	1	1.43	1	1.47	1	1.39
<i>1-2 years</i>	6	8.57	6	8.82	6	8.33
<i>3-5 years</i>	10	14.29	10	14.71	10	13.89
<i>6-10 years</i>	21	30	21	30.88	21	29.17
<i>11-15 years</i>	8	11.43	7	10.29	8	11.11
<i>16-20 years</i>	12	17.14	12	17.65	12	16.67
<i>21+ years</i>	12	17.14	11	16.18	14	19.44

Overall, respondents to the Passion Scale represented 38 different, Master's – Larger Programs institutions, 24 (63.16%) of which were SACSCOC accredited and located in the south/southeastern region of the U.S., 9 (23.68%) of which were MSCHE accredited and located

in the Mid-Atlantic region of the U.S., 4 (10.53%) “Other” (from ACPA respondents who worked at institutions that were neither SACSCOC or MSCHE accredited), and 1 (2.63%) institution that was not disclosed. Respondents to the MBI-GS represented 37 different, Master’s – Larger Programs institutions, 23 (62.16%) of which were SACSCOC accredited and located in the south/southeastern region of the U.S., 9 (24.32%) of which were MSCHE accredited and located in the Mid-Atlantic region of the U.S., 4 (10.81%) “Other,” and 1 (2.70%) institution that was not disclosed. Respondents to the AWS represented 35 different, Master’s – Larger Programs institutions, 22 (62.86%) of which were SACSCOC accredited and located in the south/southeastern region of the U.S., 8 (22.86%) of which were MSCHE accredited and located in the Mid-Atlantic region of the U.S., 4 (11.43%) “Other,” and 1 (2.86%) institution that was not disclosed.

Scales

Table 4 below shows means and standard deviations for responses to each scale included in the survey. The Passion Scale is composed of three subscales measuring general passion, harmonious passion, and obsessive passion. Overall, participants reported higher levels of general passion ($M = 5.68$) and harmonious passion ($M = 5.00$) while they reported lower levels of obsessive passion ($M = 2.90$).

The AWS is composed of six subscales that measure the six areas of worklife, which include workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and value. For all 68 respondents, results indicated community had the strongest match ($M = 3.74$) followed by control ($M = 3.68$) while fairness had the lowest match ($M = 2.80$). The areas of control ($M = 3.68$), reward ($M = 3.34$), community ($M = 3.74$), and value ($M = 3.59$) all had moderate matches while the areas of workload ($M = 2.84$) and fairness ($M = 2.80$) had low-to-moderate matches.

The MBI-GS is comprised of three subscales measuring the three components of burnout, including exhaustion, cynicism, and personal efficacy. To score results from the MBI-GS, scores for each subscale were both summed and averaged in order to be able to make comparisons to both older and more recent studies (Mind Garden, Inc., 2019b). Exhaustion ($\Sigma = 1,051$, $M = 3.00$) indicated moderate levels of burnout. Cynicism ($\Sigma = 733$, $M = 2.09$) indicated lower levels of burnout. Personal efficacy ($\Sigma = 2,172$, $M = 5.20$) indicated low-to-moderate levels of burnout.

Table 4

ml	M	SD
Passion Scale		
<i>General Passion</i>	5.68	0.51
<i>Harmonious Passion</i>	5.00	0.80
<i>Obsessive Passion</i>	2.90	1.00
MBI-GS		
<i>Exhaustion</i>	3.00	1.57
<i>Cynicism</i>	2.09	1.67
<i>Personal Efficacy</i>	5.20	0.70
AWS		
<i>Workload</i>	2.84	0.96
<i>Control</i>	3.68	0.81
<i>Reward</i>	3.34	1.00
<i>Community</i>	3.74	0.80
<i>Fairness</i>	2.80	0.90
<i>Value</i>	3.59	0.81

T-Tests

A series of t-tests were conducted to assess if there were differences in burnout, passion, and/or areas of worklife between the following groups: position type (Table 5), professionals who worked with academic probation and conditionally admitted students and those working only with conditionally admitted students (Table 6), professionals who worked with students less than 50% of their day and those who worked with students more than 50% of their day (Table 7), new professionals at their institution and those who were not new professionals (Table 8), new

professionals in higher education and those who were not new professionals (Table 9), new professionals in their position and those who were not new professionals (Table 10), and position level (Table 11).

T-tests suggested that there were no significant differences in any of the burnout or passion subscales between academic advising professionals and academic success professionals. One significant difference was found in the areas of worklife. A t-test suggested that there was a significant difference in value between academic advising professionals ($M = 3.41, SD = 0.85$) and academic success professionals ($M = 3.74, SD = 0.66$) at $p < .10, t(64) = 1.69, p < .096$. Academic success professionals reported a slightly significantly higher match in value than academic advising professionals.

T-tests suggested that there were no significant differences in any of the burnout, passion, or areas of worklife subscales between professionals who worked with both students on academic probation and students conditionally admitted to the university and professionals who worked only with conditionally admitted students. In addition, no significant differences were found in any of the burnout, passion, or areas of worklife subscales between new professionals in their position and those who were not new professionals in their position.

T-tests suggested that there were no significant differences in any of the burnout or areas of worklife subscales between professionals who worked directly with students less than 50% of their day and professionals who worked directly with students more than 50% of their day. Two significant differences were found in the passion subscales. For the general passion t-test, Levene's test of equality of variances was violated, $F(70) = 19.03, p = .001$. Noting this violated assumption, a t statistic not assuming equality of variances was reported. The t-test suggested that there was a significant difference in general passion between professionals who worked

directly with students less than 50% of their day ($M = 5.81, SD = 0.30$) and professionals who worked with students more than 50% of their day ($M = 5.35, SD = 0.79$) at $p < .05, t(18.63) = 2.40, p < .027^1$. Professionals who worked directly with students less than 50% of their day had significantly higher levels of general passion than those who worked with students more than 50% of their day. Another t-test suggested that there was a significant difference in harmonious passion between professionals who worked directly with students less than 50% of their day ($M = 5.07, SD = 0.69$) and professionals who worked with students more than 50% of their day ($M = 4.71, SD = 0.94$) at $p < .10, t(70) = 1.75, p < .085$. Professionals who worked directly with students less than 50% of their day had slightly significantly higher levels of harmonious passion than those who worked with students more than 50% of their day.

T-tests suggested that there were no significant differences in any of the passion or areas of worklife subscales between new professionals and those who were not new professionals at the institution they worked at the time of the study. One significant difference was found with burnout. A t-test suggested that there was a significant difference in exhaustion between new professionals ($M = 3.32, SD = 1.61$) and not new professionals at the institution ($M = 2.63, SD = 0.79$) at $p < .10, t(68) = 1.85, p < .069$. New professionals at the institution had slightly significantly higher levels of exhaustion than those who were not new professionals at the institution.

T-tests suggested that there were no significant differences in any of the passion subscales between new professionals and those who were not new professionals in higher education at the time of the study. One significant difference was found in burnout and one in the areas of worklife. A t-test suggested that there was a significant difference in exhaustion between new professionals ($M = 3.60, SD = 1.74$) and not new professionals in higher education ($M =$

2.81, $SD = 1.48$) at $p < .10$, $t(68) = 1.83$, $p < .071$. New professionals in higher education had slightly significantly higher levels of exhaustion than those who were not new professionals in higher education. For the t-test on control, Levene's test of equality of variances was violated, $F(66) = 4.31$, $p = .006$. Noting this violated assumption, a t statistic not assuming equality of variances was reported. This t-test suggested that there was a significant difference in control between new professionals ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 1.01$) and not new professionals in higher education ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 0.67$) at $p < .05$, $t(20.95) = -0.23$, $p < .030^2$. New professionals in higher education had a slightly significantly lower match in the area of control than those who were not new professionals in higher education.

T-tests suggested at least one significant difference between professionals in entry level positions and those in supervisory positions in burnout, passion, and the areas of worklife. A t-test suggested that there was a significant difference in exhaustion between those in entry level positions ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 1.73$) and those in supervisory positions ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 1.45$) at $p < .10$, $t(67) = 1.73$, $p < .088$. Entry level professionals had slightly significantly higher levels of exhaustion than those who were in supervisory positions. For the next t-test, Levene's test of equality of variances was violated, $F(67) = 12.81$, $p < .001$. Noting this violated assumption, a t statistic not assuming equality of variances was reported. This t-test suggested that there was a significant difference in cynicism between those in entry level positions ($M = 2.72$, $SD = 1.99$) and those in supervisory positions ($M = 1.70$, $SD = 1.35$) at $p < .05$, $t(38.93) = 2.30$, $p < .0143$. Entry level professionals had significantly higher levels of cynicism than those who were in supervisory positions. For the t-test regarding general passion and supervisory levels, Levene's test of equality of variances was violated, $F(69) = 18.16$, $p < .001$. Noting this violated assumption, a t statistic not assuming equality of variances was reported. This t-test suggested

that there was a significant difference in general passion between those in entry level positions ($M = 5.51, SD = 0.72$) and those in supervisory positions ($M = 5.80, SD = 0.28$) at $p < .10$, $t(31.01) = -1.99, p < .056^4$. Entry level professionals had slightly significantly lower levels of general passion than those who were in supervisory positions. Regarding areas of worklife, a t-test suggested that there was a significant difference in control between those in entry level positions ($M = 3.30, SD = 0.89$) and those in supervisory positions ($M = 3.90, SD = 0.66$) at $p < .05$, $t(65) = -3.18, p < .002$. Entry level professionals had a slightly significantly lower match in the area of control than those who were in supervisory positions. A second t-test suggested that there was a significant difference in the area of value between those in entry level positions ($M = 3.34, SD = 0.88$) and those in supervisory positions ($M = 3.77, SD = 0.72$) at $p < .05$, $t(65) = -2.19, p < .032$. Entry level professionals had a slightly significantly lower match in the area of value than those who were in supervisory positions.

Table 5

Scale	Academic Success		Academic Advising		<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Passion Scale							
<i>General Passion</i>	5.78	0.41	5.61	0.57	68	1.33	.190
<i>Harmonious Passion</i> +	4.97	0.57	4.97	0.91	66.28	-0.02	.982
<i>Obsessive Passion</i>	3.06	0.88	2.80	1.08	68	1.06	.292
Burnout							
<i>Exhaustion</i>	3.34	1.45	2.80	1.62	66	1.41	.162
<i>Cynicism</i> +	1.94	1.41	2.26	1.87	65.98	-0.78	.455
<i>Personal Efficacy</i>	5.09	0.81	5.20	0.69	66	-0.60	.549
AWS							
<i>Workload</i>	2.68	0.90	2.99	0.99	64	-1.31	.194
<i>Control</i>	3.55	0.79	3.73	0.82	64	-0.88	.383
<i>Reward</i>	3.25	0.97	3.36	1.01	64	-0.42	.673
<i>Community</i>	3.84	0.77	3.62	0.91	64	1.02	.313
<i>Fairness</i>	2.94	0.77	2.70	0.97	64	1.08	.285
<i>Value</i>	3.74	0.66	3.41	0.85	64	1.69	.096*

+Equal Variance not assumed

** $p < 0.05$ * $p < 0.10$

Table 6

Scale	Works w/ PB & CA		Works w/ CA Only		<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Passion Scale							
<i>General Passion</i>	5.63	0.57	5.83	0.28	69	-1.45	.152
<i>Harmonious Passion</i> +	4.92	0.83	5.10	0.57	50.73	-1.05	.297
<i>Obsessive Passion</i>	2.84	1.03	3.12	0.90	69	-1.04	.302
Burnout							
<i>Exhaustion</i>	2.84	1.51	3.49	1.63	67	-1.58	.119
<i>Cynicism</i>	2.11	1.78	2.13	1.42	67	-0.04	.965
<i>Personal Efficacy</i>	5.19	0.75	5.11	0.74	67	0.40	.694
AWS							
<i>Workload</i>	2.92	0.96	2.59	0.95	65	1.28	.207
<i>Control</i>	3.73	0.78	3.51	0.89	65	1.01	.318
<i>Reward</i>	3.29	0.94	3.42	1.15	65	-0.47	.637
<i>Community</i>	3.69	0.82	3.84	0.98	65	-0.64	.524
<i>Fairness</i>	2.82	0.87	2.67	0.90	65	0.62	.535
<i>Value</i>	3.54	0.81	3.68	0.82	65	-0.62	.536

+Equal Variance not assumed

** $p < 0.05$ * $p < 0.10$

Table 7

Scale	0-49%		50-100%		<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Passion Scale							
<i>General Passion+</i>	5.81	0.30	5.35	0.79	18.63	2.40	.027**
<i>Harmonious Passion</i>	5.07	0.69	4.71	0.94	70	1.75	.085*
<i>Obsessive Passion</i>	3.02	0.96	2.66	1.09	70	1.36	.177
Burnout							
<i>Exhaustion</i>	3.03	1.66	2.91	1.31	68	0.29	.776
<i>Cynicism</i>	2.00	1.60	2.37	1.89	68	-0.80	.426
<i>Personal Efficacy</i>	5.20	0.71	5.09	0.85	68	0.52	.605
AWS							
<i>Workload</i>	2.85	1.01	2.79	0.82	66	0.29	.813
<i>Control+</i>	3.61	1.87	3.88	0.54	48.74	-1.52	.136
<i>Reward</i>	3.39	1.04	3.21	0.87	66	0.64	.523
<i>Community</i>	3.77	0.88	3.64	0.80	66	0.54	.592
<i>Fairness</i>	2.74	0.87	2.92	0.93	66	-0.71	.478
<i>Value</i>	3.68	0.82	3.36	0.75	66	1.43	.159

+Equal Variance not assumed

** $p < 0.05$ * $p < 0.10$

Table 8

Scale	New Professional (at institution)		Not New Professional (at institution)		<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Passion Scale							
<i>General Passion</i>	5.67	0.44	5.72	0.58	70	-0.44	.661
<i>Harmonious Passion</i>	4.89	0.78	5.09	0.75	70	-1.09	.281
<i>Obsessive Passion</i>	2.90	0.92	2.97	1.09	70	-0.33	.745
Burnout							
<i>Exhaustion</i>	3.32	1.61	2.63	1.46	68	1.85	.069*
<i>Cynicism+</i>	2.36	1.80	1.78	1.47	67.96	1.51	.137
<i>Personal Efficacy</i>	5.11	0.77	5.23	0.72	68	-0.65	.520
AWS							
<i>Workload</i>	2.75	1.02	2.95	0.88	66	-0.85	.398
<i>Control</i>	3.54	0.82	3.85	0.77	66	-1.00	.115
<i>Reward</i>	3.27	0.99	3.43	1.01	66	-0.64	.528
<i>Community</i>	3.75	0.82	3.72	0.91	66	0.16	.877
<i>Fairness</i>	2.81	0.82	2.76	0.96	66	0.29	.817
<i>Value</i>	3.57	0.73	3.63	0.91	66	-0.30	.766

