The Perception of New Professionals on Their Transition Into the Field of Student Affairs

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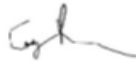
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

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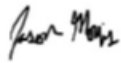
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The Perception of New Professionals on Their Transition Into the Field of Student Affairs

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by

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Acknowledgments

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Abstract

While research has been conducted exploring the competencies needed for student affairs work, little is known about the perception of new professionals regarding their socialization into the field. This phenomenological study explores the perception of 10 new student affairs professionals on how the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators and the American College Personnel Association Values, Philosophy and History professional competency aided their social transition into student affairs. Using Weidman et al.'s (2001) graduate socialization theoretical framework, the study revealed three key findings: (a) for new student affairs professionals, the socialization process begins well before beginning a graduate program; (b) the role of student affairs supervisors, mentors, and student affairs staff is crucial to the successful transition and socialization of new student affairs professionals; and (c) the importance of authenticity and wellness for the successful socialization and transition into the field of student affairs. Among the three key findings, three themes emerged: (a) their socialization impacted their approach to serving students, (b) their socialization influenced their perception of the importance of experiential learning, and (c) their socialization emphasized that while higher education may not have been built with diverse populations in mind, they are finding ways to serve diverse students.

Keywords: writing, template, seventh new professionals, socialization, competencies, synergistic supervision, wellbeing, graduate preparation program

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Chapter 1: Introduction

New student affairs professionals comprise about 20% of the student affairs workforce (Pittman & Foubert, 2016; Renn & Hodges, 2007; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008) and quickly transition into front-line staff who are charged with providing programs, services, and initiatives to students (Davis & Cooper, 2017). Through the process of socialization, new professionals acquire knowledge, skills, and values necessary for a successful entry into a professional career (Duran & Allen, 2020). Although these new professionals have little experience in the field of student affairs, they are expected to display certain skill sets and competencies when working with students (Codding, 2019; Muller et al., 2018).

This qualitative study explored the perception of 10 new professionals who had a range of no student affairs experience to 5 years of full-time professional experience in student affairs. This study looked at new professionals employed at 2- and 4-year colleges and universities who served in entry level positions in student life and/or student development services departments. Additionally, the study explored the impact that the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) Values, Philosophy and History (VPH) professional competency had assisting new professionals as they transitioned into their roles in the field of student affairs and experienced socialization. The findings from this research will be of interest to faculty and supervisors whose work with new professionals plays a crucial role in their professional development.

Through convenience sampling (Saldana & Omasta, 2018), sampling based on easy access to participants, this study explored the perception of 10 new student affairs professionals who (a) are employed in a full-time role in a student affairs department at an institution of higher education, and (b) who are still within their first 5 years serving in a student affairs role.

Participants of this study engaged in semistructured interviews. After conducting interviews, in-Vivo coding was utilized to analyze data based on the participants' exact language to generate codes. Through phenomenological inquiry, this study offers new professionals an opportunity to express their viewpoints and share their lived experiences of transitioning into their professional roles.

NASPA and ACPA have outlined professional competencies for student affairs educators. The existing body of research on the socialization of new student affairs professionals explores the development of competencies necessary for various positions within the field, such as social justice and inclusion, knowledge of student development theories, leadership, and assessment (Ardoin et al., 2019; Bureau, 2018; Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017; Muller et al., 2018; O'Brien, 2018). In 2009, NASPA and ACPA collaborated to outline a set of professional competencies for student affairs educators (ACPA/NASPA, 2015). ACPA and NASPA formed The Joint Task Force on Professional Competencies and Standards, which included representatives from both organizations and the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). In 2010, the task force proposed 10 competency areas, and in 2015, the committee revised a final list of competencies which included (1) Personal and Ethical Foundations; (2) Values, Philosophy, and History; (3) Assessment, Evaluation, and Research; (4) Law, Policy, and Governance; (5) Organizational and Human Resources; (6) Leadership; (7) Social Justice and Inclusion; (8) Student Learning and Development; (9) Technology; and (10) Advising and Supporting (ACPA/NASPA, 2015). The purpose of the 10 professional competencies is to "lay out essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions expected of all student affairs educators, regardless of functional area or specialization with the field" (ACPA/NASPA,

2015, p. 7). The competencies listed below are directly from the ACPA/NASPA document and provide additional context for each category:

1. Personal and Ethical Foundations (PEF)—Addresses the knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to making ethical decisions based on one's integrity, wellness, and growth (ACPA/NASPA, 2015, p. 12).

2. Values, Philosophy, and History (VPH): "Focuses on applying the history, philosophy, and values to current practice in student affairs" (ACPA/NASPA, 2015, p. 12).

3. Assessment, Evaluation, and Research (AER): "Addresses the knowledge and skills to create, conduct, critique, and utilize methods of assessment, evaluation, and research" (ACPA/NASPA, 2015, p. 12).

4. Law, Policy, and Governance (LPG): "Involves applying legal constructs, compliance/policy issues, and understanding governance structures to professional practice" (ACPA/NASPA, 2015, p. 13).

5. Organizational and Human Resources (OHR): "Focuses on knowledge and skills necessary to manage institutional human capital, financial, and physical resources" (ACPA/NASPA, 2015, p. 13).

6. Leadership (LEAD): "Involves the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to engage in the leadership process regardless of positional authority" (ACPA/NASPA, 2015, p. 13).

7. Social Justice and Inclusion (SJI): "Focuses on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to provide an equitable environment for all to learn and grow" (ACPA/NASPA, 2015, p. 14).

8. Student Learning and Development (SLD): "Involves the knowledge and skills to apply student learning theory to inform practice" (ACPA/NASPA, 2015, p. 14).

9. Technology (TECH): "Involves the use of digital tools and resources to improve student learning, as well as for the student affairs professional" (ACPA/NASPA, 2015, p. 15).

10. Advising and Supporting (A/S): "Addresses the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to provide counseling, advising support, and guidance to students" (ACPA/NASPA, 2015, p. 15).

However, little is known about the perception of new student affairs professionals, on the espoused competencies, and how the competencies help in their transition into their professional roles. This study will explore the perception of new professionals on how student affairs values, philosophy, and history professional competency help them in their transition into their professional roles.

Background

The field of student affairs has a long history within higher education, and over the years, has established itself as a profession that focuses on the holistic development of students (Cooper et al., 2016; Long, 2012; Shetty et al., 2016). The profession grew into serving a diverse student population which requires its practitioners to be competent and possess certain skills (Cooper et al., 2016). Professionalization of the student affairs field originated through graduate preparation programs at Teachers College, Columbia University, which helped prepare the first deans of students and initial campus guidelines (Dungy & Gordon, 2011; Hevel, 2016). Today, there are hundreds of student affairs graduate preparation programs highlighting higher education administration. However, people can enter the field of student affairs through multiple academic and career paths such as counseling, business, and other fields (Hirschy et al., 2015). Graduates from traditional student affairs preparation programs, though, tend to build a stronger professional identity and have a better understanding of their role than those from less typical

paths (Pittman & Foubert, 2016). Student affairs graduate preparation programs introduce entry-level professionals with knowledge, skills, values, and competencies necessary for professional work (Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017; Liddell et al., 2014). Therefore, examining the ACPA and NASPA competencies becomes relevant as many student affairs graduate preparation programs base their curriculum on the advancement of those core competencies (Liddell et al., 2014).

Statement of the Problem

Although a body of research exists that explores the development of competencies needed for student affairs work (Ardoin et al., 2019; Bureau, 2018; Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017; Muller et al., 2018; O'Brien, 2018), little is known about the perception of new professionals in the field of student affairs regarding their socialization process. Research on the perspectives of new professionals can be vital to their retention and overall attrition rates in student affairs (Duran & Allen, 2020; Mullen et al., 2018).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perception of new student affairs professionals, employed in entry level student life and/or student development services departments at 2- and 4-year colleges and universities, on how the VPH professional competency helped them as they socialized into their professional identities. New professionals for this study were identified as completing a graduate preparation program and having zero experience to 5 years of full-time professional experience in student affairs (Marshall et al., 2016). New professionals' voices are often left out of the research conducted on professional competencies. Thus, the purpose of this study is to give new professionals an opportunity to express their viewpoints and share their lived experiences of transitioning into their professional roles.

Research Questions

      In qualitative analysis, research questions guide the researcher towards finding the most relevant literature, research design, data collection and analysis, and help the researcher stay aligned to the research topic (Graue, 2015). The research question that guided this study was the following:

      RQ1. How does the ACPA/NASPA professional competencies of VPH help new professionals as they are socialized into their professional roles in student affairs?

Definition of Terms

      The following terms are used throughout the study and are defined as the following:

      Competencies. Features defining a professional as capable (Armino & Ortiz, 2017).

      NASPA/ACPA professional competencies. Ten professional competencies which "lay out essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions expected of all student affairs educators, regardless of functional area or specialization with the field" (ACPA/NASPA, 2015, p. 7).

      New professionals in student affairs. New professionals in the field of student affairs are those who have completed a graduate preparation program and have zero to 5 years of full-time professional experience (Marshall et al., 2016).

      Professional identity. The result of the professionalization process, which includes internalizing the norms of the profession into one's image (Liddell et al., 2014).

      Professional socialization. The process of adopting the values, skills, attitudes, norms, and knowledge needed for membership in a field (Hirschy et al., 2015).

      Student affairs preparation programs. Graduate preparation programs in student affairs prepare new professionals with knowledge, skills, values, and competencies necessary for professional work (Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017; Liddell et al., 2014).

Student personnel movement. The student personnel movement established a connection between the curriculum and extracurricular activities. It was concerned with developing well-rounded, balanced citizens who had a foundation in education and social and moral conviction (Dungy & Gordon, 2011).

Summary

The first chapter provided a thorough look at the history and emergence of the student affairs profession. Since its inception, student affairs professionals have worked towards standardizing the field by developing standards, creating graduate programs to train professionals, and engaging among each other through professional associations (Long, 2012). The upcoming chapter provides the historical context for this study, the development of professional competencies, and review the effectiveness of current student affairs preparation programs.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

New student affairs professionals embark on their professional journey into the field through a socialization process (Bureau, 2018). This process typically begins in graduate school, where they are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and values needed for entry into the profession (Weidman et al., 2001). This qualitative study explored the perception of 10 new professionals who had zero to 5 years of full-time professional experience in the field of student affairs. This study looked at new professionals who were employed at 2- and 4-year colleges and universities, serving in entry level position in student life and/or student development services departments, and their perceptions on how the ACPA/NASPA professional competency Values, Philosophy and History (VPH) helped their socialization as new professionals. This study sought to understand the experiences of new professionals and the facets of socialization within student affairs. Current literature identified the skills, competencies, and traits necessary for successful student affairs practices such as human relation skills, management skills, leadership, knowledge of student development theory, enthusiasm, and cooperation (Herdlein, 2004; Lovell & Kosten, 2000; Muller et al., 2018; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008; Roberts, 2005). New professionals are essential to daily operations of student affairs and interactions with stakeholders as they are typically the front-line staff charged with providing programs, services, and initiatives (Davis & Cooper, 2017). While skills and competencies are relevant, there are hundreds of graduate preparations programs that specifically focus on the socialization of new professionals. However, new professionals shared that they are unprepared when entering the field (Cooper et al., 2016) and lack many of the professional competencies needed to be successful in their first role after completing their graduate programs (Dunn et al., 2023).

The following section reviews the framework used for the study, the history of the student affairs field, the development of professional competencies, and current standards for student affairs preparation programs. The review also presents current research on the effectiveness of graduate preparation programs and competency development among new professionals. The Weidman et al. (2001) graduate socialization framework provides an in-depth context when situating the issue of ill prepared experiences and variations of socialization among new professionals.

Theoretical Framework

Research has been conducted to understand the socialization of students in graduate and professional programs (Duran & Allen, 2020; Lombardi & Mather, 2016). This current study was based on Weidman et al. (2001) theoretical framework for the socialization of students in graduate and professional programs. According to Duran and Allen (2020), the process of socialization typically initiates when a student participates in a graduate program or professional associations. As graduate programs introduce socialization to students, the process evolves as individuals begin to gain new knowledge, skills, and values necessary for the successful entry into a professional career (Duran & Allen, 2020).

Stages of Socialization

Weidman et al.'s (2001) graduate socialization framework built upon the stages of socialization described by Thornton and Nardi (1975). Socialization in graduate and professional programs is a developmental process and is intertwined with core elements such as knowledge acquisition, investment, and involvement, which lead to role identity and commitment (Thornton & Nardi, 1975; Weidman et al., 2001). As one moves through the developmental process, stages reflect a sequence of levels and a somewhat different state of identity and commitment

(Weidman et al., 2001). Professional socialization entails movement through four stages: anticipatory, formal, informal, and personal (Duran & Allen, 2020; Thornton & Nardi, 1975). First, the anticipatory stage is the time when students seek information about entering a profession. Students enter this stage with preconceived expectations about what it means to work in their particular field (Bureau, 2018). During the formal stage of socialization, students typically learn the norms and campus culture from supervisors and faculty members through structured instruction or experiences. It is during the first two stages—anticipatory and formal— that many students begin to learn the professional values related to their specific fields (Bureau, 2018). However, the informal stage emphasizes student interactions with peers and others who tend to further enforce role expectations (Liddell et al., 2014). Finally, during the personal stage, students integrate their personal needs with their professional roles.

Student affairs graduate programs are examples of the socialization process for new professionals preparing to enter the field. Those who desire to enter the student affairs workforce pursue degrees that directly relate to what is expected and necessary for a successful transition (Ardoin et al., 2019; Bureau, 2018; Hirschy & Wilson, 2017; Lidell et al., 2014). Professionals who earn a graduate degree in student affairs are socialized into the profession during in-class and out-of-class experiences (Hornak et al., 2016). Liddell et al. (2014) found that structured in-class instruction influenced participation in professional organizations (i.e., involvement) and modeling ethical practice (i.e., skill). Out-of-class experiences, such as internships and practicum, were more influential in understanding institutional culture and political landscape of a workplace than in-class experiences (Liddell et al., 2014).

Conceptualizing Graduate and Professional Student Socialization

Building upon the work of Thornton and Nardi's (1975) stages of socialization, Weidman et al. (2001) conceptualized a framework for understanding the socialization of graduate and professional students. The core of their framework is understanding the socialization experience in graduate degree programs which examines the institutional culture of a university (e.g., academic programs and peer climate), the socialization process (e.g., interaction, integration, and learning), and the core elements of socialization (e.g., knowledge, acquisition, investment, and involvement; Weidman et al., 2001). Around the core of the framework are the nonlinear and interactive components of graduate student socialization consisting of prospective students (e.g., background and predispositions), professional communities (e.g., practitioners and associations), personal communities (e.g., family, friends, and employers), and novice professional practitioners (Weidman et al., 2001). Finally, the Weidman framework posits that the interactive stages of socialization—anticipatory, formal, informal, and personal, are active at any point throughout the experience of graduate students and novice practitioners (Weidman et al., 2001).

Modifications to the Weidman-Twale-Stein Framework

To address the diversity of specific student populations and institutional conditions, Twale et al. (2016) revisited the Weidman et al. (2001) socialization framework to reflect its applicability among diverse groups of students and graduate student education. Since initially publishing, Twale et al. (2016) reviewed the framework and found that students of color often experience inequitable/unequal distribution of resources, tend to settle for less selective or prestigious research universities, experience trust issues because of the lack of faculty of color representation, and experience cross-cultural conflicts in the classroom as well as in their field placements. Twale et al. (2016) then added the notion of "academic resources" which reflects a

basic input-environment-outcome structure. Input is synonymous with "entering" instead of "prospective" students as students enter with predefined notion of what to expect (Castillo-Montoya, 2021). This input status contributes to what we may learn about the needs of students. In the center of the framework, Twale et al. (2016) added "faculty climate" as a key element of the environment experienced by students of color. The relationship with faculty for students of color directly influenced the social outcome based on their environment. Thus, "preparation" is used instead of "background" to demonstrate the importance of the academic program (Twale et al., 2016). This framework sets the stage for exploring new student affairs professionals' perceptions, keeping in mind the experiences of diverse groups of students (Castillo-Montoya, 2021).

Interactive Stages

The four interactive stages of Weidman et al.'s (2001) socialization framework include anticipatory, formal, informal, and personal and are active throughout the entire experience of graduate students. In the anticipatory stage, professionals seek out information about the field, hold stereotypes, and have preconceived expectations about what being a student affairs professional means within the field (Bureau, 2018). During the formal stage, however, new professionals learn the norms, values, and knowledge of the field from supervisors and faculty through structured instruction and experiences that contribute to their acclimation to the institution culture. The informal stage is where new professionals engage with peers and other professionals who will further enforce role expectations through casual dialogue and partnerships (Liddell et al., 2014). Lastly, the personal stage involves integrated personal needs with professional roles such as committing to personal and professional development (Weidman et al., 2001). This entire process is intertwined with core developmental processes such as knowledge

acquisition, investment, involvement which ultimately leads to role identity and commitment to the professional field (Weidman et al., 2001). As they assume new roles, new professionals begin morphing into a new workforce identity while simultaneously reconciling any discrepancies between their old selves and their new identity (Weidman et al., 2001).