+Equal Variance not assumed

** $p < 0.05$ * $p < 0.10$

Table 9

Scale	New Professional (in HIED)		Not New Professional (in HIED)		<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Passion Scale							
<i>General Passion</i>	5.62	0.54	5.71	0.50	70	-0.68	.498
<i>Harmonious Passion+</i>	4.79	0.87	5.04	0.74	23.51	-1.06	.298
<i>Obsessive Passion+</i>	2.69	0.73	3.01	1.06	38.82	-1.42	.163
Burnout							
<i>Exhaustion</i>	3.60	1.74	2.81	1.48	68	1.83	.071*
<i>Cynicism+</i>	2.61	2.21	1.93	1.44	20.58	1.20	.245
<i>Personal Efficacy+</i>	5.01	0.97	5.22	0.66	20.86	-0.84	.408
AWS							
<i>Workload</i>	2.76	1.02	2.86	0.94	66	-0.35	.729
<i>Control+</i>	3.22	1.01	3.83	0.67	20.95	-0.23	.030**
<i>Reward</i>	3.44	1.06	3.30	0.98	66	0.49	.627
<i>Community</i>	3.78	0.81	3.73	0.88	66	0.21	.834
<i>Fairness</i>	2.68	0.85	2.83	0.90	66	-0.60	.546
<i>Value</i>	3.50	0.93	3.62	0.77	66	-0.54	.591

+Equal Variance not assumed

** $p < 0.05$ * $p < 0.10$

Table 10

Scale	New Professional (in position)		Not New Professional (in position)		<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Passion Scale							
<i>General Passion</i>	5.67	0.51	5.77	0.50	70	-0.65	.519
<i>Harmonious Passion</i>	4.96	0.79	5.07	0.69	70	-0.47	.643
<i>Obsessive Passion+</i>	2.84	0.92	3.30	1.22	18.42	-1.38	.185
Burnout							
<i>Exhaustion+</i>	3.08	1.65	2.69	1.20	26.78	1.02	.317
<i>Cynicism</i>	2.05	1.69	2.29	1.62	68	-0.48	.635
<i>Personal Efficacy</i>	5.12	0.78	5.43	0.50	68	-1.46	.149
AWS							
<i>Workload</i>	2.82	0.97	2.90	0.94	66	-0.28	.779
<i>Control</i>	3.69	0.80	3.64	0.85	66	0.17	.862
<i>Reward</i>	3.43	1.00	3.00	0.95	66	1.44	.156
<i>Community+</i>	3.82	0.78	3.43	1.08	16.07	1.20	.222
<i>Fairness</i>	2.80	0.86	2.76	1.01	66	0.13	.898
<i>Value</i>	3.63	0.78	3.46	0.93	66	0.66	.511

+Equal Variance not assumed

** $p < 0.5$ * $p < 0.10$

Table 11

Scale	Entry Level		Supervisory/ Management		<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Passion Scale							
<i>General Passion+</i>	5.51	0.72	5.80	0.28	31.01	-1.99	.056*
<i>Harmonious Passion+</i>	4.83	0.96	5.07	0.63	40	-1.18	.246
<i>Obsessive Passion</i>	2.72	1.00	3.03	0.97	69	-1.31	.194
Burnout							
<i>Exhaustion</i>	3.42	1.73	2.75	1.45	67	1.73	.088*
<i>Cynicism+</i>	2.72	1.99	1.70	1.35	38.93	2.30	.014**
<i>Personal Efficacy+</i>	5.03	0.90	5.24	0.63	39.77	-1.02	.315
AWS							
<i>Workload</i>	2.88	1.02	2.85	0.91	65	0.19	.906
<i>Control</i>	3.30	0.89	3.90	0.66	65	-3.18	.002**
<i>Reward+</i>	3.19	1.16	3.45	0.89	43.30	-0.95	.348
<i>Community</i>	3.55	0.97	3.84	0.76	65	-1.37	.174
<i>Fairness</i>	2.61	0.96	2.90	0.83	65	-1.31	.196
<i>Value</i>	3.34	0.88	3.77	0.72	65	-2.19	.032**

+Equal Variance not assumed

** $p < 0.05$ * $p < 0.10$

Qualitative

To better understand how academic affairs professionals working with academic probation and conditionally admitted college students experience burnout, including how it impacts them personally and professionally and how they navigate it, interviews were conducted with five professionals in an academic support department at one Master's – Larger Programs, 4-year, public institution. Qualitative data confirmed various impacts of burnout identified within the Areas of Worklife Model, such as workload and community (Leiter & Maslach, 1999; 2003), and provided insight regarding how and when burnout occurs during the academic year for these professionals, how burnout may vary by position type, and the relationship between burnout and work passion. Major influences on burnout, when burnout likely occurs for these professionals, and the impacts of COVID-19 on the different contexts of their work emerged from the data, as well as other themes. This section of the chapter will provide an overview of the study's participants, their work experiences in relation to burnout and work passion, and the patterns that arose from their collective experience.

Participant Overview

After the academic support department at Southeast University was confirmed as the case for this study, only participants who had worked in the department for at least one academic year were invited to participate in an interview so that participants would be able to speak to the context of the job, the department, and the institution. Participants' specific position titles and the name of the department were omitted in order to protect participants' identity; the department is referred to as the "academic support department" and participants' positions were identified as either entry level or supervisory, which applies to multiple levels of supervision in order to protect the identify of those who may be the only person in that specific level of supervision.

Participants are referenced primarily by their assigned pseudonyms. However, in any situation where information may reveal a participant's identity, they are referred to only as "participant."

Table 12 provides an overview of participants' pseudonyms and position levels.

Table 12

Participant Pseudonym	Position Level
Brittany	Entry level
Nicole	Entry level
Kelly	Supervisory
Olivia	Supervisory
Erika	Supervisory

Themes

Though some participants hold the same position and perform many of the same job responsibilities and interact with the same student populations, they each have their own individual experiences within the department and the institution at which they work. However, the experiences they shared illuminated some common themes. This section will discuss these themes in depth, including commonalities and differences found among their experiences.

Theme 1: Major Influences, Occurrence, and Navigation of Burnout.

As participants shared their experiences with burnout, they identified major influences on burnout, how and when burnout occurs for them in their position, and some commonalities in how they navigate burnout.

Major Influences. Participants identified workload, institutional and departmental communities, and reward and recognition from the institution as major influences on both the increase in and reduction of burnout. In addition, participants shared how different position types may experience burnout differently and illuminated the potential relationship between burnout and work passion.

Workload. Overall, participants attributed increased workload as having substantial impact on their level of burnout, describing a positive relationship between the two. As workload increased, burnout often did as well. Not only did the amount of work influence burnout but also the type of work itself, which often includes difficult conversations with students and a high level of emotional management. One participant described the workload as things being “continuously put... on our plate to get done.” In particular, Brittany noted this included both additional responsibilities added and “constantly changing responsibilities.” The change, she noted, was not the issue “but to think of that work that has to go in to... these responsibilities and then to see it kind of fizzle out, it’s frustrating.” Olivia also shared a similar description of the additional workload, explaining that it was “like more and more things being put on your plate.”

Nicole described the workload as “unmanageable,” and work had to be completed outside of normal working hours so that they were “getting things accomplished at a reasonable time.” Putting in additional hours of work, particularly in a position that does not pay overtime, in order to complete job responsibilities was noted by several participants. In particular, Olivia noted that a challenge of the job was “being asked to do so much” and “not having enough hours in the day to actually complete tasks.” From a supervisory perspective, Ericka explained that when burnout is at its peak during the semester, there’s “zero time” for planning and assessment. Because these are still tasks that need completed, “the only time you have to reflect or to plan is either early in the morning before you get to work or late at night after work. So, it’s like you’re on a... 24/7 cycle of... work.” Similarly, Olivia noted she often worked nights, weekends, and/or through lunch in order to try and keep up with her job responsibilities. One participant commented that “a lot is asked of us, and there are a lot of... high demands and pressures often put on this department.” Kelly described these demands as a combination of being asked to do a high

volume of tasks and doing tasks that are inherently difficult themselves. Nicole shared a similar description of the workload; what made the workload unmanageable was having a lot of job responsibilities and each being “equally... unmanageable.” Kelly shared a story about one semester in particular where workload and burnout was at the highest point she had experienced during her time in the department; in addition to their usual responsibilities of teaching a class, which included two sections this particular semester, and meeting with their caseload of students, they were heavily involved in the university launch of an early alert program and were then asked by the institution to create and teach an additional class, which each staff member took on an additional 1-2 sections of. Kelly expressed feelings of decreased personal efficacy, explaining that “we were being asked to do so much that I couldn’t do anything well.”

Participants in supervisory positions added that part of these demands included pressure from the institution to “produce results” that showed impacts the department was having. “The department was not yet fully funded or part of the university and so it still felt extremely high stakes,” Kelly reflected. She described the pressure as feeling like ‘if you screw up, we’re going to fire everybody’ and ‘we’re going to eliminate your department.’ Olivia shared similar pressures, explaining there was “a very specific focus on producing results.” While departments often must collect and share data to show their services are having positive impacts and warrant continued funding, Olivia noted the challenge was “having to prove results too early in the game to be able to actually show results.” For example, Olivia shared that the department was asked by the institution for results within the first semester of their new academic probation program when it was either too early to show GPA and other impacts their program had on students at all or was only one semester worth of data. “We need[ed] a little more time to see... long-term what the impact is going to be,” Olivia explained. She expressed the pressure this put on her and the

department to “make adjustments to our services very quickly;” these changes were not as “data driven from a ... longitudinal perspective as [she] would [have] like[d].”

While higher workload increased burnout, some participants also shared how their work with these student populations also carried an emotional weight at times, which also impacted their burnout. Kelly shared a story about a student she worked with one semester who worked hard, had a successful semester, and improved her academic standing but had spent the last year without financial aid and could no longer afford to attend the university. Kelly shared the student’s situation with “a lot of people,” asking “how do we do this? How do we fix this?... here’s a student who recovered and has gone on to ... make Dean’s List and... we’re losing her because of money.” Unfortunately, the student did not return to the institution. Olivia shared how she often had difficult conversations with students in this particular functional area and “it’s a really hard job and people get filtered out.” These conversations can range from difficult financial and homelife situations, like Kelly shared, to frank conversations about a student’s academic standing and potential ramifications of that, such as financial aid loss and separation from the institution.

Community. Participants described the communities of the department and institution, noting differences between the two and for a while feeling as if the department was not a part of the campus community, though some participants noted improvement in this area in recent months. Several participants described the institutional community as political and identified this as a factor in increasing their own burnout. Brittany said there had been “constantly... chang[ing] leadership” in recent years, which included creating new administrative positions and frequent changes in the organizational structure of the institution. She shared concerns of people being “hired sometimes and put into these positions without clear understanding of how they got

the job.” The impact these leadership and organizational changes had on the academic support department included “constantly hav[ing] to try and figure out how to impress the next person... whoever’s in the chain above you without... clearly knowing that they see the value in everything that’s happening down the line,” Brittany explained. Similarly, Olivia expressed feeling as if “the scope of the department would change based on who was in charge” and it “would change based on their personal feelings that might be somewhat stigmatized about... what services were being offered” out of their department. Olivia shared that this volatility created a community where she felt their department had to constantly be grateful, and thus, could not honestly share concerns and/or challenge something coming down from the institution. As a new professional at Southeast, Nicole explained she “didn’t realize how political the institution would be” and that it is something that decreases her job satisfaction. “It makes you feel like no matter what kind of work you do, your department does, that if you don’t have a relationship, a previous relationship with someone in a specific position... or you’re not in good terms with someone,” it can really impact the department’s work, Nicole disclosed.

Some participants expressed that the institution does have its own sense of community; however, they themselves and/or their department have not felt a part of that. Nicole echoed this sentiment, stating the institution does have a “strong sense of community” but that she doesn’t feel a part of it. She also noted it is an individual responsibility to engage more and try to be a part of the community as well as the institution’s responsibility to welcome employees into the community. “The university definitely strives to... have a lot of campus partnerships,” Erika stated, but also explained “there’s more opportunities to improve” partnerships and relationships on campus. Olivia described the institution as “very community oriented” and “relationship focused” but that it was “difficult to be an outsider” at such an institution and “difficult to break

into” that larger institutional community. Other participants argued there was a lack of a larger, institutional community but there existed multiple, separate communities. Kelly felt the institution was “largely segregated... by department and role on campus.” She mentioned faculty and staff being two different communities, as well as the different colleges that make up Southeast University having their own individual communities. Brittany described the separate communities similarly; she noted three major communities, which included faculty, staff, and students, and additional, separate communities within those. For example, Brittany identified student affairs and academic affairs as communities within the larger staff community but described them as two isolated communities rather than one larger student support community, which Brittany attributed to the political nature of the institution. Another example of separate communities Brittany shared was even within the academic affairs community, academic advisors and academic support services such as success coaching and tutoring felt very separated from one another.

In comparison to the institutional community, participants described a more positive and supportive sense of community within their department. Several participants described the departmental community as collaborative while acknowledging individuals’ strengths and assigning projects based on those strengths. For example, Olivia described the departmental community as very driven and collaborative, focusing on research to help inform decisions and having developed a culture of support and challenge. Erika described the department as very collaborative as well, with individuals working together on curriculum, programs, and with two other support resources on campus in particular. Nicole echoed Erika’s collaborative, project-based community; she described the departmental community as broken up into smaller communities based on projects professionals are working on together, whether those projects

were explicitly assigned by a supervisor or informally created. Participants attributed the support of their colleagues and department as meaningful and helpful in managing their own levels of burnout, which were impacted by the workload. As Kelly explained, “there are definitely times where we can share in that... stress.” “Sometimes that commiserating is being angry and sometimes it’s laughing,” she described, “but we figured how to move forward and focus on the work too.”

Some participants also spoke to the personal relationships they’ve developed within the departmental community and noted both the advantages and disadvantages of blurring professional and personal lines. For example, Kelly described how she’s become “more than co-workers” with other members of the department whom she’s worked with for several years now. Furthermore, she added that social activities like getting coffee with colleagues at work or going to yoga together before the pandemic were forms of social support that reduced her feelings of burnout. Olivia also spoke about the personal nature of the departmental community. She explained “it felt like going to work with friends” and this enabled them to challenge each other professionally. However, she described it as “a lot of the personal bleeding into the professional” and “it was very difficult to have those personal lines” of setting work/life balance.

Reward. Leiter and Maslach (2003) explain that the area of worklife of reward includes “monetary, social, and intrinsic” rewards (p. 97). Mismatch in the area of reward occurs when rewards do not align with one’s expectations. An example of a mismatch in social reward is a “lack of recognition” from individuals, which in the case context could be students, other departments/staff members, and/or the larger institution/administration (Leiter & Maslach, 2003, p. 97). Reward, particularly social reward, was a common area of mismatch that emerged from participants’ narratives. They expressed frustrations with a lack of recognition of their

department and the work they do from both students and the institution, including a lack of understanding about their services, lack of recognizing the value they could bring to students and the institution, and lack of recognizing success. Regarding a lack of understanding, Brittany explained she “wouldn’t say the campus in entirety understands and completely values... what we can provide students.” Olivia echoed those thoughts, describing it as “one of the challenges” they faced as an office because “people didn’t quite know how to classify our department and what we did.” Similarly, Nicole didn’t believe the institution was “familiar with what we did” and described how “there was not a lot of recognition” when she first started with department. Erika acknowledged that there is a better understanding of the office across campus now, but she finds it frustrating when the administration is “still sometimes not quite understanding what we’re doing after all of these years, still being a little confused or questioning” our office and what we do, which was something that also negatively impacted her work passion.