The Core Elements

Although the interactive stages lend key insight into the socialization framework, the core of the framework includes the investment, involvement, and internalization of what is being learned (Weidman et al., 2001). Institutions and faculty have control of the institutional culture, the curriculum and activities, and program structures for student learning (Weidman et al., 2001). As graduate students forge experiences, the culture of learning, interactions with faculty and their peers, and involvement in program events contribute to the depths of socialization and can be categorized in one of the interactive phases (Weidman et al., 2001). This eventually influences perceptions about student affairs as a profession for graduate students entering the field (Weidman et al., 2001).

Knowledge acquisition is crucial for new professionals to succeed in their professional roles (Weidman et al., 2001). New professionals learn the norms, expectations, values, and history of the field to assess their ability to do the job successfully (Weidman et al., 2001). Investment occurs at all stages of the socialization process—from anticipatory to the personal stage. Choosing to enroll in a master's program to learn more about the student affairs profession, as well as invest time and money, further creates a greater investment (Weidman et al., 2001). Involvement is the level of participation in a professional role and/or the preparation for engaging with others by forming relationships with mentors, faculty, or seasoned professionals. Professional identities are cultivated through the investment of participating in a

role, how involved one becomes, and internalizing the personal meaning of the role (Weidman et al., 2001).

Around the Framework

Weidman et al.'s (2001) socialization framework applies an "around the framework" process where the nonlinear and interactive components of the socialization process exist. The components include entering the field, building disciplinary/professional communities, establishing personal communities, and identifying as novice professional practitioners. Most of those components exist outside of the university setting but have influence over graduate students and their experiences in the academic program including exiting into the student affairs workforce (Weidman et al., 2001).

Incoming graduate students come with predispositions (e.g., values, career aspirations, learning styles, beliefs), from different backgrounds (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation for example), and with different levels of readiness for preparation programs (Weidman et al., 2001). Personal communities can include family members or friends who provide support during the graduate school experience, or otherwise detract from graduate studies (Weidman et al., 2001). Professional communities include other practitioners who serve as mentors and role models (Weidman et al., 2001). Professional associations also set the standards for professional practice. The primary outcome of the socialization process is to transition novice professional practitioners into seasoned and competent members of the workforce (Weidman et al., 2001). However, novice practitioners represent a successful professional socialization process and emphasize the importance of developing a professional identity in student affairs.

Socialization Into the Field of Student Affairs

The transition from graduate school to their first professional position can be a struggle for new professionals (Dinise-Halter, 2017). The process of socialization helps new professionals understand the standards with a field that develops skills through structured experiences at through an institution (Liddell et al., 2014). Socialization also occurs through interactions with peers and others who encourage role expectations (Liddell et al., 2014). Research has been conducted to understand the socialization process of new professionals and what hiring organizations and graduate school programs can do to improve their socialization tactics (Lombardi & Mather, 2016).

An outcome of professional socialization is a professional identity. Socialization for student affairs professionals often occurs early on since there is not a standard form of preparation or entry into the field (Hirschy et al., 2015). To foster professional identity, student affairs professionals need to engage in meaningful experiences that influence commitment, such as involvement in professional organizations, having a mentor, participating in synergistic supervision, and involvement in professional associations (Pittman & Foubert, 2016). Through involvement in professional associations, student affairs professionals can broaden their support networks, acquire, and hone skills and knowledge, obtain ongoing educational and professional support throughout the career span, and establish a formal connection to the profession (Hirschy et al., 2015).

Lombardi and Mather (2016) sought to understand the anticipatory socialization experiences of new professionals in student affairs. Through purposeful sampling, Lombardi and Mather (2016) collected journal entries from 14 new professionals during three phases—before beginning their job search, during the interview stage, after accepting positions, and prior to

joining a new organization. This study found that there are distinctions between the public and private aspects of socialization (Lombardi & Mather, 2016). Some of the public aspects new professionals experienced were navigating socialization activities including job placement conference participation, networking, interviews, and receiving job offers (Lombardi & Mather, 2016). Private aspects included managing meaningful relationships while going through the anticipatory socialization process—includes finding fit, making sense of advice they receive, developing confidence in themselves, and comparing self to others (Lombardi & Mather, 2016).

Hirschy et al. (2015) sought to understand early career professionals' perspectives of their socialization process in the field of student affairs as it relates to their professional identify development through quantitative research. The results of the study indicated that commitment to the field, values congruence, and an increase in specialization advanced knowledge and skills required to develop professional identity (Hirschy et al., 2015). Additionally, the study found that age, master's program curriculum and experiential opportunities, and collegial involvement in professional associations were all significant influences related to professional identity (Hirschy et al., 2015).

In student affairs, graduate preparation programs are the birthplace in the development of professional identity (Liddell et al., 2014). Liddell et al. (2014) examined how the socialization process helped student affairs professionals develop a professional identity through participation in graduate preparation programs in student affairs rather than entering the field from another profession. The researchers developed the Survey of Early Career Socialization in Student Affairs, based on Weidman et al.'s (2001) core elements of socialization. Participants consisted of 148 members of ACPA who had full-time enrollment in a master's program and who held paid graduate assistantships. The findings of this study indicated that out-of-class experiences

and a collaborative peer culture were far more influential in the development of professional identity than other sources of learning, including the curriculum itself. However, the findings also indicated that in-class experiences promoted self-evaluation and reflective practices (Liddell et al., 2014). Liddell et al. (2014) also revealed a continuity across functional areas and institutions. A significant percentage of the participants took their first professional job in a functional area that they worked as a graduate student and participants often returned to work at institutions similar in size and type as their undergraduate institution (Liddell et al., 2014).

There is a delicate transition from graduate preparation programs to the student affairs profession. The transition from graduate school to their first professional position can be a struggle for new professionals (Dinise-Halter, 2017). Dinise-Halter (2017) explored the challenges and support needs of new professionals as they transition into the field of student affairs. The purpose of the study was to offer more supportive ideas toward the retention of new professionals and to amplify the voices of new professionals (Dinise-Halter, 2017). Through a qualitative study, Dinise-Halter (2017) interviewed and collected photo journals from four new professionals who were within one to 3 years postgraduate degree completion. The findings of the study identified three main themes around challenges for new professionals in student affairs: (a) lack of stability, (b) fear of complacency, and (c) pushed outside comfort zone (Dinise-Halter, 2017). Additionally, three themes emerged around support: surrounding community, resources, and mentorship (Dinise-Halter, 2017).

History of Student Affairs as a Profession

The student affairs profession was forged during the early years of higher education (Long, 2012). As higher education evolved and diversified in response to political, economic, and social contexts, so did the approach to addressing students' academic and personal needs

(Dungy & Gordon, 2011). Student affairs is known for its ability to anticipate change and the impact it may have on student success (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). Schwartz and Lazarus Stewart (2017) categorized the growth of student affairs into seven eras: (a) era of paternalism (1636–1850), (b) era of college life (1850–1913), (c) student personnel movement (1914–1945), (d) golden age of higher education (1945–1970), (e) era of consumerism (1970–1995), (f) era of student learning (1994–2010), and (g) the era of professionalism (2010–the present).

Era of Paternalism

During the era of paternalism (1636–1850), only a small number of students and faculty members were allowed to easily facilitate the student experience (Coomes & Gerda, 2016). The student body looked much like that of the faculty—male, white, and Christian (Coomes & Gerda, 2016; Schwartz & Lazarus Stewart, 2017). During this time, the student conduct and moral developments were the responsibility of college faculty and presidents (Thelin & Gasman, 2017). Colleges and universities were empowered to act *in loco parentis*, or in place of parents (Thelin & Gasman, 2017). College leadership's approach to ensuring the social, moral, and intellectual aspects of student life were in line with religious denominations and influenced the interactions between students and faculty (Schwartz & Lazarus Stewart, 2017). However, there was an emergence of tensions between church and state, the effects of the Revolutionary War and the religious environment, began to shift the college environment causing division within student populations and against the administration (Dungy & Gordon, 2011).

Era of College Life

The genesis of higher education transformed over the year from only white, Christian men, and the era of college life (1850–1913) was preceded by the enrollment of women and people of color with the creation of land grant institutions funded by the Morrill Acts of 1862

and 1890 (Schwartz & Lazarus Stewart, 2017). Additionally, with the growth in faculty and administration responsibility, the need for student personnel administrators responsible for student well-being, discipline, housing, and student activities became necessary (Long, 2012). The first deans of men and women were appointed to oversee student life as it changed with the social and political nature of the surrounding environment (Dungy & Gordon, 2011).

The First Deans of Women

One of the first women to officially be named as a dean of women was Alice Freeman Palmer in 1892 by the University of Chicago (Hevel, 2016; Schwartz & Lazarus Stewart, 2017). With the rise of enrollment among women, women leaders were called upon to serve as deans responding to women's issues and advocating for their needs. Deans of women were also called to protect women students from social errors that could ruin their reputation based on societal norms of that period. However, by the 1890s, deans of women were given roles to meet the academic needs of women that were beyond the social expectations (Coomes & Gerda, 2016).

The First Deans of Men

Around the same time that the University of Chicago named Alice Freeman Palmer as the first dean of women, Harvard University was redesigning organizational structures to think about the student experience. In 1890, Harvard's president, Charles Eliot, decided to create a position, titled dean of the college, to manage student relations when appointing LeBaron Russel Briggs in the inaugural position (Coomes & Gerda, 2016). Briggs' roll was to alleviate the burden of their college president's as they experienced growth in undergraduate enrollment among young men (Schwartz & Lazarus Stewart, 2017). The success of the dean of women, and how they advocated for women students, and the work of Briggs, encouraged many institutions to formalize the role of the dean of men (Coomes & Gerda, 2016).

The Student Personnel Movement

By the twentieth century, the student personnel movement was adopted, and institutions focused on educating the whole student (Long, 2012). The student personnel movement established an image of student affairs as educators who were concerned with the holistic development of students, not solely academics (Reason & Broido, 2017). The role of the dean became one of the most influential and important roles on college campuses. Though, it was during this growth that student affairs as a profession began to take shape, introducing the 1937 Student Personnel Point of View (Long, 2012). The SPPV identified the nature and extent of student personnel work and how to approach their work (Muller et al., 2018). This transition initiated a new wave of standardizing higher education administration (Muller et al., 2018).

Golden Age of Higher Education

Higher education continued to experience rapid growth in enrollment with the passage of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, which granted returning veterans financial assistance to attend college (Thelin & Gasman, 2017). Although this act was created as a postwar effort to help servicemen transition to civilian life, no one at that time expected this act to be as successful as it was (Thelin, 2019). By the fall of 1945, 88,000 veterans applied to participate in this program to attend institutions for higher learning (Thelin, 2019). This change prompted higher education institutions to think of ways to meet the needs of a new type of enrollee—the nontraditional student (Thelin, 2019)—and to also examine the quality of their facilities, admissions procedures, recruitment, and student life (Thelin, 2019). It became necessary to employ student personnel administrators who would provide services to students such as financial aid, housing, food services, health services, and disability services while still disciplining students, as necessary (Dungy & Gordon, 2011).

The Era of Consumerism

With the new revisions to support services and enrollment then became a different supply and demand. The era of consumerism was crucial in validating students' rights and needs, especially among underrepresented student populations (Schwartz & Lazarus Stewart, 2017). Laws such as Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Family Educational Rights and Privacy, and amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1965—which created the Pell Grant and affirmative action—centered on higher education's social responsibilities to its students (Schwartz & Lazarus Stewart, 2017). Although these laws impacted the entire landscape of higher education, student affairs continued to expand as student affairs professionals were required to provide even more services to an increasingly diverse student body (Schwartz & Lazarus Stewart, 2017). During the 1960s and 1970s, an emergence of student development theories began to influence the field of student affairs (Muller et al., 2018). The development of theories helped guide and provide the foundation for student affairs practice such as student learning (Jones & Abes, 2017).

The Era of Student Learning

During the era of student learning, student affairs professionals began to establish themselves as educational partners with faculty members in promoting student learning (Schwartz & Lazarus Stewart, 2017). Student affairs began to align itself with the origins of higher education—to educate students (Schwartz & Lazarus Stewart, 2017). Core documents, such as The Student Learning Imperative, reported the importance of student affairs' role in student learning and development and emphasize the importance of partnering with other campus members to enhance holistic learning (Hirschy & Wilson, 2017).

The era of student learning also deals with addressing the needs of diverse students with unique needs and changes brought on by the advancement of technology (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). At the beginning of the 21st century with the growth of technology, many institutions of higher education began to offer distance learning education courses (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). Online students challenged the way student affairs professionals met needs and engaged with students in their academic pursuits (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). The diverse student population of contemporary student life includes differences in age, gender, race, sexual orientation, and other characteristics (Hamrick & Klein, 2015).

The Era of Professionalism

Today there is an emphasis on increased accountability and the need for specific learning outcomes (Hamrick & Klein, 2015). Additionally, student affairs professionals must continue working closely and effectively with faculty to create curriculum with specific learning outcomes that can be accomplished through collaboration (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). Further, student affairs professionals should pursue designing intentional learning outcomes and participating in institution-wide conversations on student learning (Hamrick & Klein, 2015). Student learning outcomes must guide student affairs professionals as the allocation of resources are often tied to the results of their efforts (Hamrick & Klein, 2015). This directly correlates to the importance of student affairs competencies created by NASPA and ACPA. However, this era of professionalism is rooted in exploring VPH competency.

The values, philosophy, and history of the field of student affairs "ensures that our present and future practices are informed by an understanding of the profession's history, philosophy, and values" (ACPA/NASPA, 2015, p. 12). The history of student affairs provides context and perspective into the contemporary problems professionals, at all levels, are

encountering (Hevel, 2016). Kimball and Ryder (2014) suggested that the present can be seen differently through the lens of the past. When we understand the historical background of the field, it helps us make sense of our work as student affairs professionals (Kimball & Ryder, 2014).

History of Professional Competencies

The development of professional competencies transformed the field of student affairs from an occupation to a profession (Armino & Ortiz, 2017; Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017). Though, the development of competencies began among the early deans of students. One of the first guiding documents to identify the nature and extent of student personnel work was the 1937 Student Personnel Point of View (SPPV), written at a conference held by the American Council on Education (ACE; Hirschy & Wilson, 2017). ACE established a committee to continue examining the specific practices in accomplishing the goals of higher education among an ever-changing educational climate (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). A second version of the SPPV was released in 1949 which detailed how student affairs professionals should approach their functional areas and introduced the idea of assessing their work through evaluations (Muller et al., 2018). The 1949 SPPV advocated for broader educational goals, to include democracy, international understanding, and using higher education to solve social problems (Dungy & Gordon, 2011).

Competency Based Movement

With the growth of student affairs as a profession, the profession debated what skills and attitudes were needed for working within higher education (Eaton, 2016). The long-standing debate and evidence led to a competency-based movement in student affairs (Eaton, 2016). The competency-based movement occurred as a response to larger societal, political, and historical

pressures. Since the 1980s, the competency-based movement has made its way through the

educational system in the United States. The competency-based movement occurred as a

response to larger societal, political, and historical pressures (Eaton, 2016). Moreover, evidence

of the failure to prepare graduates for the work force and the out-of-control spending, increased

criticism of higher education from the media, government, and general public (Eaton, 2016).

Therefore, the competency-based movement gained traction for its budget efficiency and

responsible approach. Additionally, the competency-based movement placed value on students'

demonstration of acquired knowledge and skills that was measured through assessments,

awarding badges, or credits based on experience (Eaton, 2016).

In 1979, the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) was

established and helped reach a consensus that consolidated the debate (Eaton, 2016). The

purpose of CAS was to provide standards and ethical guidelines that would inform the work on

graduate preparation programs and guide practitioners in the self-assessment of programs

(Dungy & Gordon, 2011; Eaton, 2016). CAS developed five guiding principles, which included

(a) students and their institutions; (b) diversity and multiculturalism; (c) organization; (d)

leadership; and (e) and human resources, health-engendering environments, and ethical

considerations. Overall, CAS continues to evaluate and revise standards as the profession

advances, and the fundamental principles underlying the CAS standards guide future discussions

(Dungy & Gordon, 2011).

ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies

As higher education grew and became more diverse, additional competencies were

needed for student affairs professionals (Muller et al., 2018). At the turn of the 21st century, the

increased push for accountability led to the 2007 ACPA professional competencies publication

(Muller et al., 2018). In 2009, ACPA joined forces with NASPA to analyze the competencies and recommend updates. The final document was released in August 2015 and included 10 professional competencies: (1) Personal and Ethical Foundations; (2) Values, Philosophy, and History; (3) Assessment, Evaluation, and Research; (4) Law, Policy, and Governance; (5) Organizational and Human Resources; (6) Leadership; (7) Social Justice and Inclusion; (8) Student Learning and Development; (9) Technology; and (10) Advising and Supporting (ACPA/NASPA, 2015). The ACPA and NASPA professional competencies further elaborated and codified the professional competencies that sought to guide and prepare student affairs educators during graduate preparation programs and when entering the profession (Eaton, 2016). For each of the 10 professional competencies, there are three levels to assess personal outcomes which are foundational, intermediate, and advanced (Muller et al., 2018). Below are the definitions of each competency:

11. Personal and Ethical Foundations (PEF)—Addresses the knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to making ethical decisions based on one's integrity, wellness, and growth (ACPA/NASPA, 2015, p. 12).