Regarding feeling valued by the institution, Brittany shared a story about a student she was meeting with who told their professor they had started attending the department’s academic support service and the professor questioned why the student would meet with that service and not them (the professor). It “made me feel he didn’t see the value in what I could even provide to that student or what [our service] could be providing a student,” Brittany expressed. “I don’t feel always valued by the institution,” Nicole shared. She described “feeling that we’re being looked over or credit isn’t given... where it needs to be.” In terms of feeling valued by the institution, Kelly expressed that “for a long time, it felt like a struggle.” When talking about the department’s work with students on academic probation, Kelly felt “there’s always some kind of pushback about whether or not they actually need to work with us or take our course.” Kelly also described an instance where some individuals “even... went so far as to question the validity of

our data.” She explained “we can tell [the institution] all these things and make suggestions about ways to help student retention... and I don’t know that anybody’s willing or ready to hear that stuff.” Olivia explained it was at the institutional level “where I really struggled... feeling valued.” She described her work as a “fight to create the department and to... sustain the department.” Olivia reiterated the institution’s “focus on proving results” and on data, but that “it just didn’t ever feel like it was enough” and she often felt personally and professionally rejected by the institution. Even when their data showed successful impacts, Olivia said “it sometimes just felt a little bit like there was... a tendency to try to find any other explanation for the success that we were having,” echoing Nicole’s feelings of credit not being given to their department. Similarly, Erika shared she doesn’t feel there’s “as much pushback” now as in previous years. However, Erika was one of two participants (both supervisors) who noted “a lot of times there’s always going to be some pushback” at “any university when you’re going to make a change.” So, for Erika, though there was pushback to the changes the department brought to the institution in terms of probation policy and requirements for students on academic probation, it was expected. “Each year was a challenge,” Erika said “to get people... on board with us moving towards a university wide type of approach” for academic probation. However, she still expressed that getting continued pushback from the upper administration was extremely frustrating and impacted her levels of burnout because they “should know that what you’re doing is for the betterment of the university.” Olivia also acknowledged Erika’s belief about change; “there’s going to be conflict.... There’s never enough money to go around,” she explained. However, for her, the institution and department should both agree on “the department trajectory,” and the institution should engage with the department in open conversations about the department’s

services and how they can work together for the betterment of the institution, which she felt was not happening.

While most participants described the lack of social reward in terms of understanding and all participants described a lack of recognition, monetary reward was a specific area of mismatch for Nicole as a new professional. She expressed frustrations with not having the same salary as other staff members in the same position and not receiving a pay increase when she obtained additional education. The institution's "lack of willingness to engage in my conversation [about my salary] or meet with me made me feel not supported," she shared. Nicole further explained, "obtaining more education and the institution not valuing that to increase my salary... did not make me feel valued, especially working in higher ed."

Feeling Valued. Participants shared mixed messages of support from and feeling valued by their students, department, and institution. While participants noted the department itself was very supportive of one another and knew the value of the work they did, they shared stories of student interactions and how they felt perceived by the institution that highlighted moments of support and value as well as opposing examples that have impacted their burnout.

Within the student context, participants shared stories about what made them feel valued and lower levels of burnout and then, on the other hand, what made them feel less valued and increased feelings of burnout. Instances that increased their own value, and perhaps personal efficacy, included verbal acknowledgements and appreciations from students and students who would follow-up, which included explicit actions, like students letting participants know about successes and how something they worked on together in a meeting helped them, as well as implicit actions, like scheduling additional appointments with participants and continuing to meet. Both of these situations helped many participants see students had identified them as a part

of their support network and saw the value in the services they provided. For example, Brittany shared about a student she had worked with previously who “willingly reached out to me and asked to schedule an appointment with me... That really made me kind of see that she saw the value in me..., like I was someone to go to when she started having some challenges.” Nicole reminisced on moments from students who “express gratitude and follow-up about how helpful things were from our department as a whole or from... myself as an individual coach or instructor.” When students follow-up, Nicole explained that “makes me feel valued because it shows that I think that we built a really positive relationship and they want to share their success.” Kelly echoed Brittany and Nicole, sharing that when students have explicitly told her they appreciated her or “through their actions – their willingness to come back and talk to me or they reach out later unexpectedly.” Though “few and far between,” Olivia shared she keeps “thank you notes from my students.” She further explained those written notes, explicit verbal acknowledgements, and student comments stating they found the probation program valuable and share skills they developed, which are collected as part of qualitative data collection in the form of a final course reflection about the program, make her feel valued. Olivia also expressed feeling valued by students who “reach out again” or you “see them on campus flourishing... or walk across the stage at graduation.” From the perspective of a supervisor of student workers for the department, Erika shared a way she feels valued is she has “not advertised... [those] positions since the first year” and has “actually had to turn students away because they come through our programs, and then they want to work for our department.” She explained that desire to work for the department feels like “a way that students are showing that they really value what we’re doing.”

On the other hand, participants shared students do not always react positively to having to work with them and/or to suggestions they may provide to students in meetings. Brittany shared a story of a student who became “very upset with me in class” and when “I tried to talk with the student further after class,” it escalated, and the student complained to Brittany’s second level supervisor. Brittany explained she was just “trying to help” and shared “better ways if he’s in those situations in college that he could handle that,” but the student was offended and did not see value in Brittany or her suggestions at the time. Nicole shared more generally that “there are some students that outwardly express that they do not want to engage, and they don’t find much purpose or value in the programs that we provide or the services that we do or the work that we do.” Olivia shared there is often resistance and resentment from students who are required to engage with their office’s academic probation program and sometimes resistance from students conditionally admitted to the institution. She explained though that can be very challenging to work with, “even if a student is frustrated, I feel like I do get the sense from them that they know I’m in their corner, they know that someone cares about them, and so in that way, I do feel valued.”

All participants described their department as the context that provided them with the most support and made them feel valued, sometimes reducing feelings of burnout. In particular, Brittany shared she feels the most valued “from my colleagues more than anybody else.” When “they come to me when they have questions or concerns or... they want to talk through something,” it makes her feel she has “something of value for them.” Nicole also attributed feeling valued to her “supportive colleagues and supervisor.” She described receiving “a lot of positive feedback, there’s a lot of encouragement,” and being “given the responsibility to work on some of the projects that I’ve done” all make her feel valued. Furthermore, when “some of the

curriculum or projects that I've developed" are shared with others, that also makes her feel valued "because it shows that my supervisor trusts that what I'm doing is acceptable for our department as a whole with... having that responsibility and knowing that I can do the job." Echoing Nicole's statements about supportive supervisors, Kelly explained something that makes her feel valued is how her "supervisor constantly looks for opportunities and ways...to help us grow professionally." "I don't know that as many departments or heads of departments spend as much time thinking about their employees as ours does," Kelly shared. Olivia expressed she "absolutely" felt valued by her department because they "saw how hard I was working" and everyone "had a shared vision... and strong communication." She also felt a "sense of purpose" and that she "made the department better," all of which contributed to her feeling valued in this context. From the department and her supervisor, Olivia explained she was getting all that she needed in terms of support, which included being trusted, backed in decisions that were made, encouraging students to use the department's services, encouraging faculty and staff to recommend their services, and allocating resources needed as much as was in control of her supervisor. However, "the institution was not supporting me in that way." Erika attributed her own value and support to knowing those in her department seem "pretty happy to come to work... and I think people are really motivated." Brittany shared the department is always very understanding but sometimes felt like there was a false sense of support. Verbally the department offers support, but in action, Brittany expressed that doesn't happen. "You say that you see how hard we work," Brittany explained, "but yet you continuously put things on our plate to get done, like that doesn't feel like true support to me at the same time."

Position Type. Differences in burnout, including major impacts and supports, were highlighted between different position types. Supervisory and entry level participants highlighted

different areas of worklife that impacted their burnout and differences within areas, such as extrinsic or intrinsic validation and monetary or social reward. One notable difference was the student context seemed to influence burnout more for participants in the entry level position than those in supervisory positions. This could arguably be due to their positions being more student facing in the sense they teach more and work with students one-on-one more than their supervisors with both the academic probation and conditionally admitted student populations and due to those in entry level positions being new professionals (defined as less than 5 years) in higher education and/or in the position. Supervisors more often discussed frustrations within the institutional context and the limitations or difficulties that put on the department as impacts on their level of burnout more so than students. Supervisors also identified positive impacts, or things that helped reduce their burnout, within the institutional context more than entry level participants. What may further impact burnout for those in supervisory positions is that they are trying to manage their own levels of burnout while also trying to support those professionals who report to you. As Olivia explained, “you do feel like you’re getting it from both sides” and that she has “continue[d] to be challenged by the supervisory aspect” of her job in relation to burnout.

One participant argued that what impacts burnout and work passion could be developmental. New professionals, like herself, may need external recognition and acknowledgement from others, like one’s supervisor. She further proposed,

at a certain point in our career, I think we don’t maybe need that as much because we know intrinsically that I’m doing what I’m supposed to be doing. I’m doing things that matter, whereas now early in my career, I do feel the need at times to have those kinds of recognitions. I need to have that... additional support... to make sure that I’m doing my job well.

As Olivia, a supervisor, explained, “I don’t look to my students for... validation.” “If you look to [students] for your satisfaction,” she warned, “it’s over.” She explained, “I have best practices. I have colleagues. I’ve been doing this long enough that I’ve seen the successes that that’s enough, I think, for me to be like ‘Nope... I have conviction in what I’m doing. This is the right thing.’”

When talking about burnout, Kelly, another supervisor, shared a story about a student situation that increased her level of burnout. The impact was not from the student themselves but from the institution’s handling of the situation. “I feel like there should be an easy answer or an easy way that the university can respond, and they don’t,” referring in this situation to solutions like policy changes for when financial satisfactory academic progress is reviewed and when students are notified of being in potential danger of losing aid. In terms of worklife areas, mismatch in monetary reward was identified by an entry level participant whereas the area of control was more noticed and impactful by those in supervisory positions. When sharing her experience with burnout, Erika, a supervisor, explained that “having control over the people I get to hire” and “being able to have total autonomy over my programs” supports her and reduces feelings of burnout.

Differences were also noted between faculty and staff positions for those participants who had previously held faculty roles. Kelly shared her experience moving from a faculty position into a staff position within the academic support department and that it felt like “a step down in the kind of hierarchy of [the] institution.” She felt “not quite as good” as faculty in her new staff position. Comparing the burnout between her faculty and staff positions, Kelly felt “there are very few supports in place to help staff” whereas “there are things in place for faculty supports.” An example of this that arose from all three participants who transitioned from faculty to staff roles was recovery time. Burnout was felt in their faculty positions as well, but at a lower

level. One reason, they proposed, was having time off to recuperate. There are no “moments to reset,” shared Kelly. A second reason is a seemingly higher sense of control over their work. “There’s a lot of the student holidays that faculty have off because there’s no classes; therefore, faculty aren’t teaching... or Thanksgiving and spring break they can make choices about how much work they’re actually doing,” Kelly explained. Staff, however, still report to work on student holidays and work all of Spring break and most of Thanksgiving Break (3 of the 5 days). Furthermore, Kelly argued “they have summer mostly off or they can choose whether or not they’re teaching in the summer” whereas in her staff position, she works the entire year and does not have that same choice to volunteer to work over the summer or not. As Erika explained it, as a faculty member, “when your exams are done and your grades are in, you’re done... if students aren’t there, you’re not there for the most part. Administrators, it does not matter.” In addition to time off for holidays and/or breaks, Kelly also added for “tenure and tenure track [faculty], there’s sabbatical.” Brittany noticed burnout occurring in both roles but at different levels and due primarily to different impacts. As a faculty member, “I would maybe notice burnout with particular sections because particular sections would be more challenging than others, but then I would always have like a really great section that would help to balance that out.” “By the end of the semester,” she described how “I would be tired and looking forward to taking a little bit of time off to... recoup.” While acknowledging “hindsight [is] 20/20,” Brittany felt “comparatively the burnout didn’t feel as bad” as a faculty member than it has as a staff member in her current role.

Relationship with Passion. The relationship between burnout and work passion is not one well understood in current research, especially within the higher education context and specifically for this population of academic support staff. Though their descriptions of work

passion were similar, the way it impacted them and their burnout differed. One participant's story supports the notion that passion could actually increase a person's burnout (Fernet et al., 2014). This participant exhibited a high level of passion for this particular area of academic support. When she was hired for the position, she described,

I literally could not believe when I would get in my car to go to work that I got to do this for a living and get paid for it.... It had just felt like all of the training and all of the passion, all the times I had gone to a conference and got energized by an idea, I was like 'I actually get to try this out now. I actually like have a playground where I can take all of this theory and all the stuff that I think is supposed to work and all the stuff that I've done at other... another institution and make it mine.' And like do it, which was like the most amazing feeling. I felt like I, like, made it.... This is the job I could see myself doing for like 20 years.

While her passion for the job was high, she also described it as all-consuming, partly due to boundary setting but also due to the continuous pushback she felt the department received and the high workload that made it extremely difficult for her to establish a work/life balance, speaking to the conflict within other areas of life Vallerand et al. (2003) found for obsessive passion. Ultimately, the lack of support from the institution outweighed the support she had from her department and the passion she had for the work. As she shared, "I don't know that my love of the functional area is enough to overcome... those challenges." Her level of burnout reached such a height that she left the institution, illuminating the impact mismatches in one context (institution) can have on a person's level of burnout even when those are areas of match in another context (department and students). She explained "if the engagement and the actual day-to-day work, like the work with students had been enough to stay... I would still be in" that

position, but “I feel like I had to leave.” “I don’t know that I will ever find... a functional area that I’m as passionate about,” she worried, but also admitted she is “happier in my [new] job” and said she “cannot be in a position that consumes me in that way.” While her passion for the work now, after transitioning to academic advising, is lower, her level of burnout is as well. She questioned, “is it possible to be 100% committed and passionate about your work and not have it overtake your whole life?” In a position that is more manageable, she said “I’m finding that my tradeoff is that I’m a little bit less passionate and invested in my work.” She talked about the work/life balance she has been able to have now and the areas of her life that have improved. She now focuses on areas of her job that she is more passionate about, like helping to support, train, and develop new professionals rather than the functional area of the job itself. “Maybe I’m passionate about developing people,” she admitted.

On the other hand, another participant’s story supports the argument work passion may help prevent or lessen one’s level of burnout (Carbonneau et al., 2008). Erika described the passion she has for her work as being hard to not think about “but in an excited kind of way.” In her experience,

if you’re really passionate about what you’re doing, it’s hard to just cut it off when you leave. It’s hard to just leave it at work. I think when you’re really passionate about work it’s hard to not think about how to improve something or something you want to do... I actually have to think about not thinking about it.

She attributes this work passion to being something that has kept her going. “If I wasn’t passionate and always thinking, I don’t... I wouldn’t have made it this far... because I would have burned out and just given up.”