12. Values, Philosophy, and History (VPH): "Focuses on applying the history, philosophy, and values to current practice in student affairs" (ACPA/NASPA, 2015, p. 12).

13. Assessment, Evaluation, and Research (AER): "Addresses the knowledge and skills to create, conduct, critique, and utilize methods of assessment, evaluation, and research" (ACPA/NASPA, 2015, p. 12).

14. Law, Policy, and Governance (LPG): "Involves applying legal constructs, compliance/policy issues, and understanding governance structures to professional practice" (ACPA/NASPA, 2015, p. 13).

15. Organizational and Human Resources (OHR): "Focuses on knowledge and skills necessary to manage institutional human capital, financial, and physical resources" (ACPA/NASPA, 2015, p. 13).

16. Leadership (LEAD): "Involves the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to engage in the leadership process regardless of positional authority" (ACPA/NASPA, 2015, p. 13).

17. Social Justice and Inclusion (SJI): "Focuses on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to provide an equitable environment for all to learn and grow" (ACPA/NASPA, 2015, p. 14).

18. Student Learning and Development (SLD): "Involves the knowledge and skills to apply student learning theory to inform practice" (ACPA/NASPA, 2015, p. 14).

19. Technology (TECH): "Involves the use of digital tools and resources to improve student learning, as well as for the student affairs professional" (ACPA/NASPA, 2015, p. 15).

20. Advising and Supporting (A/S): "Addresses the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to provide counseling, advising support, and guidance to students" (ACPA/NASPA, 2015, p. 15).

Attainment of Competencies Among Student Affairs Professionals

It is common that people enter the field of student affairs from a variety of backgrounds. Therefore, establishing competencies helps promote consistency among practitioners and aids in the socialization of those entering the field from backgrounds other than higher education administration (O'Brien, 2018). Professional competencies help set the guidelines for professional knowledge, expected skills sets, and help student affairs practitioners identify areas of growth (Munsch & Cortez, 2014). Research supports the usefulness and effectiveness of competencies in the field of student affairs (Bolitzer et al., 2019); however, Muller et al.'s (2018)

research gained a better understanding of what demographics, preprofessional experiences, and educational experiences influence the development of the NASPA/ACPA competencies among student affairs professionals.

Muller et al.'s (2018) quantitative research approach included a 58-question survey with questions related to participants employment status, preprofessional experiences, educational experiences, demographic characteristics, and attainment of the 10 NASPA/ACPA professional competencies. The results of the study found that white participants reported significantly higher attainment in two of the 10 competencies. Men reported significantly higher attainment in four of the 10 competencies. However, people of color, people with a disability, or lesbian or gay/homosexual identities reported significantly higher attainment on the social justice competency. Those who did not live on campus as undergraduates or were affiliated with a sorority or fraternity reported having higher attainment of three of the 10 competencies. Those with master's degrees reported higher attainment in four of the 10 competencies. Those with doctorate degrees reported higher attainment of all competencies except for technology (Muller et al., 2018).

Gansemer-Topf and Ryder (2017) sought to understand what skills were needed to be effective in an entry-level student affairs position. They interviewed 17 mid-level, full-time professionals in student affairs who supervised at least one entry-level professional. Gansemer-Topf and Ryder (2017) found that communication, social justice and inclusion, understanding of institutional culture and politics, interest in working with and knowledge of students, advising, and assessment were identified as skills necessary for entry-level professionals to be impactful They also wanted to know how these skills needed for entry-level work aligned with the ACPA/NASPA competencies. Most of the skills identified by participants aligned with the

professional competencies but other competencies were neglected. Participants admitted that skills in budgeting and financial management were important, but few entry-level professionals had opportunities to gain those skills before taking their first professional position (Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017).

Dickerson et al. (2011) compared the expectations of senior student affairs officers and graduate preparation faculty for entry-level professional proficiencies in 51 discrete competency areas. Dickerson et al. (2011) collected data from 275 Senior Student Affairs Officers and 125 faculty members. The participants completed a survey in which they rated 21 knowledge competencies, 20 skills competencies, and 10 disposition competencies. The findings indicated that for 49 of the 51 competencies, no significant differences between how faculty and SSAOs rated them as desired. The findings further indicated the importance and usefulness of competencies among scholars and practitioners. Some of the gaps found in the study between faculty and SSAP perceptions were in the degree of possession by new professionals. Faculty rated new professionals higher for knowledge of organizational structures in student affairs, knowledge of group dynamics, skills in advising students, and willingness to collaborate with other university members. However, SSAOs rated new professionals higher in their ability to interpret research; indicating a difference in standards set on students between faculty and SSAOs (Dickerson et al., 2011).

Conversely, O'Brien (2018) explored the intersection of the ACPA and NASPA competencies based on participants' years of experience among student affairs professionals. O'Brien (2018) examined the years of professional experience that influence the intersection of the ACPA/NASPA competencies. For new professionals, O'Brien (2018) found that leadership, personal ethical foundations, law, policy, and governance, and organizational and human

resources were frequently observed in their study. New professionals intentionally seek to establish themselves as professionals and effective managers who can successfully navigate institutional hierarchies (O'Brien, 2018).

New Professionals

New professionals in student affairs are defined as having zero to 5 years of full-time professional experience yet make up 20% of the student affairs workforce (Marshall et al., 2016; Pittman & Foubert, 2016). Even though they are new to the field of student affairs, new professionals are expected to display certain skills and competencies as they work with students (Codding, 2019). However, many new professionals experience limited formalized training and/or coursework in their graduate school program. For example, Shelton and Yao (2019) found that most participants in their study shared that there was limited formalized coursework related to working with international students. Similarly, Boss et al. (2018) found that new professionals "encounter challenges navigating social justice in their practice, and many lack the knowledge of sufficient theories to account for the complexities of student experience, development, and identity" (p. 382).

Graduate Programs and Their Effectiveness

Student affairs graduate preparation programs shape the norms and values of future professionals (Hirschy & Wilson, 2017; Lombardi & Mather, 2016), are the birthplace for the development of a professional identity (Liddell et al., 2014), and provide the initial introduction and assimilation functions (Armino & Ortiz, 2017). Kuk and Cuyjet (2009) explained that graduate preparation programs introduce student affairs professionals to academic curricula, opportunities for professional practice, and purposeful interactions with others. Master's level student affairs preparation programs are often guided by CAS standards which "promotes

common professional standards and encourages self-regulation among student affairs professionals responsible for programs and services" (Hirschy & Wilson, 2017, p. 87).

The role of ACPA/NASPA competencies not only define the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that student affairs professionals should possess, but they can also be used to design curriculum in graduate preparation programs (Hirschy & Wilson, 2017; Liddell et al., 2014). While many graduate programs utilize the ACPA/NASPA professional competencies, Cooper et al. (2016) found competency gaps in the graduate school curriculum and what they are expected to know upon entering the student affairs profession. Cooper et al. (2016) analyzed 136 preparation program websites and found disparities in supervision, strategic planning, institutional and campus politics, and technological competencies (Cooper et al., 2016).

Part of developing a professional identity in graduate preparation programs is learning the values of the field (Bureau, 2018). There is little research that has been conducted to analyze the perceptions of student affairs values among graduate students and new professionals (Bureau, 2018). Through narrative inquiry, Bureau (2018) collected data from 17 participants from three different student affairs graduate programs. The data revealed shared values, which include diversity and inclusion, collaboration, learning, student centeredness, change and responsiveness, ethics, holistic student development, intentionality, community, service, professional development, caring, and responsibility.

Ardoin et al. (2019) sought to understand SSAO perceptions of graduate preparation programs and their ability to ill equip early career professionals for career success. Two primary areas of strength identified in the study were foundational knowledge bases and creating opportunities to put the concepts learned through experiential learning and building relationships into practice. Ardoin et al.'s (2019) study also found the SSAO thought graduate preparation

programs were teaching theory, diversity and equity, and assessment as well as view these as important to new professionals' work in student affairs. On the other hand, participants in the study perceived noticeable gaps in professional preparation among new professionals. Gaps included "additional knowledge bases in the curriculum, grappling with ideal versus reality in higher education and student affairs work, and considering graduate students' holistic development needs" (Ardoin et al., 2019, p. 384). Lastly, SSAO's found gaps in "administrative knowledge and skills including governance and decision making, budget and finance, and supervision and management" which is important in understanding the broader perspective of how budgets are allocated and the role they can potentially play in managing budgets (Ardoin et al., 2019, p. 387).

Dunn et al. (2021) explored how and where preprofessional student affairs practitioners learned and gained leadership educator competencies by getting the perspective of subject matter experts including student affairs graduate program faculty members and experienced student affairs practitioners. By using the Delphi technique, a group comprising of 13 student affairs practitioners was established as Group A, while Group B consisted of 15 higher education/student affairs faculty. The findings of this study revealed the significant value both groups place on the graduate assistantship as the place where student affairs practitioners should learn and practice leadership educator competencies. Additionally, coursework focusing on leadership education was found to be a considerable place to learn and practice leadership education competencies.

Competencies and Graduate Preparation Programs

Many institutions of higher education offer postsecondary and student affairs graduate preparation programs that typically align with the competencies established by ACPA/NASPA

(Nguyen et al., 2019). However, Eaton (2016) argued that there is an overapplication of these competencies in programs. While the competency-based educational models are an affordable alternative to traditional education and are efficient in enhancing the workforce, Eaton (2016) questioned whether the specification of professional competencies introduces a checkbox mentality.

Supervised Practice Experiences

Supervised practices have been widely used in professional education for a variety of programs, including student affairs (Young, 2019). Supervised practice in student affairs is often referred to as graduate assistantship, internships, practicums, and fieldwork (Young, 2019). The purpose of supervised practice is to provide an outlet where students can apply theory to practice and to bring practical experiences back into the classroom where they can make sense of the concepts being taught (Young, 2019). Young (2019) found that not only did graduate students in their study feel well prepared for professional practice because of their master's program, but they also gained substantial confidence in preparation for professional practice through their supervised practical experiences. Participants felt confidence in applying theory, leadership, and career preparation in class and practical experience (Young, 2019). Young (2019) stressed that in-classroom and supervised practice experiences must be meaningfully and connected to an outcome—creating a learning laboratory within the professional preparation program.

Professional Associations

Professional associations are a place where student affairs practitioners can further learn about working in the field, how to navigate and connect to the field, and encourage student affairs administrators to remain in the field (Duran & Allen, 2020). Through structured opportunities to share knowledge, professional associations encourage the scholarship of practice

(Hirschy & Wilson, 2017). Duran and Allen (2020) sought to understand how professional associations influence the socialization of student affairs graduate students and new professionals. This qualitative study collected data from 15 individuals using semistructured interviews. Duran and Allen (2020) focused on the messages received by practitioners from associations about what it means to be a successful professional and how professional associations influence the formative stage of a practitioner's career. Duran and Allen (2020) found several key concepts from the data about how professional associations influence new professionals as they socialize into the field. The first concept revolved around how new professionals were introduced to associations. Duran and Allen (2020) found that participants had undergraduate and graduate mentors who influenced their participation with professional associations, indicating the importance of faculty, staff, and mentors who help new professionals navigate the field. The second concept demonstrated how professional associations influenced participants to network and build professional relationships. Networking and building relationships encouraged participants to develop a professional community that would be a resource for their careers and could lead to job or leadership opportunities in student affairs. Finally, Duran and Allen (2020) found that lifelong learning was important to being a student affairs practitioner among the participants. Professional associations encourage professionals to stay on top of trends and best practices by facilitating workshops, conferences, and webinars (Duran & Allen, 2020).

Workplace Environments

The workplace is a venue in which new professionals are usually socialized and learn about working in student affairs (Duran & Allen). However, research indicates that student affairs professionals leave because of work environment issues (Davis & Cooper, 2017; Marshall

et al., 2016). For new professionals, the transition from graduate school to professional life can be negative and lead to attrition (Marshall et al., 2016). Marshall et al. (2016) found that many professionals in student affairs experience burnout due to long hours, extreme work obligations, fatigue, and frustrations that lead to attrition. On the other hand, supportive work environments included supportive and challenging supervisors, recognition of work-life balance, and wellness which resulted in an affective attachment among student affairs professionals (Marshall et al., 2016; Naifeh & Kearney, 2020).

Wellness and Well-Being

Helping professions, such as the field of student affairs, experience stress, lower levels of wellness, and high attrition rates (Naifeh & Kearney, 2020). New professionals are often on the frontlines of responding to critical student incidents and complex issues (Chessman, 2021). Dealing with critical student incidents and complex issues with little to no training or support can negatively impact a professional's job satisfaction and can lead to professionals leaving the field with a decreased well-being (Chessman, 2021). Chessman (2021) sought to understand the well-being of student affairs professionals and identified the factors that best predict student affairs professionals' well-being. The result of the study confirmed that the quality of work environments was an essential part of wellness (Chessman, 2021). Additionally, the results found that professionals' ability to have dialogue about goals, engage in professional development and training, and develop a relationship with their supervisors had a significant relationship to well-being (Chessman, 2021).

Professional Development Opportunities

Higher education is constantly changing with the increasing demands for accountability, transparency, efficiency, productivity, and quality (Adams-Manning et al., 2020). The need for

training and development is crucial to produce staff who are prepared, nurtured, supported, and challenged. Institutions and supervisors can create a positive working environment by encouraging staff participation in training and development activities (Adams-Manning et al., 2020). Adams-Manning et al. (2020) found that for staff to voluntarily participate in training and development, the organization must create a structure that promotes and encourages participation in professional development. Moreover, Adams-Manning et al. (2020) discovered that extrinsic motivation significantly predicted participation in training and development. Offering salary increases, promotion, supervisor praise, or other incentives can help cultivate an organizational culture where professional development is the norm (Adams-Manning et al., 2020).

Synergistic Supervision

Effective supervision leads to new professionals' job satisfaction (Marshall et al., 2016). Winston and Creamer (1997) found that synergistic supervision was the best approach to supervision, and that it best conceptualized how to work with student affairs professionals within higher education. Synergistic supervision is defined as the process of cooperation by both the supervisor and the supervisee to ensure that organizational goals are met while also meeting personal and professional goals (Davis & Cooper, 2017). Synergistic supervision is most effective when working with new professionals who often struggle with role ambiguity, role conflict, stress, and burnout. By providing positive feedback, highlighting early successes, and modeling effective supervision behavior, supervisors can increase job satisfaction among new professionals and decrease attrition from the profession. Moreover, there is a significant positive correlation with the professional identity of student affairs professionals and synergistic supervision (Pittman & Foubert, 2016).

Summary

  The review of literature provides context for this study and sets the foundation for the growth of student affairs as a profession, ACPA and NASPA competencies, and graduate preparation programs. Through the work of early student affairs professionals and student affairs associations, we now have standards to guide new and seasoned professionals. The review of literature also speaks to the body of research that focused on the effectiveness of graduate programs and competency development among new professionals. The next chapter will provide key information regarding this present study's methodology including the research approach, design, participants, data collection, and data analysis.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Research indicates that there are certain competencies needed for student affairs work (Ardoin et al., 2019; Bureau, 2018; Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017; Muller et al., 2018; O'Brien, 2018). However, little is known about the perception of new professionals in student affairs regarding how competencies help them in their socialization process. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perception of 10 new professionals who have zero to 5 years of full-time professional experience in student affairs. This study looked at new professionals employed at 2- and 4-year colleges and universities—serving in entry level position in student life and/or student development services departments—and how the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) professional competency Values, Philosophy and History (VPH) helped socialize them to field of student affairs. Chapter 2 indicated how few studies exploring the perception of new student affairs professionals were conducted regarding their attainment of the NASPA and ACPA professional competencies and the application of those competencies. The research question that guided this study, was:

RQ1. How does the ACPA/NASPA professional competencies of VPH help new professionals as they are socialized into their professional roles in student affairs?

Chapter 2 also indicated that the new professional's voice is often left out of research. Therefore, to gain a better understanding of the lived experiences of new professionals, phenomenological inquiry was used to examine new professionals' perception on how student affairs values, philosophy, and history helped socialize them to student affairs. Chapter 3 describes the methodological approach used in answering the research questions posed in this

study. The population sample, data collection, and analysis described in detail below offer further insight into the perspectives of new student affairs professionals.

Research Design

Qualitative research is the process of analyzing human experience to reconfigure and form into new meaning (Qutoshi, 2018; Saldana & Omasta, 2018). A qualitative research methodology is a way of approaching and conducting inquiry (Saldana & Omasta, 2018. This study used a phenomenological design as phenomenology provides a method for defining a researcher's position, broadening how we see the world around us, and to study lived experiences at a deeper level (Qutoshi, 2018).