Occurrence: The Cyclical Nature of Burnout. In addition to major impacts on burnout, when burnout occurred, in terms of time, emerged as participants were describing their experiences. Burnout appears to occur in a cyclical nature each academic year, hitting peaks near the middle of semesters and ebbing near the beginning and end of each semester and then during breaks, like between fall and spring semester and the summer (after conditional admission program 1 moved from a summer to fall program). For participants, burnout hit a peak each semester between interim grades, which occurs around week 5 of the semester, and weeks 10-12. “The middle third of the semester is when it feels the worst,” Brittany expressed. Participants attributed this to an increase in the amount of their regular job responsibilities, such as grading, early alert outreach, and one-on-one student appointments, while trying to support students expressing higher support needs at this point. Brittany explained “not only is that sorta like the height of all the different tasks that I have... like all that’s still going on, usually still at a pretty high level... and also at a point like in the context of students where I’m still really trying to lead them to water as much as possible.” By “the last third of the semester,” Brittany described “it starts feeling a little better because... a lot of the tasks have calmed down for the semester, as well as” reaching a point with student outreach knowing if a “student isn’t engaging with me at this point, like I can’t do anything more.” When talking about burnout, Nicole explained that midterm time is when burnout feels higher for her, and job satisfaction is often lower. She described this time as,

It’s a pivotal point for students to address where they’re at in terms of their academics...

Are they meeting their goals? Are they not? If not, how are we going to address that?

There’s not as much time left. There’s a little bit more stress just due to the time left in the semester. We have a... lot of larger assignments we have to grade. We have a lot of

alerts that we respond to in terms of interim grades.... We have a lot of meetings. We have a lot of students themselves coming and being emotional... It's just a stressful time for our students and us.

Kelly expressed similar sentiments about the "interim/midterm area." At this point, "students are suddenly panicking... about their grades and want to talk about... what it means." Kelly also mentioned at this point, burnout feels higher "when I have a lot of students who are high needs kind of all at the same time... trying to support those students... it kind of turns into not just academic support but some kind of emotional support." Like Nicole, Kelly also described the increase in regular responsibilities: "there's a lot of extra grading at this particular point... there's... bigger assignment[s] plus more students wanting to be seen... Those are responsibilities that we always have but it just seems like more." For example, an additional responsibility is needing to calculate and submit interim grades, which must be reported to the Registrar's office during this period. Kelly argued it also "depends on... the other demands that are happening... like someone in the administration has requested that we do on top of other responsibilities... I think just the sheer amount of things that we're trying to do sometimes leads to burnout."

Furthermore, burnout also hits a peak at this point in the semester for supervisors but can occur at other times based on the responsibilities they hold. Kelly shared in addition to the higher number of regular responsibilities like grading and student appointments occurring, as a supervisor,

I'm also thinking about next semester. And so... having that dual [responsibility]. Like, here's this thing... we have to work on now as an entire department, everybody needs to

be aware of, and it's in the present, but I'm also like thinking about something that not's happening for months but needing to...

For example, one of her responsibilities is planning the next semester's course offerings. She must consider how many classes of each course the department offers (one course students on academic probation are required to enroll in and one course conditionally admitted students are required to take) will be needed and what days/times will they be offered. This has to be done around the midterm point in preparation for the following semester.

Erika, another supervisor, reiterated that the "peak of burnout" occurs "mid-semester... [to] usually... that 75% point of a semester." She also shared it occurs then partially due to student panic; students often reach out because they're now "past [their] midterms [and]... are concerned about being on probation," Erika explained. However, she also explained burnout also feels higher at this point "because there's so much planning that goes in" to the upcoming semester and "at that point, all you're doing is putting out fires" with students and parents. When "that's all I'm doing," Erika expressed, "that's usually that peak of like all I'm doing all day. I'm either in meetings or I'm putting out fires." Then, the planning part has to occur before or after work hours because no time remains during the regular workday but still must occur and is often time sensitive. Though burnout often hits its peak at this 50-75% point in the semester, "administratively, it could be any time during the year."

Navigating Burnout. Participants predominately navigated burnout by making internal changes, often to the curriculum or within the department, and/or trying to set work/life boundaries for themselves. Within the department, some participants made changes to course curriculum in an attempt to address challenges they had experienced that semester with assignment submission rates, low assignment grades, and low engagement with in-class content.

Brittany described “looking forward” to the “next semester,” like “we can try some new things [to] try to help it out.” “I think if I’m experiencing this burnout,” she explained,

There’s something that I can do to change it, and I try to look for that in the work... So, a lot of times I’m trying to figure out how can I make, say, like this experience better so I’m not dealing with the negativity as much to make the burnout not feel as bad... A lot of times I’m looking to tweak assignments or curriculum... I’ll do some research, some personal training about maybe how I could improve my own... practice.

She admitted though that helps somewhat to make things better, that the burnout is a “vicious cycle” because “every semester comes and there’s always a point where... those changes don’t help anything.”

Similarly, Olivia explained, “I tend to go inward. I tend to be reflective... [on] what do I need to adjust.” She described in her supervisory position, she focused a lot on what structural change within the department does she have the control to make and what changes can be made. Olivia shared she will often ask herself reflective questions like “How can we rework appointments? How can we approach this differently as an office? Like why are we doing it this way? Is this really... resulting in improved... student support... and customer service?” Then she’ll work to make adjustments that will serve both students and staff by reducing challenges adding to staff burnout. Erika also described one way of navigating burnout is focusing on what she can control. Erika explained “if I ever feel a day or a time that I’m kind of like, ‘I just can’t do this anymore... I’m tired of fighting these battles,’” one thing she will do is focus on what she can control and what is going well.

Some participants also turned inward personally and tried to make personal changes regarding realistic expectations of work, identifying what kind of work environment they need to

thrive, and trying to set boundaries for themselves with work in an attempt to reduce their feelings of burnout. However, every participant who mentioned boundary setting was aware of it as something important and something that could help manage their burnout but admitted it felt extremely difficult to actually set and follow. Brittany explained she tried more recently to set boundaries for herself regarding how many hours she is working outside of regular work hours and taking vacation days. As someone who would often come into work early and never take time off, Brittany described how “I’ve been trying to be better about ‘This is when I start, and so I shouldn’t come in before...’ and ‘I only have to work these many hour days, so this is when I should leave.’” However, “despite those things... most of the tasks on my plate, I feel, are time sensitive and other people are relying on me, so I often come in earlier, I stay later, as well as during my vacation, I ended up working a lot,” she admitted.

Due to her educational background, Nicole explained she had learned about burnout and “tr[ies] to be really mindful of [it].” She explained she was taught “to notice kind of warning signs and to create boundaries between work and personal life.” However,

the workload becomes unmanageable, and we do have to do those extra hours to feel that we’re getting things accomplished at a reasonable time... When there is that overflow of work bridging into your personal time, that starts to touch on that burnout because it’s violating those boundaries that you try to be really proactive about.

Nicole felt that boundary setting was particularly difficult for her as a new professional because, you want to make sure you’re meeting expectations or trying to exceed expectations... whether they’re created in your own mind [or] if they’re outwardly expressed by your supervisor... I think it’s hard to stick with those boundaries because you want to get your job done and you want to do it well and that takes extra time when you have a lot to do.

And so I don't know at this point in my career... if I felt comfortable not doing what I did of staying late or coming in early or... working from home and doing all these extra things to make sure my job gets done.

She further admitted "we know that that's not healthy; however, you do what you need to do to get the job done, which is a toxic thought to have in the first place."

Kelly also tried to be more intentional with setting and sticking to boundaries "so work doesn't take over." During "really difficult semesters where... I brought work home," she explained she would "get up really early in the morning before my family was awake and did it then, but in the evenings once I was home, I was home." Kelly was one participant who explained she has been able to stick to that particular boundary but is still bringing work home and doing it early in the morning, like Erika, or like Brittany and Nicole who are coming into work early to do work. Another boundary Kelly tried to implement more recently is "no work talk" times with her partner. That boundary appeared harder to stick to, as she explained they will still talk about work but "if there's something we feel like one of us has to say about work in... a no work talk time, we'll warn the other one or ask permission first."

Olivia also shared she "had to... work on establishing work boundaries" and struggles with setting boundaries, specifically when it comes to taking on too much work. Something she has been trying to work on is telling people "I can't follow through with this" or "This is too much" when it comes to workload. She has also been trying to "be more comfortable... saying no to things or asking for clarification and being like 'Okay, like why are we doing it that way? Is that necessarily needed?'" Similar to Nicole, Olivia also showed awareness of the need to set boundaries. "It's really important that... I set those [boundaries] for myself because nobody is going to set those for me," Olivia shared. She stated she needs to focus on "establishing realistic

expectations,” which “sometimes that is going to mean saying no to things... and being okay with walking away at the end of the day.”

Theme 2: The Spectrum of Student Experience

One of the impacts on burnout, both the increase in and reduction of, for many of these academic support professionals was their experiences with the students they work with. When participants described the work they do with students on academic probation and students conditionally admitted to the institution, what emerged was a spectrum of experiences ranging from positive interactions with students, often those showing higher levels of motivation, to negative interactions with students, many of whom displayed lower levels of motivation or more external locus of control, within three areas: students, programs, and contexts.

Between Students. Overall, participants described their interactions with students from both the academic probation program and conditionally admitted programs they work with. On the positive end of the spectrum were students who were open to the services they provided, were willing to ask for help, and engaged with the programs because they saw the value it could provide. Students on this end of the spectrum also more often verbally stated their appreciation of the academic support professionals and the services they provide and followed-up with more appointments and/or informal check-ins with staff members regarding their progress. “There would be some students who, you know, they have accepted, and they’ve understood that something didn’t work,” Brittany described academic probation students she’s had more positive interactions with. “So, you do have some of those students who... want to get some help,” she explained. Similarly, Nicole shared “there are some students that really value [our support]. They go out of their way to ask questions and ask for help.”

Within the middle of the spectrum were more neutral experiences with students who engaged with the programs but more from a place of “have to” rather than willingly admitted they needed and/or wanted to improve academically and personally by further developing skills the programs fostered, such as time management, self-reflection, and effective studying. These students were neither overtly positive nor outwardly negative about engaging with the office but did not seem to value the staff and services the academic support department offered. Brittany described students that fall within the middle area of the spectrum as “the ones who they’ll show up and talk to me because it’s expected of them. You can also kind of tell that they’re just there because they have to, and they don’t necessarily see a value in the experience.”

At the other end of the spectrum were negative experiences with students who appeared to have little motivation and engaged very little with the programs. Students on this end of the spectrum were often outwardly resentful of having to participate in the programs, and participants felt they saw no value in the department. Brittany shared some more negative interactions she has had with students were those “who are downright... annoyed that they have to be working with me..., and they do not think I could possibly understand their situation and possibly provide them with anything useful.”

Between Programs. In terms of the programs, participants worked primarily with students on academic probation and students conditionally admitted to the institution. Overall, participants described working with academic probation students as more difficult. “It can be challenging” working with students on academic probation, Nicole explained,

because not a lot of them are really motivated... and they don’t see the value in the work that we do sometimes in the class that we offer. You know, they see [it] as a requirement,

something they have to do; therefore, it's almost seen as like a punishment, and I think that brings in a negative feel towards the experience.

When describing their work with students, some participants broke these programs into further subcategories. For example, Erika pointed out some differences she has noticed between students on academic probation during the fall semester compared to those on academic probation during the spring semester. Primarily, students on academic probation in the fall are often 2nd year students on continued probation, meaning they had been on academic probation at least the previous spring semester, sometimes for multiple previous semesters, and had not yet earned good academic standing. In her experience, these students are the “most motivated” and “have a bit of a slightly higher level of... sense of urgency of getting off probation,” often due to trying to get back financial aid they've lost because of their academic standing. Students on academic probation in the spring semester are primarily first year students who went on academic probation at the end of their first semester. Erika described these students as less motivated, and she's had more negative experiences with this population than the second semester probation students or students in conditional admission program 1. For these students, “it's not real yet,” she argued. “They're mad. They're upset. ‘Why do I have to do this?’ ‘I can do this by myself’ kind of thing. So that... is a huge challenge.”

Regarding the two conditional admission programs the academic support office works with, many participants described their interactions with students in conditional admission program 1 as more positive because these students were often more motivated and engaged. While all participants explained that their experiences with students in each program varied along this spectrum, there was some resentment from students in conditional admission program 1 but far less than students in academic probation program. As Brittany explained,

since it's really not an expectation that they meet one-on-one, I would say it's a very positive experience for students who actually show up. Usually those are the students who already have a little... internal motivation that they do want to do better, at the fact that they're going out of their way to seek this extra help, it's usually a very positive interaction.

Echoing her thoughts about how the requirement adds a level of negativity to working with students on academic probation, Nicole felt that the conditionally admitted students in program 1, which are the conditionally admitted students she has primarily worked with,

tend to be a little more motivated... [and] willing to engage in the process because I think the, again, that requirement just casts a bad shadow on... the experience, where conditionally admitted students maybe don't come in with that perception of 'This is something I have to do because I did bad and now this is my punishment.'

Many students in conditional admission program 1 often have felt they did not belong or felt less than because they were not "regularly" admitted to the university. Kelly disagreed with other participants about working with conditionally admitted students being typically more positive. In Kelly's experience,

when we [had]... conditionally admitted students in the summer programs, that was extremely trying because there were so many students who were very upset that they were in a conditionally admitted program and somehow felt like they were less than, and so it was a lot of work trying to get them to realize that they were not, and we were not viewing them as less than in some way.

When discussing her work with conditionally admitted students, Olivia echoed Kelly's experience with freshman conditional admission programs, like conditional admission program 1

at Southeast University, for which “that university has identified [students] usually based on the standardized tests score.” With these students, Olivia explained “it’s taken us time to really get into some of the skill building because there is, I think, a sense from them of ‘Well, the university thinks I’m not good enough to be here,’ and there’s some resentment of having to be a part of a program like that.”

In a previous position, Olivia shared she also worked with “conditionally admitted students who have taken time away from the institution and have come back... but they haven’t necessarily always been suspended.” She explained “I actually have found with that group of students who are a little bit older usually... a very high success rate...[and] an openness to being a part of a program.” Further differences Olivia shared regarded the length of the conditional admission program. For conditionally admitted freshman students, “I have found when it’s been a year-long program, in the spring I have seen drastic improvement in a willingness to engage and in... levels of reflection and skill development,” Olivia shared. She felt that “it’s difficult” for one semester programs because “I think a lot of students feel like ‘Well, I should be here... I’m just like any other student and I’m like really resentful of the fact that I have to... do this at all.’”

To an extent, Erika’s experience is similar to other participants who felt working with conditionally admitted students was more positive. She described those in conditional admission 1 program as “the sweet spot” sometimes. “A lot of times they are... happy to be here. They... had a level of success. They have at least some level of understanding of what it takes to be at the college level. So, I think they’re more motivated as a whole,” Erika explained. However, students in conditional admission program 2, who are “the most at risk, typically the least... academically ready or to even be engaged in the classroom... [, are] a bigger challenge than even

probation students... just as far as academically being able to just engage and understand that.” Erika described these students as often being the least motivated.

Some participants described their interactions with students in the academic probation program overall as more negative. Many participants attributed this to participation in their program being a requirement, as many students resent, at least initially, being required to participate. Kelly also felt that since working with their office was a requirement for students on academic probation, that impacted student attitude and engagement in the one-on-one appointments and classroom. She explained,

I think some students are really embarrassed about it and are demonstrating their embarrassment through anger... and... there are a lot of students who are just like ‘Oh, well I just screwed up this one semester. I know how to fix it. I know how to fix it,’ and they are mad that... there is a requirement of them.

Olivia also articulated that “mandatory programming is... always going to be an uphill battle” and that “there’s going to be an element to [being required to participate] that feels punitive to the majority of students.”

Since the conditional admission program 1 moved to a fall conditional admission program, a change implemented in Summer 2020 as a result of COVID-19, Kelly “doesn’t feel the same kind of animosity” she had before, primarily within the classroom experience. Kelly felt similar animosity from students in conditional admission program 1 as students on academic probation when the conditional admission program 1 was in the summer and,

it was a requirement of students to take the [academic skill development] course and... already the students of course were... feeling less than... feeling like they were second

class citizens in some way, and then having to take a class on academic skill development I think, for some of them, reinforced that feeling of less than.

Changes have since been made that students in both conditional admission programs now take a first year experience course their first fall semester, which is a “course... required of all students... regardless of the student’s admin status.” Kelly has taught this course the past two fall semesters and feels “it’s generally a [more] positive course” and “overall, the tone of the classroom feels better” since that change.

Between Contexts. In their role, participants engage with students through one-on-one appointments and as instructors in the classroom. Almost all participants described the one-on-one context as more positive and more productive than the classroom context, especially while working with students virtually through semesters most affected by COVID-19. Nicole shared one-on-one appointments she really enjoys getting to do with students and finds them overall more positive. “I tend to get more out of students in one-on-one appointments,” Nicole explained regarding both students on academic probation and students in conditional admission program 1. Similarly, “I felt like I really connected with the students much more in the one-on-one setting,” shared Olivia. Like Nicole, Olivia felt she “was able to have those [one-on-one] meetings be much more effective... because of that rapport” she got to build with students in individual appointments that didn’t really happen, at least in the same way, in the classroom. She described those individual “conversations were much richer, and we could go into more detail because I wasn’t introducing a concept.” Olivia felt it was easier “to break down that potential resistance” of having to participate in a support program “in a one-on-one setting than it is in a group setting when you don’t know the student very well.”

On the other hand, most participants described the classroom context as more challenging and how it can often be more negative. Brittany felt that the classroom context is “harder... because [students] have that ... little bit of that negativity coming out already because they don’t necessarily see the class as being as useful of an experience as the one-on-one.” Furthermore, she explained while it varies and,

some people [do] feel positive about the classroom experience, I think... once one person has some sort of negative comment, it gets the ball rolling. So once one student starts complaining, whether or not they actually legitimately feel this way or now they feel comfortable talking this way, is sort of when the negative atmosphere starts to form.

Kelly reiterated Brittany’s statement about the classroom experience varying and that overall one-on-one interactions seem to be more positive, similar to Nicole’s experience. Kelly argued the classroom experience often “depends entirely on the make-up of the class.” She described “classes that just the entire classroom felt hostile, that everybody... was upset they had to be there, and it took a lot of work to kind of back that down a bit.” However, “once some students stopped coming to the class..., things got better.” She then shared there have been “other classes where we were able to start... better and more supportive and I think it was because there were some more vocal voices or some... more students in there who realized like ‘Oh, here’s my chance to fix something.’” For Kelly, “the positive interactions would kind of go hand in hand with the class.” She further explained with academic probation students, often if she has a positive one-on-one interaction with them, their attitude in class becomes better and the classroom environment can feel a bit better. Olivia also described how one-on-one appointments can affect the classroom in a positive way. “After you build all that rapport,” she explained “it’s very positive because you have peers around... it can be a very good environment.” However,

Olivia also described how the classroom context can be challenging because “it’s a tall order to get students on your side... and to feel like... ‘This isn’t punitive. This is somebody who’s here to support me.’”

Theme 3: Impacts of COVID-19

Qualitative interviews were conducted between July and September 2021. At this point, Southeast University was preparing for its first full face-to-face semester since the institution transitioned to virtual learning and work for students and staff in March 2020. Participants in the study had transitioned back to a “normal” work schedule (in person, five full days a week) in March 2021 after a year of a hybrid work schedule, part of which included working and teaching from home. Participants shared how COVID-19 impacted their work, including their department community and their work with students.

Departmental Impacts. When participants talked about the sense of community within their department, they were asked directly if they felt COVID-19 had impacted that sense of community in any way and to share any other impacts they felt the pandemic had on their work experience. Participants predominately described negative impacts on their sense of community, expressing how a once strong, positive, and collaborative community felt at times isolated and uncomfortable. “We had a really good sense of community,” Brittany said, “but I do think COVID has changed that.” Kelly agreed that their department’s community “definitely changed with COVID.” “Pre-COVID,” Kelly explained, “I really enjoyed all my co-workers all the time... It was a great environment.” Erika described how the department went “through a rough patch because we are so used to being around students and each other, and I think we gain a sense of energy being around each other and collaborating that I really think ... COVID kind of threw us back for a little bit.” One thing almost all participants argued attributed to that negative

shift in community was the challenges of electronic communication and transitioning from working in a community where informal, spontaneous conversations spawned brainstorming and a sense of comradery to conversing via Teams where comments and questions got lost in the feed, were misinterpreted, and/or required meetings, which became harder to find time to schedule and even more fatiguing to continue. Brittany attributed the changes in their sense of community “to just not being able to really see each other... frequently” and,

[a] large part of that does have to do with the electronic communication. So other than... chatting with somebody down the hall and you get to, like, hear the inflection in their voice or... get an immediate response from them... [you’re] just sending them a message, then... you’re not hearing back from them... [and] thinking, like, ‘Okay. Is that person just not there or are they reading this, how I wrote this, incorrectly?’ And then I feel like that does spillover because then even when we are doing, say, like a live meeting, it does feel different... Where before it felt like much more... collegiate..., like we’re all talking and listening and comfortable..., now sometimes it feels like people maybe just don’t want to even... speak up because maybe they feel, like, uncomfortable doing so or their responses feel like they’re uncomfortable responses.

Kelly also described how “great” it was pre-COVID to be able to “pop into somebody’s office and just... chat or... we could down the hall.” However,

once COVID hit and everyone was working from home and nobody saw each other and we were only communicating... via Teams or text or whatever and occasionally saw each other in boxes on... Teams, I felt very distanced from my coworkers... in a way that was extremely uncomfortable. And... I think the... community fell apart entirely.”

Noting the impacts of communication and new way of working, Nicole explained,

there's not much opportunity to work together and communicate so once COVID hit and there was less collaboration, less interaction, less... just communication in general, I think our sense of community definitely was impacted in a negative way... because then you start to feel like just... individual [people] versus a department.

Echoing the change in interacting with co-workers and sharing communication challenges of working virtually, Olivia described how hard it was to try and find time to have what used to be those informal conversations that often were a part of community building. She stated, "I feel like we're really stretched thin having to provide virtual and in person services so some of its just the nature of like finding time in the schedule to be able to have those discussions." Regarding the challenges of electronic communication, Olivia felt the biggest challenge has been trying to manage multiple modes of communication, in addition to multiple modes of services, and described this as "very fatiguing." She explained "we're having to be on Zoom at the same time as doing like in person stuff, plus on like Microsoft Teams messaging this, plus" managing email, which "we're getting more emails than ever before." Not only is "having to manage more than one mode at the same time challenging" but this "new standard" of immediately responding to a person's communication and "this expectation that you're always available" from both students and colleagues. Olivia shared,

We've had to really change how we're available to try and make up for not being able to pop into somebody's office and get a second opinion. It's almost like now we're stretched so thin across so many different methods of communication, I'm finding it harder and harder to keep track of.

Olivia shared overall that "being able to prioritize things has become more difficult" because of the increased volume of electronic communications. Erika described Zoom meetings being more

difficult than in-person meetings because “it’s easy to check-out, just like students.” She explained,

If I was in a meeting and I’m sitting around a table and there’s 10 people in the meeting, I’m not checking email... If there’s a part of the meeting that, that’s not necessarily something that I need to pay a whole of attention to... it’s easy to kind of multitask [when meeting virtually] ... I felt like if everybody’s in the same room, there’s more attention being paid to whatever the task is... People are... participating more... It correlates to how we’re trying to teach our classes. We see the exact same thing when we’re in, in meetings. It’s just easier to kind of check out.

In addition to communication challenges and less collaboration, Olivia shared another challenge is having to provide “virtual services and in person services to students,” both of which “ha[ve] to be done well.” Doing this all within the context of COVID means “at any point, we may have to pull the plug because numbers get too high, and now we have to convert to virtual. So, it’s just like it feels like you’re just like waiting for the other shoe to drop all the time, and we have... contingency plans... but like for everything all the time.” Olivia described how overwhelming it feels to have to have multiple service modes and contingency plans for all aspects of one’s job, including teaching, meeting one-on-one with students, and other job responsibilities.

Some participants described an improvement in the department community since returning to regular in-person work. Erika felt “we’ve improved a lot as far as how we feel” and “the energy I feel is way higher” because “we’re not as reliant on Zoom and Teams” and “we can get out of our office” to talk with and work with one another again. Kelly noticed a similar improvement in the department community, explaining “now we are making strides to... repair it.” Kelly attributed those strides to being “back in the office, and we see each other and it’s

possible to do that again,” as well as “who we now have on staff and the changes that have been made more recently in staffing.” On the other hand, Nicole felt the negative shifts in departmental community were “a challenging thing to... come back from because it’s just a shift has clearly happened.”

Student Impacts. Participants also shared how COVID-19 influenced their work with students. Already working with populations of students where engagement quite varied and the classroom environment was often already challenging, participants described the challenges of student participation and content delivery in the virtual classroom. Both Brittany and Nicole felt that one-on-one meetings with students felt similar to one-one-ones pre-COVID. “Teaching,” however, as Brittany described, “has created unique challenges... not only being able to deliver content effectively but also engagement.” “While some of those things existed pre-COVID,” Brittany explained, “It’s just sort of new challenges for how to make sure the students are actually understanding and getting the material they need, as well as... staying engaged during class time.” With content delivery, Brittany shared the department decided based on best practices at the time “to not sort of use synchronous Zoom time to straight lecture.” Nicole added that “we were very mindful that requiring students to have cameras on may not have been the best practice at the time.” So, the department made changes to “provide asynchronous material and then to try to use synchronous time for more engagement conversations and little tasks” and to not require students to have cameras on in class, Brittany explained. However, it made it difficult for this synchronous class time to go well when “students were not actually reading the materials asynchronously. They were sort of going through it to get the check.” For students without cameras on, Nicole explained “I think that means even being able to step away from the computer or allowing themselves to be distracted with other things,” which “greatly decreased

participation.” Brittany described the student engagement as feeling “forced.” “Maybe they would chat with each other, but it tended to not be about the subject at hand,” she explained. Furthermore, Brittany described how “even giving them sort of extra time to do work where... normally they’d have a class period ... to get it done, submission rate still has not improved. Actually, in some cases, probably went down.” Nicole described how “it was hard to create... a community within a classroom virtually... it was just so many barriers such as students’ willingness to have on a camera or feel comfortable participating.” Furthermore, Nicole felt this virtual learning environment “had a great impact on just building relationships between faculty and student.” She described how in person, “you have more small talk... when class is starting or when you can walk around when... students are working on assignments, and I think you miss that a lot online.” Another challenge COVID-19 has presented for teaching, especially being back in person while COVID is still prevalent, Erika explained the challenges in trying to have clear attendance and late policies. “There’s so much more gray area,” she explained than pre-COVID. She described how challenging it is to “juggle the students that are in the class” because there are some “in quarantine versus isolation” and then those who are just not feeling well but don’t want to risk coming to class, and it becomes “really difficult to stick to an attendance policy.”

Furthermore, some participants shared how some students, especially those on the lower end of the positivity/motivation/engagement spectrum held an external locus of control and blamed their academic standing on others, added COVID-19 as another reason beyond themselves why they were not academically successful. As Nicole stated,

I do want to be aware and mindful... [that] some students did have to deal with a lot of health issues themselves or their family members, and I think that had an impact.... If

students were having to still work and go to school and balancing that, I think it was quite an experience with a lot of negative impacts.

Thus, participants were very much aware of the real challenges many students were facing during this time. However, as Brittany described,

Some of my work with students has gotten a little trickier because now I feel like they have a bit of a scapegoat – COVID, online learning – and not that those weren't legitimate challenges, but I think... sometimes students are quick to find any external reason that they don't have to be successful or putting in the work and so now this is just a slightly more convenient one that they can point to and so having those discussions and trying to help them find some internal motivation... has become, in some cases, a little trickier.

Kelly reiterated the difficulties Brittany shared with students attributing their lack of success solely to the learning impacts of COVID-19. She explained,

We see students blaming the pandemic for any academic issues that they've had, blaming Zoom classes for academic issues, and so it's kind of an easy scapegoat and so in outreach... the students can have an excuse, like have already made an excuse for why they're not doing well, and so they're maybe a little less... willing to accept help with appointments.

In terms of retention and the student community, Nicole expressed concerns about the social assimilation of students to the institution during this time, echoing Tinto's (1993) theory of academic and social integration. "I think there was an impact on the students because I... believe that a lot of the campus community is built off of... interactions and groups and social activities and without having that I think there's probably a lack of commitment to the

institution,” she explained. She supported her explanation with her “understanding of student retention and... when students can develop a sense of community at their institution, they’re more likely to stay at that institution and I don’t think that sense of community was easily developed doing things online.”

Institutional Impacts. One participant who left the department and has since started at another institution talked about the challenges of developing a departmental and institutional community during COVID. “I feel like I’ve been at a disadvantage,” she shared, at “getting to know the campus community, creating those relationships.” “I’ve had to be way more intentional about [finding ways to connect with people] during COVID,” she explained. This participant believed that being face-to-face with people is an important part of building community, which nearly all participants noted when describing departmental challenges, including communication.

When comparing the departmental and institutional communities, Nicole shared how it’s been challenging to rebuild the department community. However, she believed things “in the college community or the institution, that might look different because it’s a changing flow of people, and I think it’s easier to rebuild with new faces versus people that continuously work together,” which is in opposition to the participant’s experience who left Southeast. That participant felt COVID did not have “huge impact” on pre-existing relationships “because I already had so many years of that relationship building.” It was trying to tap into a new institutional and departmental community that was difficult.

Erika also described challenges with electronic communication and Zoom in particular at the institutional level. She felt there was now an overreliance on Zoom and Teams being back in person. Though acknowledging the context and being mindful of being around other people, she

shared further what made these virtual meetings difficult. She described how many of her meetings now are “back-to-back to back because we can just click a button on Zoom instead of actually sitting at a table and seeing people face-to-face.” With this type of meeting structure, she described how there is no break in between meetings that accounted for traveling from one meeting to another, which served as a mental and physical break before heading into the next meeting. “There are some days I’m literally still in my office all day when I could have easily had fewer meetings spread out and get out of the building,” she expressed.

Though many of the COVID-19 impacts that participants shared highlighted challenges for themselves, their students, and their own sense of departmental community, Kelly shared one positive way that the pandemic has shaped their department at the institutional level. “Suddenly, academic support became way more visible,” Kelly explained. It seemed “more people in the administration, perhaps even more faculty, [were] suddenly aware that academic support is really important.” “How the university sees academic support” appeared to shift, as “the entire department survived the budget crisis to the point where we were able to expand a year later.”

Chapter 5: Discussion

This study aimed to understand influences on burnout and loss of passion for academic affairs professionals who work with academic probation and conditionally admitted students and how these professionals navigated these experiences. This study also intended to explore the role of institutional culture and support on staff burnout and loss of passion, including practices that may help to alleviate these outcomes. Within the study's conceptual framework, the researcher argued there are multiple contexts an academic affairs professional must work within, including the department they work in, the institution they work at, and the students they work with regularly as a part of their job, and that different cultures and can exist within these three contexts. It was also hypothesized that mismatch between work life areas in multiple contexts would increase the burnout and loss of passion professionals experienced. Through a mixed methods research study, burnout, work passion, and areas of worklife were assessed via a quantitative survey and a series of t-tests; then an institution was selected to delve deeper into understanding the institutional culture and experiences with burnout and work passion for the academic support professionals within that case via qualitative interviews and analysis.