Qutoshi (2018) explained that phenomenological research studies follow four characteristics. First, researchers collect verbal data by straightforward descriptions, interviews, or a combination of the two. During interviews, questions are open-ended, giving the participant an opportunity to express their viewpoints. Second, the researcher reviews the entire raw data without beginning any analysis. Third, researchers search for meaning by dividing the data into meaning units. Fourth, researchers organize and express the data into disciplinary language. The final step involves synthesizing the data and communicating it to the scholarly community.

Phenomenology was appropriate for this study because the focus was to explore the experiences and perceptions of recent graduates of student affairs preparation programs (Leavy, 2017). By utilizing the phenomenology approach, I focused on human consciousness to understand social reality and how one thinks about a lived experience (Leavy, 2017). Qualitative approaches to research, such as phenomenology, allow researchers to "build a robust understanding of the topic, unpacking the meanings people ascribe to their lives—to activities, situations, circumstances, people, and objects" (Leavy, 2017, p. 124).

Population and Sample

Saldana and Omasta (2018) explained that a research study must consider the perspective of those whose who would be most valuable to learn from, how to select participants, and how many participants should be interviewed to get a clear understanding of the experiences being analyzed. Participants in this study had to meet the following criterion: (a) be employed in a full-time role in student affairs or student development services department at an institution of higher education and (b) who are still within their first 5 years serving in a student affairs role. To draw a sample, convenience sampling was utilized. Convenience sampling is a strategy that involves selecting participants based on easy access (Saldana & Omasta, 2018).

Participants of this study were initially identified by a current faculty member of the New Professionals Institute (NPI), co-sponsored by NASPA Region III and the Southern Association for College Student Affairs (SACSA), who served as the initial contact person for recruiting participants (see Appendix B and C). Potential participants were sent an email from the NPI faculty member with the initial invitation and was given the researcher's contact information to reach out to the researcher if interested. A standard qualitative research approach favors smaller sample sizes (Leavy, 2017). Although there were no set rules and guidelines for sample size, Levy (2017) suggested that qualitative studies typically have no more than 15 participants. For the present study, 10 past participants of NPI showed interest and were interviewed. Participants for this study represented 2- and 4-year colleges and universities who were within in their first 5 years serving in their professional roles to generate diverse perspectives.

Ethical Considerations

There are three basic ethical principles that govern research, identified in the Belmont Report, which included respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (Saldana & Omasta, 2018).

Respect for persons requires researchers to treat participants as autonomous agents, providing participants with all the necessary information needed to make an informed decision and with the understanding that their participation is voluntary (Saldana & Omasta, 2018). Beneficence requires a "do not harm" mindset for researchers regardless of the methodology. Beneficence minimizes any possibly risk and maximizes possible benefits. Lastly, justice considers who benefits from the study and who is burdened by it as well as understanding the need for a balance of these factors (Saldana & Omasta, 2018).

Permission from Abilene Christian University's Institutional Review Board (see Appendix E) was obtained prior to commencing data collection for the present study. Each participant received an informed consent document (see Appendix A) which explained the risks and benefits of participation and detailed the voluntary nature of their participation. The informed consent also ensured that participants were guaranteed confidentiality and their right to stop their participation at any time. Participants were offered time to ask any questions or seek clarification.

Since this study included human subjects, I altered the names of each participant to maintain confidentiality. However, I informed participants that their years in the field of student affairs and institutional type were not altered to provide a snapshot of the participant demographics and identity correlations between experiences. Participants were notified that their responses were not altered in any way and were presented accurately to maintain the integrity and validity of the study.

Materials/Instrument

The informed consent provided a description of what participation in the study entailed including expectations, risks, and benefits, and how confidentiality will be maintained (Leavy,

2017). Participants received an informed consent PDF through e-mail which required their

signatures. Leavy (2017) recommended the following sections be included in the informed

consent: the title of the project, contact information for the principal investigator, the purpose of

the study, and the intended outcomes of the study. Additionally, the informed consent listed the

procedures and what participation entails. This section provided information on the interview

process, the time commitment that was required for their participation, and what could occur

during the interview. The next section of the document included information regarding

confidentiality. Participants were notified that they were assigned a pseudonym to keep

information shared anonymous and confidential. Lastly, the informed consent shared information

regarding participants' rights and compensation. Participants were notified of the voluntary

nature of the study and could withdraw at any time during the study. Participants were notified

that there were no possible risks or compensation for their participation in the study. However,

participants were told participating would be an opportunity to have their voice heard and

hopefully feel empowered by sharing their lived experiences.

Data Collection

The interview was the best method for the problem of practice because it was a method of

qualitative inquiry used to garner data regarding a participant's personal experiences, knowledge

or understanding, attitudes, values, and beliefs regarding the research topic (Saldana & Omasta,

2018). During interviews, researchers use a certain skill set such as understanding appropriate

interview protocols (see Appendix D), maintaining the conversation, and continuously analyzing

responses to determine what question should be asked next (Saldana & Omasta, 2018).

Implementing this interview protocol guides and keeps the researcher on the right track through

each step of the interview process. Saldana and Omasta (2018) explained that interviews should

be conducted through the lens of storytelling with a beginning, middle, and end. Interview protocols allow the researcher to set up the interview in such a way that a story will come out of it. Therefore, the interview protocol was set up to get a story about each participant's overall development of the NASPA and ACPA competencies and how they are used in the field. In order to do this, the questions asked then enabled the participants to speak comfortably, with honesty, and freely about the topics (Saldana & Omasta, 2018).

The best interview method for my study was an in-depth, semistructured interview; there was one interview per participant. This approach encouraged participants to use their own language and provide detailed responses. Interviews were in a one-on-one setting and were conducted over videoconferences. Since participants represented colleges and universities from all over the United States, in-person interviews were not possible. Interviews were arranged based on participants' availability and were scheduled through the Abilene Christian University email account, along with calendar invites to conduct interviews over video conference on Google Meet.

Data Analysis

After conducting interviews, the coding process was utilized to analyze data. Coding is a process that requires thinking and reflecting on the nature of the data collected (Saldana & Omasta, 2018). Coding allows the researcher to conceptualize the data collected and assign a word or phrase to segments of data (Leavy, 2017). In qualitative data analysis, a researcher develops meaning from the data and detects patterns, categorizes data, make assertions, build theory, and other analytical processes (Saldana & Omasta, 2018). The present study utilized In Vivo coding, which better allows the participants' exact language to generate codes (Leavy, 2017).

Methods for Establishing Trustworthiness

Establishing trust in research means that the reader has a level of confidence in the quality and reliability of the work (Locke et al., 2010). Readers must know that the research was performed competently and reported honestly (Locke et al., 2010). According to Locke et al. (2010), the following warning signals can indicate problems in establishing trust: technical aspects of method, sampling, replication, conflicts, carelessness, and errors of interpretation. In qualitative research, building trust and developing rapport are key ethical issues (Leavy, 2017). Researchers can build trust among participants by showing an active interest in their stories, using appropriate body language and facial expressions, demonstrating care for both the research project and participants' lived experiences (Leavy, 2017). To establish trustworthiness, I will take the time to get to know each participant. Additionally, participants were notified that their names were altered to maintain confidentiality and that their interview files were filed in a password locked computer, that I personally owned.

Limitations

The limitations of a study outline the potential weaknesses that are out of the researcher's control (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). Limitations can also affect the research design, results, and ultimately, the conclusions of a study. Therefore, it is crucial for limitations to be clearly acknowledged (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). Outlining limitations ensures transparency, as well as leaving the reader thinking of possible improvements to the research, sparking readers' curiosity in the topic (Ross & Zaidi, 2019). On the other hand, delimitations are the boundaries or limits that are set by the researcher themselves (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018).

The limitation identified in the present study was the researchers' role as a new mid-level professional in the field of student affairs. Additionally, the researcher was in their sixth year

working in the field of student affairs which was one year over the new professional definition. There may be some inherent biases held by the researcher in terms of their experiences with the NASPA and ACPA competencies. Additionally, all the participants of this study hold graduate degrees in student affairs. There are many professionals in student affairs roles who do not hold a graduate degree. Therefore, this study left out the voices of professionals within student affairs who experienced certain points of socialization. It would be informative to student affairs-based associations to learn more about the perceptions of professionals in the field who do not hold master's degrees, learn competencies, yet are socialized to meet the expectations of the student affairs VPH. Another key voice that was excluded from this study were new professionals who entered the profession at a community college setting. All participants from this study worked at 4-year institutions, and there may be differences in the socialization process between different institution types.