This chapter discusses the overall findings in relation to the study's research questions, limitations and context of the study, as well as implications for practice and recommendations for future research. The study's research questions included:

1. What are the causes of burnout and loss of passion for academic affairs professionals who work with probation and conditionally admitted students?
2. How do academic affairs professionals navigate the experience of burnout and/or loss of passion?
3. What organizational aspects of universities support staff by reducing or preventing burnout and loss of passion and how so?

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study include implications for better understanding what could impact burnout and loss of passion for academic affairs professionals who work with at-risk undergraduate student populations and strategies for helping these professionals to better manage, and ideally reduce, levels of burnout and loss of passion they may experience. Results also support the study's conceptual framework, identifying differences in the areas of worklife between the case study's institution, department, and population of students that professionals worked with. Within this section, the study's findings are summarized and organized by research question.

Research Question 1: Influences of Burnout and Loss of Passion

Both quantitative and qualitative results speak to the influence the areas of worklife have on burnout and loss of passion, though each type of results highlight the influence of different areas. Quantitative t-tests found significant results in the areas of value and control while qualitative results highlighted the impact of workload, community, and reward. Quantitatively, t-tests suggest academic success professionals had a significantly higher match in value than academic advisors, indicating those professionals found their own values more in line with that of the institution. Results also indicated those in entry level positions had lower matches in the areas of value and control, suggesting entry level professionals struggled more with things like role ambiguity and role conflict than those in supervisory positions and felt their individual values misaligned with that of their institution. These results confirm findings from Leiter and Maslach (2003) for non-supervisory positions and the area of value, though add to the literature by finding a significant difference in the area of control. Similarly, new professionals at their institution were found to have a lower match in the area of control.

Quantitative results found additional differences between those in entry level and supervisory positions, as well as those who were new professionals at their institution and in higher education. In terms of burnout, professionals in entry level positions reported higher levels of exhaustion and cynicism than those in supervisory positions, echoing findings from Leiter and Maslach (2003) regarding higher levels of cynicism. In addition, those in entry level positions reported lower levels of general passion than those in supervisory positions. Results suggest new professionals at both the institution and in higher education reported higher levels of exhaustion than those who were not new professionals. New professionals at the institution and entry level professionals may be younger in age, which would support Russell's (1987) study that found younger teachers experienced higher levels of emotional exhaustion. However, this could also be due to the nature of their position and to trying to break into the institutional culture, regardless of age. Lastly, amount of time spent working directly with students saw an impact on work passion. Professionals who worked directly with students less than 50% of their day reported higher levels of general and harmonious passion.

For participants in the qualitative case study, primary influences on their level of burnout emerged within the areas of worklife of workload, community, and reward. Consistent with prior research, higher workload was associated with feeling higher levels of burnout, including emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and personal efficacy (Leiter & Maslach, 1999; 2003) and lower levels of job satisfaction (Volkwein et al., 1999; Volkwein & Parmley 2000). Furthermore, the work type these professionals are a part of must be considered. They work primarily with academically at-risk student populations and often have difficult conversations with students. Supporting previous research, participants' experiences show that chronic emotionally taxing work is associated with higher levels of burnout, particularly emotional exhaustion and

decreased personal accomplishment; some participants described feeling emotionally depleted at times and how they felt that negatively impacted their quality of work (Leiter & Maslach, 1999; 2003; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998; Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). Furthermore, their experiences speak to Russell's (1987) study that found the more stressful events one experienced, the more emotional exhaustion they felt. Many participants described having to work outside of their regular work hours in order to complete work, echoing Scott's (1992) findings of not having enough time to complete work being a stressor for women in their study. In terms of community, participants described the institutional community as very political and one their department has not felt very much a part of, though some participants shared how that has improved in recent months. Participants mostly described their department positively and getting to work collaboratively with colleagues and receiving support from them as an area of match, compared to the institutional mismatch, which helped them manage feelings of burnout. Consistent with the Areas of Worklife model (Leiter & Maslach, 2003) and other research that highlights the impact of support from one's supervisor and colleagues (Russell, 1987; Sarros & Sarros, 1992; Lee & Ashforth, 1993; Schwab et al., 1986), the participants' stories of community highlight how this area can affect burnout; higher quality social interaction can support, if not lower burnout, whereas low quality social interaction can increase burnout. Regarding reward, the participants' experiences highlighted that when a department's services are not understood and not valued, professional's levels of burnout and loss of passion can increase. As some participants shared, they knew to expect a certain level of resistance or certain behavior from students, but to have that level of pushback and resistance from the institution was challenging. Monetary reward was discussed by one participant, but overall, a lack social reward was highlighted by participants as a major influence on burnout, both of which were identified by Leiter and Maslach (2003) as

influences on burnout. These findings confirm previous literature that suggested a lack of control; social and institutional support; feeling valued, recognized, and respected by the institution; involvement in decision making; and inconsistent treatment (in the forms of rewards and punishment) increase burnout (Schwab et al., 1986; Wallace et al., 2004; Belicki & Woolcott, 1996; Leiter & Maslach, 2003).

Furthermore, influences on burnout were noted based on position type. For participants who had previously been faculty, they shared a lack of time off between semesters as influencing their burnout in the sense they didn't feel they got time to recover at the end of a semester and rejuvenate. Differences were also highlighted between entry level and supervisory positions. Though all position levels spoke to the impacts of students and the institution on their burnout and work passion, entry level participants spoke more on how students influenced their burnout while supervisors talked about the institution having a higher influence on their levels of burnout. These findings speak to Renn and Hodges's (2007) findings regarding new professionals' experiences in the early and transition phases of employment. Participants in the early phase were more concerned with what students thought of them and their work (Renn & Hedges, 2007), which was supported by one new professional within higher education, the position, and at the institution in the current study. In the transition period, Renn and Hodges (2007) found new professionals became more focused on their relationship with their supervisor. In the current study, the same new professional noted support and validation they needed from their supervisor regarding their work more so than their own internal validation, which was mentioned by two participants in supervisory positions who are not considered new professionals. Supervisors also more often spoke about control over their work as something that prevents or reduces burnout for them, which was not discussed by entry level participants.

Lastly, qualitative interviews shed light on how the time of the semester influences burnout, which was not something discussed in previous literature. Burnout was higher for participants between about weeks 5 and 12 of the semester due to an increased workload that included a higher volume of their regular job responsibilities and additional planning demands for supervisors, as well as an increase in student needs/stress and the emotional demands that can accompany this type and level of support. Additional findings that contribute new understandings within burnout research are the impacts of COVID-19 shared within the qualitative interviews. Participants highlighted the challenges of electronic communication, including managing multiple modes of communication, managing multiple modes of services (in-person, virtual, phone), and collaborating less with colleagues. Less collaboration and the challenges of electronic communication impacted their department's sense of community in a negative manner. Within the student context, participants described challenges with teaching, including content delivery and student engagement, and online learning being an external reason students use to explain why they haven't been successful.

Influences on a decrease in work passion for participants included the students on the negative end of the student experience spectrum. Some participants shared that while positive interactions with students, including productive meetings and hearing back from students they have previously worked with, would increase their work passion and decrease their feelings of burnout, these interactions were few and far between. Thus, the negative experiences often felt like they outweigh the positive experiences for some. One participant felt like they just weren't helping enough students and, similarly, another stated that getting less time to work less one-on-one with students reduced their level of passion. Similar to impacts on burnout, entry level and supervisory positions highlighted different impacts on their work passion. Entry level positions

primarily talked about the students who don't care and are extremely dismissive of their services as reducing their work passion while supervisors spoke mostly about the institution. Supervisors spoke about the institution not understanding their services, not supporting their services, and not including their department as reducing their work passion. One participant shared frustrations about not being to do things that would benefit students because of institutional politics or lack of funding. Another mentioned feeling like they were alone and always having to fight for their department and services reduced their level of work passion.

Research Question 2: Navigating Burnout and Loss of Passion

While Scott (1992) specifically studied how participants navigated work stress, participants in the qualitative part of the study shared two primary ways they have navigated the burnout they've experienced. One way is by assessing their work, such as curriculum, assignments, and scheduling systems, and making changes that are within their control that they believe will help alleviate frustrations, misunderstandings, and/or follow-through. For example, if students are not showing up to scheduled appointments, would a scheduling system that includes email and/or text reminders increase the likelihood a student will attend their appointment? If staff are seeing low submission rates on a class assignment, if changes to the assignment to provide clearer directions and provide examples as well as more in-class time is devoted for time to complete the assignment, will students submit the assignment at a higher rate and submit higher quality work? Often, supervisors looked at what changes could they make structurally that may help alleviate challenges for their staff, such as utilizing a scheduling system for students to book appointments on their own rather than emailing staff to schedule. A second way participants navigated burnout was trying to set work/life boundaries for themselves. All participants noted this as a strategy they have tried, often with the awareness of its

importance and how it could benefit them but have had difficulty following due to increased workload and often time sensitivity of demands, such as early alert outreach.

Support from colleagues, both at work and socially, was shared as something that helped to reduce feelings of burnout for participants and helped them navigate the experience, confirming the importance of colleague and social support on burnout and work stress identified in previous literature (Sarros & Sarros, 1992; Russell, 1987; Schwab et al., 1986; Scott, 1992; Lee & Ashforth, 1993). Socially, one participant shared how activities like getting coffee together and going to yoga with colleagues pre-pandemic was something that reduced their level of burnout, speaking to Volkwein et al.'s (1999) findings that identified interpersonal relationships as an important factor regarding job satisfaction. At work, being able to empathize with one another about the stresses and challenges of the job was important to colleagues. One supervisor shared not having someone else in their same position level made dealing with the burnout difficult at times because they felt there were some things they couldn't share with the colleagues who reported to them and didn't have that commiseration. Another way participants supported one another at work was being open to changes and suggestions that individuals would share in hopes of improving something at work and then helping those individuals implement changes. Similar to Volkwein and Parmely's (2004) findings identifying teamwork as an important job factor impacting job satisfaction, help from and collaboration with colleagues was important in helping participants navigate burnout. They felt supported when they could ask questions, ask for help, and receive it, which positively impacted burnout. However, participants, particularly those in supervisory positions, shared when this support was not given by the institution, that negatively impacted their level of burnout. Like the TRIO program participants in Wallace et al.'s (2004) study, participants in the current qualitative study felt valued by those

who understood their work and worked with the program, including individuals within the department and some campus partners, but not from the institution itself. For one participant, the lack of institutional support outweighed that she was receiving from the institution; burnout became so high, what felt like her last attempt at navigating it was to leave.

Navigating loss of passion seemed to happen more passively than navigating burnout. While many participants described being aware of burnout and recognizing when it got to that point for them, participants were less aware of work passion and as they were describing this concept and their experience of it, many seemed to be thinking about it for the first time. Many participants did describe work passion as being excited and enthusiastic about one's work, echoing Baum and Locke's (2004) definition of general passion. For some participants, passion for their work had decreased since they first began the job, but unlike burnout, there seemed less awareness of it happening or how it happened.

Research Question 3: Organizational Supports for Reducing Burnout and Loss of Passion

While the institution is certainly not solely responsible for the burnout and/or loss of passion of its employees, they do have a responsibility to understand the services their departments/office provide, to be aware of influences on burnout, at least generally, and to offer supports for both faculty and staff to help them manage burnout and passion. Institutional actions that participants shared would help reduce burnout for them included providing necessary resources, training, and general support in order to perform their job at a more optimal level. Regarding the need for effective training, Fore et al. (2002) found that "lack of proper staff development training" increased burnout (p. 39); on the flip side, Gabris and Ihrke (1993) found lower levels of burnout were associated with proper training. Both findings support the issue identified within the current study. At the institutional level, resources include the funding and

support from offices like the Provost's Office and Human Resources for the hiring of additional staff members needed to manage the workload of their department, particularly when additional demands are placed on the department directly by the institution. Participants often shared about the lack of understanding and support of their department from the institution. This was consistently mentioned as a general support that would reduce burnout and loss of passion if participants felt their own institution valued them and the services they provide. This support includes how the institution frames the services the department provides to students and other campus offices. If the department and/or its services are discussed in a negative and stigmatized manner, that can negatively impact the work experience of professionals, including increasing their burnout and loss of passion for their work compared to an institution that talks about the positive ways the office can support and impact students, encourages students to use the services, and encourages other campus partners to collaborate with the department. These findings parallel those found in Wallace et al.'s (2004) study, in which participants at both institutions in the study worked with marginalized student populations and also felt marginalized by their own institution. Furthermore, participants in the current study did not feel valued by their institution in part due to a lack of recognition of their program and its success, which was also found in Wallace et al. (2004). Support can also include supporting employee's work/life balance. One participant shared a challenge exacerbated by COVID-19 was work/life balance in terms of work and childcare for many professionals that also care for children.

Additional institutional actions that participants shared could potentially help maintain or increase their work passion included professional development funds that would allow participants the opportunities to attend professional conferences within higher education and academic functional area professional organizations. Some participants mentioned conferences

specifically as something that increases their work passion. Others shared being able to share ideas with one another and colleagues from other institutions, which often occurs at conferences, was exciting and invigorated their passion for the work that they do.

Scholarly Implications

The current study adds to the literature by providing insight on burnout and loss of passion for higher education professionals who work with students on academic probation and students conditionally admitted to the institution, particularly via a mixed methods research design, as qualitative research on this topic was limited. Previous studies on burnout and work passion focused heavily on the K-12 context, healthcare, counseling/social work, and studies within the higher education context primarily studied academic advisors and/or studied supervision specifically. Furthermore, the qualitative portion of the study adds to a gap in the burnout literature of how burnout is navigated, particularly beyond the context of supervision, and the occurrence pattern of burnout. The qualitative section of the study also provides additional understanding of burnout overall, as previous research is primarily quantitative, and for those in higher education who balance staff and teaching roles. While Scott (1992) studied how men and women coped with work stress, this study explored how participants navigated burnout and loss of passion. No current literature at the time of the study assessed the timing pattern/occurrence of burnout and while research notes burnout builds cumulatively, the current research provides insight to this pattern for academic affairs professionals working with these populations of students. In addition, Schwab et al. (1986) called for further research on the impacts of “student discipline” and “dealing with the emotional problems of students” on burnout for teachers (p. 27). While the current study focuses on the higher education context rather than K-12, participants include those who work often and directly with students, including

teaching, and the study's findings address this research gap, as findings show how student discipline and emotions impact professionals' burnout via the spectrum of students experience and feeling valued.

In addition, the study suggests burnout and passion can be affected by multiple contexts and that the areas of worklife can have matches and mismatches in these different contexts. In the qualitative section of the study, participants revealed more areas of match and more support within their department and less areas of match and less support from their institution. The third context, students, provided a spectrum of support and value, while seemingly having a higher impact on entry level professionals than those in supervisory positions. The current study provides some insight into organizational practices that influence burnout and work of passion, highlighting the impact organizational support and understanding of specific services can have on the individuals who work within those departments. In addition, effective training at both the institutional and departmental level and resources for professional development and funding of adequate staff were practices identified by participants as necessary for reducing levels of burnout and loss of passion. Lastly, the current study adds to work passion research by providing insight into work passion based on position level (i.e., entry level, supervisory).

Practical Implications

Practical implications for institutions, including but not limited to Southeast University, to support academic affairs staff working with these student populations emphasize institutional recognition, effective training, flexible work schedules, professional development, and supervisory actions. Echoing Wallace et al. (2004), institutions need to assess university committees and attempt to make those more representative and inclusive of a wide range of departments on campus. Furthermore, institutions should support networking between campus

partners, highlighting the positive impacts each department has on the institution and students, and earnestly engage in open dialogue with heads of various departments regarding concerns, challenges, and proposed solutions for the betterment of the institution and its students. This dialogue would also foster better understanding of programs and departments (Wallace et al., 2004).

Effective training should include practical training of job responsibilities, such as typical job duties, policies, and technology used in the department/position, as well as clear expectations and goals, discussions of challenges commonly faced in the job, and an orientation into the department and university culture. As recommended by Ward (1995), role stress should be discussed in the job context; supervisors should be upfront with new professionals in the position what stress may be expected from the role and open dialogue should exist as part of the department culture and supervisor/supervisee relationship to discuss job challenges and stressors as they are experienced, rather than shying away from them. Clear job descriptions and expectations should be communicated with staff, as discussed by Fore et al. (2002). Reaffirming Renn and Hodges (2007), clear expectations are especially important for new professionals regarding their job responsibilities and the responsibilities of their supervisor. This implication is significant for departments like the academic support department at Southeast University and other offices with higher numbers of entry level positions to better support new professionals within higher education, the institution, and/or the position. While much of an employee's training is housed within the department, new employee orientation is often hosted by the institution (via Human Resources and/or a specific orientation department) and adequate orientation is important for professionals (Fore et al., 2002). Orientation should include an honest session on organizational culture. The department's training should also focus on departmental

and organizational culture, particularly their position and relationship with it (Renn & Hodges, 2007). Additional trainings, like FERPA and other higher education policy trainings, may be offered through the institution or department and should adequately train and re-train employees on such issues, particularly as they apply to professionals' specific positions.

Flexible work schedules is another organizational support that could help reduce burnout and loss of passion. Work from home and flexible work hours could support staff trying to manage other responsibilities, like taking care of children, parents, and/or their own health that may make a mandatory 8am-5pm, Monday-Friday schedule difficult to manage. Flexible work schedules could also include revised contracts for staff who traditionally work 12-months of the year; considering the recovery time participants shared they experienced as faculty and lost when they transitioned to staff positions, for staff without primary summer responsibilities could realistically work a 9–10-month contract. Institutions should consider conversations with department heads/center directors to discuss department/office roles throughout the year and strongly consider this possibility. Additional institutional actions that participants shared could potentially help maintain or increase their work passion included professional development funds that would allow participants the opportunities to attend professional conferences within higher education and academic functional area professional organizations. Institutions could also provide other means of professional development, such as hosting speakers on campus or providing funds for departments to purchase professional development materials like books that may be more affordable than conference and travel fees. Departments should also regularly incorporate professional development, such as lunch and learn events, sharing and reading articles with one another, inviting campus partners to speak on topics related to the job, and incorporating time to research and write. Considering the timing of burnout, perhaps these

professional development opportunities could happen during times in the semester when professionals feel they have more time and energy to devote to them. However, even small professional development opportunities could be offered during peak burnout times as a way to refresh passion and support professionals when they may need that support most.

Lastly, effective training and professional development related to leadership and supervision should be provided to supervisors from the institution and department. Research has highlighted the impact supervision can have on employees, with positive supervisory relationships supporting professionals and positively impacting their work experience while negative supervisory relationships have the opposite effect (Jo, 2008; Shupp & Arminio, 2012; Renn & Hodges, 2007). Specifically echoing Shupp and Arminio (2012), supervisors need to understand their professionals' needs may be different and, thus, the support each person needs should be individualized. For new professionals specifically, the supervisor needs to set clear expectations for the professional and explain their role as supervisor. The qualitative findings of the current study expand understanding of supervision and burnout, highlighting indirect supervision, in this case from the upper administration, can affect individuals' burnout and job satisfaction. As Jo (2008) found, conflict with one's supervisor was one major influence of job turnover; this conflict included feeling disrespected and lack of involvement in decision-making. In the current study, two supervisory participants felt respected by and involved in decision making with their immediate supervisor, but not with that immediate supervisor's supervisor (a member of the upper administration), which impacted one participant's departure from the institution.

Limitations

One limitation of the research study was the limited number of participants. For the quantitative survey, a standard response rate of 15% was not reached. While the results were still able to shed some perspective on the impacts on burnout, work passion, and areas of worklife, there were limitations with generalizability of the data due to a low response rate. Thus, scale results and t-test results are acknowledged but with careful consideration of error and generalizability. In addition, four significant t-test results violated Levene's test for equality of variances, and, thus, these specific results may not be conclusive. Adequate initial identification of potential participants was also a limitation, as it was sometimes challenging to identify professionals who worked with the student populations of interested based off of department/position descriptions available on institutional websites. Thus, professionals who do work predominately with at-risk students may have not been identified, as well as professionals who may not work predominately with at-risk students being included. For the qualitative findings, while interviewing only five participants within one department allowed for follow-up interviews and deeper analysis of their experiences, a limitation is again generalizability since perspectives shared and institutions represented were limited. While the department did have more than five professional staff members at the time interviews were conducted, the researcher intentionally did not interview staff who had not been in their position for at least a year so participants could share more deeply about their department, institution, and their work experience. Furthermore, while maximum variation was reached in terms of position level, as participants who were interviewed ranged from entry level to second level supervisor/administrator, the highest position within the department, perspective was once again limited to one department at one institution. Maximum variation was a limitation in terms of

multiple departments and institutions being represented in the study, as well as institution type. However, the researcher was intentional that institutions were of the same Carnegie classification and regions/accreditation bodies to limit these potential contextual influences on participant experiences.

Another limitation was a lack of participant diversity in terms of gender identity, race, and ethnicity, as well as age, which was not asked, which are other areas of limited maximum variation. The researcher was aware of this limitation in current literature thus far and some individuals who did receive invitations to participate in the survey worked at Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) and Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs). However, quantitative survey respondents were predominately white, female, and not Hispanic or Latino, similar to current research. Though the researcher had limited control over responses to the survey and no control over who currently holds positions in departments that work the student populations of interest, additional research is needed to address more diverse perspectives of academic success professionals. Similarly with the qualitative sample, interview participants were all white, female, and not Hispanic or Latino.

All three individual surveys were included in the quantitative survey in order to be able to explore the relationship between burnout, work passion, and areas of worklife for this population of higher education staff and contribute to a gap in the research. However, based on time estimates for each survey, the total estimated time to complete the survey was 20-25 minutes. The time to complete may have been a deterrent to some potential participants who decided to not take the survey at all and to those who started the survey but did not complete it fully. In addition, the 2nd and 3rd round of surveys were sent to identified individuals during summer 2021. The researcher received several automatic “out of office” responses from individuals and

though follow-up emails about the survey were sent out 1-2 weeks after the initial email, data collection during a time of year when many academic affairs professionals may be taking time off was another limitation. A potential limitation for ACPA commission members who received the 1st round of survey distribution during the spring 2021 semester was professionals being busier at this time and feeling they did not have the time to complete the survey. Lastly, data was self-reported, which is another limitation of the data collection, as participants may not report accurate information.

Context: COVID-19

On January 31, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) “declare[d] the coronavirus outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern” (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), 2021, para. 21). Within two months, the coronavirus, or COVID-19, outbreak was declared a pandemic on March 11. Shortly after cities began to shut down schools, restaurants, and stores, among other industries, in an attempt to slow the spread of COVID-19 (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 2021). In order to continue serving students, K-12 schools and higher education institutions shifted classes online, throwing teachers, students, and staff into an unprecedented time in education.

In response to COVID-19’s declaration as a “Public Health Emergency of International Concern,” Southeast University began actively monitoring COVID-19 and communicating information from the CDC and the state’s Department of Health and Human Resources. Immediately after COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, Southeast extended its spring break for students an additional week, advised faculty to prepare for online instruction, and halted all non-essential university travel. Within that same week, the institution “closed” in response to the state’s executive order closing all public schools, including colleges and universities; employees

designated as essential were still required to report to work while others received instruction from their department heads. Many employees transitioned to working from home in mid- to late-March of 2020, including those in the Academic Support Department (the case for the qualitative study). Students staying on campus that semester were able to return to campus only to move out of their residence halls and instruction officially shifted online. For the fall 2020-spring 2021 academic year, Southeast University announced it would be returning primarily to face-to-face instruction. Instructors had to designate their courses' modality (face-to-face, hybrid, or distance learning) and students were able to select course with a modality that fit their needs. During this academic year, the Academic Support Department continued to offer fully virtual services, including virtual student appointments via Zoom or phone and teaching their academic support and first year courses synchronously online.

One impact of COVID-19 on institutions has been declines in enrollment. Data from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center reported a 6.5% decline in undergraduate student fall enrollment from fall 2019 to fall 2021 and a 3.2% decline from fall 2020 to fall 2021 (2021). However, 4-year public institutions like those included in the study, have fared better than private for-profit 4-year and public 2-year institutions with a 3.1% overall decline in undergraduate student fall enrollment from fall 2019 to fall 2021 and a 2.3% decline from fall 2020 to fall 2021 (2021). Negative enrollment impacts in conjunction with an already hurting financial state for many institutions resulted in substantial budget cuts over the last year and a half. As Hubler (2020) reports, "many colleges imposed stopgap measures such as hiring freezes and early retirements to save money" in the spring 2020 semester (para. 3). However, "the persistence of the economic downturn is taking a devastating financial toll, pushing many to lay off or furlough employees, delay graduate admissions and even cut or consolidate core programs

like liberal arts departments” (Hubler, 2020, para. 3). Many institutions, including Southeast University, imposed employee furloughs and reduction-in-forces (RIFs). Several institutions also cut academic programs and many smaller, branch campuses in large university systems, like the Pennsylvania state system, have been proposed to consolidate, all choices that impact faculty, staff, and students (Hubler, 2020).

Pivoting to online teaching in the Spring of 2020 was particularly challenging because of how quickly instructors had to switch from face-to-face teaching strategies, class structure, and assignments, to online in order to finish the semester. As Supiano (2021) describes, “the spring-2020 pivot was about survival” (para. 9). Instructors had to make quick decisions regarding how online class time would be used (lecture v. flipped classroom where students are asked to review material prior to class so class time can be used for more intentional discussions or work), if they would require students to have cameras on or just get comfortable with blank boxes, and if they would continue with the same tests and assignments or if they’d use lockdown browsers or alter tests or assignments all together. Institutions and instructors then had time to reset over the summer. Moving from survival mode, “the strategy for fall focused on redesigning courses so that they could be taught effectively online” (Supiano, 2021, para. 9). Summers for many were spent expanding their own professional development about online learning to be more effective and revisit course goals and implementation.

For class sessions, student appointments, and meetings among faculty and staff, Zoom became the classroom, the office, and the conference room. While Zoom allowed for colleagues to still meet with one another, for student support staff to still meet with students, and for students to still have class and interact with their professors, this switch to the virtual platform, which was used so often during the workday for many, led to many feeling what became known

as “Zoom fatigue,” or a feeling more exhausted or drained at the end of the workday. Fosslien and West Duffy (2020) propose the reasons behind Zoom fatigue include that Zoom meetings require more focus but are easier to lose focus in, which was easily exacerbated for individuals working from home with partners and/or children trying to do the same. In addition, people process information differently via video, during which people keep a ‘constant gaze’ in order to show they’re paying attention and do not get “visual breaks” (Fosslien & West Duffy, 2020, para 5).

Participants’ survey responses must also be considered within the context of COVID-19. While some of the impacts on burnout, like workload and some student experiences, existed pre-COVID, participants in the qualitative case study highlighted impacts of COVID on their burnout and overall work experience, such as challenges with online teaching and electronic communication. While there is some understanding on the impacts of COVID-19 on higher education, including institutions, teaching, student learning, and mental health, this is an area of research to be expanded and one that the current study contributes to by sharing impacts on an academic support department, particularly at the departmental and individual staff member level.

Directions for Future Research

While the current study provides some insight into work passion for the professionals in the qualitative case study, it was difficult to measure loss of passion beyond narrative experiences shared. Future research could address this concept more deeply by conducting a longitudinal study that includes pre- and post-measurement of work passion via the Passion Scale to assess changes in work passion. Regarding the relationship between burnout and work passion, the current study warrants further research to better understand this relationship, as the qualitative interviews provide contradictory relationships between work passion and burnout.

Previous research suggested increased levels of passion, specifically harmonious passion, were associated with lower levels of burnout (Carbonneau et al., 2008; Chen et al., 2020; Fernet et al., 2014) while higher levels of obsessive passion were associated with higher levels of burnout (Fernet et al., 2014). One participant's experience shared in the current study attributes their work passion to helping them manage their burnout and still being in their position. On the other hand, another participant identified their work passion as a potential influence on increasing their level of burnout. To further understand the relationship between burnout and work passion for academic affairs professionals, a quantitative study utilizing regression analysis could be conducted as well as a qualitative study with a much larger sample.

The current study contributed to the research on burnout in higher education, but within a limited context due to the singular case study design. To enhance this body of knowledge, further research could utilize a comparative case study of similar departments at 2-3 institutions, as originally intended for the current study, which would provide broader generalizability and more understanding of impacts on burnout from the job itself (work type) compared to impacts of contexts (institutional, departmental, and students), including culture. Furthermore, the institution used within the case study provided insight of one, Master's Level-Larger Programs, 4-year public institution. Additional research including more institutional types, such as research institutions or 2-year public institutions, would provide insight into impacts institutional type may have on professional burnout and work passion. To further understand organizational supports that help to reduce levels of burnout and increase levels of work passion, future research could include a longitudinal study that assesses the impact of a specific program, training, or strategy. Pre- and post-measurements of burnout using the MBI-GS could be used to assess the impact of the program on participant burnout levels.

A major limitation of the current study's quantitative section was the low response rate. Further research could assess if similar results were found with a higher number of participants and higher response rate. A larger sample size that includes more equal groups may also help to address the limited evidence for relationships identified in the four t-tests that violated Levene's test of equal variances. Lastly, research on the financial, psychological, and educational impacts of COVID-19 will continue to grow. The current study provided insight into how COVID-19 impacted one institution's academic support department. Additional research, particularly research including multiple institutions, could assess additional impacts and broader generalizability regarding impacts of COVID-19 on the higher education landscape.

Conclusion

While burnout has been widely studied and well-defined within the literature, there was limited research on burnout and loss of passion for staff within the higher education context, particularly those working with students on academic probation and students conditionally admitted to the institution. Thus, the current study aimed to understand the influences of burnout and loss of passion for higher education professionals who work directly with these student populations and how these professionals navigate these experiences. Furthermore, the study sought to investigate how institutional culture and supports impact staff burnout and loss of passion.

While there are limitations regarding generalizability due to low response rate to the quantitative survey and a singular case study, findings add to the literature on burnout and work passion within higher education by identifying impacts on burnout and work passion for this population of higher education staff. Both quantitative and qualitative findings suggest differences in burnout for new professionals at their current institution and in higher education.

Furthermore, both suggest differences in general passion, burnout, and areas of worklife between those in entry level positions and those in supervisory positions. Qualitative findings suggest high workload and lack of institutional support are among major influences on staff burnout and highlight how burnout occurs cyclically for staff working full-time during an academic year. Furthermore, qualitative findings provide support for the current study's conceptual framework that the areas of worklife can occur within different contexts of a professional's job; variations in overall support, as well as within the worklife areas of reward and community, were identified between departmental, institutional, and student contexts. Lastly, current findings shed light on how COVID-19 influenced the work experience and burnout of this population of higher education professionals. Qualitative findings also suggest practical implications for academic support departments like that at Southeast University and for higher education institutions. Understanding and recognition of a department's work was shared repeatedly among interview participants as an impact on burnout and work satisfaction and can be considered a social reward within the reward area of worklife. Furthermore, effective training, including being upfront with challenges professionals could face in their position and having honest, open conversations about burnout, and professional development opportunities, including the ability to attend professional conferences, were identified as important strategies for managing burnout and reducing loss of passion beyond supervisory strategies and actions identified in previous literature.

To further understand the impacts on burnout and loss of work passion on this population of higher education professionals, future research could extend the current study's quantitative work by conducting a longitudinal study that utilizes pre- and post-measures of burnout and work passion in order to more accurately measure loss of passion and by using regression analysis to determine potential cause and effect relationships between burnout and loss of

passion. Future research could expand upon the current study's qualitative findings by conducting a comparative case study analysis that incorporates multiple institutions to better assess impacts on burnout and loss of passion that may be institutional or per the position type. As for the current study, findings have expanded the current understanding of burnout and work passion within higher education through broader quantitative analysis and the qualitative analysis of the lived experiences of an academic support department's professional staff members at one mid-sized, public, 4-year institution.

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Footnotes

¹If equal variances were assumed, a t-test suggested that there was a significant difference in general passion between professionals who worked directly with students less than 50% of their day ($M = 5.81, SD = 0.30$) and professionals who worked with students more than 50% of their day ($M = 5.35, SD = 0.79$) at $p < .001, t(70) = 3.60, p < .001$.

²If equal variances were assumed, a t-test would suggest that there was a significant difference in control between new professionals ($M = 3.22, SD = 1.01$) and not new professionals in higher education ($M = 3.83, SD = 0.67$) at $p < .05, t(66) = -2.831, p < .006$.

³If equal variances were assumed, a t-test would suggest that there was a significant difference in cynicism between those in entry level positions ($M = 2.72, SD = 1.99$) and those in supervisory positions ($M = 1.70, SD = 1.35$) at $p < .05, t(67) = 2.52, p < .014$.

⁴ If equal variances were assumed, a t-test would suggest that there was a significant difference in general passion between those in entry level positions ($M = 5.51, SD = 0.72$) and those in supervisory positions ($M = 5.80, SD = 0.28$) at $p < .05, t(69) = -2.38, p < .020$.

Appendix A: Quantitative IRB Cover Letter



Cover Letter
Minimal Risk

Dear Participant,

This letter is a request for you to take part in a research project on burnout, work passion, and worklife among academic affairs professionals. This project is being conducted by Alexa Cecil, M.A. in the Department of Curriculum & Instruction/Literacy Studies at WVU under the supervision of Dr. Nathan Sorber, an Associate Professor of Higher Education Administration in and Department Chair of the Department of Curriculum & Instruction/Literacy Studies, to fulfil requirements for a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete a survey asking about your work experience. Your participation in this project will take approximately 20-25 minutes. You are being invited to participate because you are a member of the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) according to the organization and/or because you have been identified as an Academic Affairs professional who works with probationary and/or conditionally admitted college students at your institution according to its website/directory. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

Your involvement in this project will be kept as confidential as legally possible. Any identifiable data will be unidentified and kept confidential. All data will be kept in the aggregate. Your participation is completely voluntary. You may skip any question that you do not wish to answer, and you may discontinue at any time. West Virginia University's Institutional Review Board approval of this project is on file. Your email address will be requested because you may be invited to participate in future research for this study. However, it will be stored separately | from any data collected in the study.

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact me via e-mail at aantill@mix.wvu.edu or Dr. Nathan Sorber at Nathan.Sorber@mail.wvu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the WVU Office of Human Research Protection by phone at 304-293-7073 or by email at IRB@mail.wvu.edu.

I hope that you will participate in this research project, as it could help us better understand work experiences of academic affairs professionals. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alexa Cecil

Appendix B: Qualitative IRB Cover Letter

Cover Letter
Minimal Risk

Dear Participant,

This letter is a request for you to take part in a research project on burnout, work passion, and worklife among academic affairs professionals. This project is being conducted by Alexa Cecil, M.A. in the Department of Curriculum & Instruction/Literacy Studies at WVU under the supervision of Dr. Nathan Sorber, an Associate Professor of Higher Education Administration in and Department Chair of the Department of Curriculum & Instruction/Literacy Studies, to fulfil requirements for a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in one semi-structured, in-depth interview. Your participation in this project will take approximately 1 hour. In order to participate, you must meet the following criterion: currently work or have worked with probation and/or conditionally admitted college students; work as an academic advisor, academic coach (often also referred to as success coach), or supervisor of such positions; and work at a 4-year public Master's – Larger Programs institution (as defined by the Carnegie Classifications of Institutions of Higher Education). You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

Your involvement in this project will be kept as confidential as legally possible. Any identifiable data will be unidentified and kept confidential. All data will be kept in the aggregate. Your participation is completely voluntary. You may skip any question that you do not wish to answer and you may discontinue at any time. West Virginia University's Institutional Review Board approval of this project is on file.

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact me via e-mail at aantill@mix.wvu.edu or Dr. Nathan Sorber at Nathan.Sorber@mail.wvu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the WVU Office of Human Research Protection by phone at 304-293-7073 or by email at IRB@mail.wvu.edu.

I hope that you will participate in this research project, as it could help us better understand burnout among academic affairs professionals who work with at-risk students. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alexa Cecil

Appendix C: Interview Guide

I. Topics: burnout, organizational support, organizational culture, work passion, work life

II. Introduction:

For transcription and note-taking purposes, I would like to record our interview today. Only I will have access to the recordings, which will be kept on my password protected, personal computer and eventually deleted after transcription is completed. My dissertation committee may have access to the data if needed, but it would only be if there are questions in relation to transcription or the writing of results. They will not have access to the recordings themselves or anything identifying you as a participant. Furthermore, pseudonyms will be assigned to your name and the institution you work at.

I have planned for this interview to last approximately one hour. You may skip any question that you do not wish to answer, and you may discontinue at any time.

III. Opening:

You were selected for this interview because you have been identified as an Academic Affairs professional who primarily works with conditionally admitted and probation college students at a 4-year public Master's – Larger Programs institution.

This interview is part of my dissertation study. The purpose of my research is to understand burnout and loss of passion for academic affairs professionals who work with this population of students, including influences on burnout/loss of passion, how these professionals navigate these experiences, and the impact of institutional culture on these experiences.

IV. Interview Questions:

A. Interviewee Background:

1. Name:
2. Title:
3. Institution:

B. Interviewee Experience:

1. Describe the workplace culture of your department.
2. How would you compare the workplace culture of your department to that of the university (at which you work)?
3. Describe your experience working with probation and conditionally admitted students (e.g., which population of students, teaching v. 1-1 meetings).

4. Do you feel valued by your institution, department, and the students you work with? Why/why not?
5. How would you describe the sense of community at your institution and within your department? Has that changed since COVID? If so, how?
6. Describe additional impacts COVID-19 has had on your work (on institution, department, and work with students).
7. How does your institution and department support you?
8. Describe what burnout means to you.
9. Describe your experience with burnout. How have you navigated it?
10. What components of your job/workplace culture do you feel have increased your level of burnout?
11. What do you feel has supported you/reduced your level of burnout? From your institution? Department? Students?
12. How do you feel about your job?
 - a. How has this changed since you first began this job? Why?
 - b. Have you or are you considering leaving within the next year?
13. Why did you transition into Higher Education and academic success?
 - a. Why did you apply to this job?
14. How would you describe “work passion”?
 - a. Do you now, or have you ever, felt this way towards your work?
 1. If yes, how have you experienced “work passion”?
 - b. What has supported or increased passion towards your work? From your institution? Department? Students?
 - c. What has reduced passion towards your work? From your institution? Department? Students?

***Probe questions if necessary:**

- Can you give me an example?
- Can you tell me a story about that?

Appendix D: Quantitative Recruitment Emails

Email sent to ACPA Commission Members:

Hello,

My name is Alexa Cecil, and I am a PhD candidate in West Virginia University's Higher Education Administration program. As an ACPA member of the Academic Affairs Commission and/or the Academic Support in Higher Education Commission, you are invited to participate in an online survey for my dissertation research about your work experience as an Academic Affairs professional.

To complete the online survey, please click here: https://wvu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_7TK4gXq50j1xgUe. The survey will take approximately 20-25 minutes to complete.

If you would like more information, please contact me or my dissertation chair, Dr. Nathan Sorber, at Nathan.Sorber@mail.wvu.edu. I sincerely appreciate your time and sharing about your experiences.

Respectfully,
Alexa Cecil

Email sent to professionals at SACSOC accredited institutions:

Dear Colleague:

My name is Alexa Cecil, and I am a PhD candidate in West Virginia University's Higher Education Administration program. As a potential Academic Affairs professional who may work with probation and/or conditionally admitted college students at a Master's - Larger Programs institution in the Southeast region, you are invited to participate in an online survey for my dissertation research about your work experience.

To complete the online survey, please click here: https://wvu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_7TK4gXq50j1xgUe. The survey will take approximately 20-25 minutes to complete.

If you would like more information, please contact me or my dissertation chair, Dr. Nathan Sorber, at Nathan.Sorber@mail.wvu.edu. I sincerely appreciate your time and you sharing about your experiences.

Respectfully,
Alexa Cecil
aantill@mix.wvu.edu

Email sent to professionals at MSCHE accredited institutions:

Dear Colleague:

My name is Alexa Cecil, and I am a PhD candidate in West Virginia University's Higher Education Administration program. As a professional who may work with undergraduate probation and/or conditionally admitted students at an MSCHE accredited and Master's - Larger Programs classified institution, you are invited to participate in an online survey for my dissertation research about your work experience.

To complete the online survey, please click here:

https://wvu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_7TK4gXq50j1xgUe. The survey will take approximately 20-25 minutes to complete. Those who complete the survey will be entered into a drawing to win one of two \$25 Amazon gift cards.

If you would like more information, please contact me or my dissertation chair, Dr. Nathan Sorber, at Nathan.Sorber@mail.wvu.edu. I sincerely appreciate your time and you sharing about your experiences.

Respectfully,
Alexa Cecil
aantill@mix.wvu.edu

Appendix E: Qualitative Recruitment Emails

Hello,

My name is Alexa Cecil, and I am a PhD candidate in West Virginia University's Higher Education Administration program. Thank you for completing the survey about your work experience for my dissertation research. I sincerely appreciate your time and reflection.

The second part of my research involves interviewing selected participants in order to further understand their experiences working with probation and/or conditionally admitted undergraduate students. Due to the nature of your work, I have identified you as an ideal participant for a 1-hour, virtual interview during which I will ask approximately 12 questions. If you would be interested in participating, please respond to this email with days/times over the next 2 weeks that you would be available for a 1-hour interview via Zoom.

Thank you,
Alexa Cecil

Appendix F: Quantitative Survey Questions

1. Do you work with students on academic probation?
 - Yes
 - No
2. Do you work with students who have been conditionally admitted to the university?
 - Yes
 - No
3. Gender Identity:
 - Male
 - Female
 - Non-binary/third gender
4. Ethnicity:
 - Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin
 - Not Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin
5. Race:
 - White
 - Black or African American
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
 - Other
6. Name of institution currently employed at: [fill in the blank]
7. How many years have you worked at this institution?
 - 0-6 months
 - 7-11 months
 - 1-2 years
 - 3-5 years
 - 6-10 years
 - 11-15 years
 - 16-20 years
 - 21+ years
8. Title of current position (e.g., Academic Coach, Academic Advisor, etc.): [fill in the blank]
9. How many years have you worked in this position?
 - 0-6 months
 - 7-11 months
 - 1-2 years
 - 3-5 years
 - 6-10 years
 - 11-15 years
 - 16-20 years
 - 21+ years

10. Employment Status:
 - Full-time
 - Part-time
11. What percentage of your day-to-day responsibilities is spent working directly with probation and/or conditionally admitted students? [sliding scale from 0-100; select percentage]
12. Is your position considered:
 - Entry level
 - Supervisor/Management (First-level)
 - Management (Middle)
 - Management (Senior)
13. How many years have you worked in higher education?
 - 0-6 months
 - 7-11 months
 - 1-2 years
 - 3-5 years
 - 6-10 years
 - 11-15 years
 - 16-20 years
 - 21+ years
14. Please provide your email address. You may be contacted for further research for this study: [fill in the blank]
15. Please rate each of the following statements using the rating scale below. The Passion Scale is adapted from Carbonneau et al. (2008) and Vallerand et al. (2003): [Matrix question: Likert scale responses include do not agree at all, somewhat disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat agree, agree]
 - I spend a lot of time doing my work.
 - I like my work.
 - My work is important for me.
 - My work is a passion for me.
 - My work is in harmony with the other activities in my life.
 - I have difficulties controlling my urge to do my work.
 - The new things that I discover doing my work allow me to appreciate it even more.
 - I have almost an obsessive feeling for my work.
 - My work reflects the qualities I like about myself.
 - My work allows me to live a variety of experiences.
 - My work is the only thing that really turns me on.
 - My work is well integrated in my life.
 - If I could, I would only do my work.
 - My work is in harmony with other things that are part of me.
 - My work is so exciting that I sometimes lose control over it.
 - I have the impression that my work controls me.

* Due to copyright laws via Mind Garden, Inc., the distributor of the MBI and AWS surveys, only sample items are available for inclusion in dissertations which they are used. Thus, the MBI and AWS scales included below are an abbreviated version of the scales participants completed as part of the full quantitative survey.

16. Below are 16 statements of job-related feelings. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you have ever felt this way about your job. If you have never had this feeling, mark “never” for that statement. If you have had this feeling, indicate how often you feel it by marking the descriptor that best describes how frequently you feel that way.

MBI - General Survey - MBI-GS: Copyright ©1996 Wilmar B. Schaufeli, Michael P. Leiter, Christina Maslach & Susan E. Jackson. All rights reserved in all media. Published by Mind Garden, Inc., www.mindgarden.com

[Matrix Question: response options are never, a few times a year or less, once a month or less, a few times a month, once a week, a few times a week, every day]

- I feel emotionally drained from my work.
- In my opinion, I am good at my job.
- I doubt the significance of my work.

17. Please use the following rating scale to indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

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[Matrix Question: Likert response options are strongly disagree, disagree, hard to decide, agree, strongly disagree]

- Workload: I do not have time to do the work that must be done.
- Control: I have control over how I do my work.
- Reward: I receive recognition from others for my work.
- Community: Members of my work group communicate openly.
- Fairness: Resources are allocated fairly here.
- Values: My values and the Organization’s values are alike.