Summary

This study explored the perception of 10 new professionals who had zero to 5 years of full-time professional experience in the field of student affairs. This study looked at new professionals who were employed at 2- and 4-year colleges and universities, serving in entry level positions in student life and/or student development services departments, on how the ACPA/NASPA professional competency Values, Philosophy and History helped socialize new professionals to the field of student affairs. Through purposeful sampling, this study obtained crucial data that informed student affairs practice and development of future professionals. Additionally, the findings of this study in the next section further inform student affairs graduate preparation programs on how to best prepare new professionals. In Chapter 4, the results of the study will be explained in detail.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perception of 10 new professionals who had zero to 5 years of full-time professional experience in the field of student affairs on how the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) professional competencies of Values, Philosophy and History (VPH) help new professionals as they transition into their roles and are socialized into the field of student affairs. This study looked at new professionals who were employed at 2- and 4-year colleges and universities, serving in entry level positions in student life and/or student development services departments. Chapter 3 outlined the methodological approach used in answering the following research question:

RQ1. How does the ACPA/NASPA professional competencies of VPH help new professionals as they are socialized into their professional roles in student affairs?

The current chapter presents the findings from this research study. Additionally, this chapter provides the process of thematic analysis and the relevant participant information. Using an in-depth, semistructured interview approach, 10 new student affairs professionals were interviewed. Three major findings emerged: (a) for new student affairs professionals, the socialization process begins well before beginning a graduate program; (b) the role of student affairs supervisors, mentors, and student affairs staff is crucial to the successful transition and socialization of new student affairs professionals; and (c) the importance of authenticity and wellness for the successful socialization and transition into the field of student affairs. The VPH professional competencies were learned and internalized throughout participants' involvement and interactions with student affairs departments and their staff. Among the three key findings, three themes emerged. The following sections outline the thematic analysis which led to these

themes: (a) their socialization impacted their approach to serving students, (b) their socialization influenced their perception of the importance of experiential learning, and (c) their socialization emphasized that while higher education may not have been built with diverse populations in mind, they are finding ways to serve diverse students. The following sections outline the thematic analysis which led to the three findings and three themes.

Thematic Analysis

The following section presents the thematic analysis of the findings from this study, which gave new student affairs professionals an opportunity to express their viewpoints and share their lived experiences of transitioning into their professional roles. Ten new professionals in the field of student affairs were interviewed. From these interviews, five themes emerged that described the perception of new student affairs professionals regarding their transition into the field and how the values, philosophy, and history of the field helped them in that transition. This section outlines the process for analyzing the interview data and how themes emerged.

After conducting the interviews, the recordings were uploaded to Transcribe.me services. The interview recordings were uploaded to transcribe.me and it took about a week to receive the transcripts. Transcribe.me provided formatted, proofed, and high-quality transcripts using advanced computer-generated speech recognition algorithms. The transcripts were carefully reviewed to ensure that the written dialogue in the transcripts matched the interview recordings. This was done by listening to each recording while simultaneously reading the transcripts and making corrections along the way, if necessary. The transcripts were reviewed three times and key words and phrases from each participant were highlighted and labeled as codes. The highlighted words and phrases became the initial codes. Next, the codes were input into a table and grouped based on what was similar across each interview. The table included four columns

with the following sections: (a) the interview question, (b) the actual response from each participant, (c) the coding type, and (d) the actual code. Once all the responses from each participant for each question were added to the table, In vivo coding was used to focusing on the participants' exact language (Leavy, 2017). Finally, the five themes that emerged from the coding process were identified by clustering the initial codes from each response (Saldana & Omasta, 2018).

Introduction of Participants

This study sought the perspectives of new professionals in the field of student affairs. The researcher initially utilized connections with the New Professionals Institute (NPI) sponsored by NASPA and the Southern Association for College Student Affairs (SACSA) to identify participants. NPI is a week-long professional development opportunity for new professionals where they engage in learning, networking, professional and personal development (SACSA, n.d.). Institute topics include career and life planning, diversity and inclusion, professional standards, and emerging research and theories (SACSA, n.d.). Additional connections with student affairs graduate program faculty members were used to identify participants. The criteria for this study require participants to (a) be employed in a full-time role in student affairs or student development services department at an institution of higher education and (b) who are still within their first 5 years serving in a student affairs role. Based on the criteria set for this study, 10 participants self-identified as new professionals, meaning they had zero to 5 years of full-time professional experience in the field of student affairs (see Table 1). Additionally, each participant completed a master's degree in education or other relevant fields. Their functional area experiences within student affairs varies from orientation, student involvement, housing, equity and inclusion, and veteran services.

Table 1

Participant Information

Pseudonym	Student affairs area	Years of experience
Meghan	First Year Experience	1.5
Julia	Orientation/Student Activities	1.5
Harriet	Residence Life	2
Robert	Military & Veteran Services	3.5
Sophia	Diversity Programs & Services	4
Audrey	Student Involvement/Programming Council	1
Caroline	Recreation and Outdoor	3
Sam	Inclusion, Equity, & Diversity	0–1
Emma	Student Governance	0–1
Olivia	Career Services	1

Results

The results of this study add to the limited body of literature written to understand the experiences and needs of new student affairs professionals and how their socialization into the field can be improved. The findings yielded results that answered the following guiding research question:

RQ1. How does the ACPA/NASPA professional competency VPH help new professionals as they are socialized into their professional roles in student affairs?

The interviews included an opportunity for each participant to introduce themselves with their professional and educational background. The next three questions asked how the values, philosophy, and history of student affairs helped them as they were socialized into their professional roles. Through the collection, organization, and analysis of the interview data, three key findings emerged: (a) for new student affairs professionals, the socialization process begins well before beginning a graduate program; (b) the role of student affairs supervisors, mentors, and student affairs staff is crucial to the successful transition and socialization of new student affairs professionals; and (c) the importance of authenticity and wellness for the successful socialization and transition into the field of student affairs. Through these key findings, four themes arose: (a) their socialization impacted their approach to serving students, (b) their socialization prioritized the importance of wellbeing and work/life balance, (c) their socialization influenced their perception of the importance of experiential learning, and (d) their socialization emphasized that while higher education may not have been built with diverse populations in mind, they are finding ways to serve diverse students.

Socialization Begins Before Graduate Program

During the interviews, several shared themes became apparent. Among these, none was more prevalent as the fact that new professionals typically gained their initial insights into the field while students during their undergraduate experiences as either a student leader or as a student employee. Their interactions with student affairs mentors and staff played a pivotal role in their introduction to their field. Many of the participants recounted forming personal connections with these student affairs mentors and supervisors, who significantly influenced their decision to pursue a career in student affairs while they were still undergraduates.

Meghan was heavily involved during their undergraduate studies and shared, "eventually my dean of students looked at me and said, 'this is a career. You could do this with your life.'" Sophia had a similar experience with her hall director as an undergraduate student and stated, "my hall director was a very influential person in my life and would say to me, 'you know, this is a job, you could do this as a job.'" Sam was also extremely involved as an undergraduate student and recalled, "I remember one day I told my Assistant Director, 'I think I want to do what you do,' then they introduced me to the field of student affairs." Olivia elaborated,

> During my senior year of undergraduate, I worked in residence life. My supervisor told me one day, "if you want to stay in higher education, you can work in student affairs and you can get your master's in student Affairs." He was a mentor to me, so he began to share his experiences in his master's program and in working in student affairs.

Through active involvement in student life and observations of student affairs staff, the participants of this study began to internalize the values and general role expectations associated with the profession. Each participant shared the exact moment where they recognized that they could envision themselves becoming a student affair professional.

VPH as Framework for Work

New professionals shared that the field is not the highest paying or glamorous job, but they have a deep understanding of the impact they can make on students' lives. Many new professionals chose the field of student affairs because they wanted to help people and because they cared. Julia said,

> I realized that I wanted to make an impact on the lives of students and help walk them through life. I care about students and want to see them grow and develop. And that's

why I got into this field. I think it's really neat to work in a field where people clearly

aren't doing it for the money, but they do it because they genuinely care.

The VPH competency helped them understand the significance of their role in higher education.

Having an understanding of the values, philosophy, and history provides the "why" for the work

they do. This understanding helped keep them engaged in the work during times of stress and

uncertainty. Additionally, understanding the values, philosophy, and history helped retain new

professionals when they are tempted to look for higher paying jobs outside of higher education.

Emma explained her experience with the temptation to leave the field.

> There are days in student affairs that I would consider "bad days" at work, and there are
>
> moments where I am envious of my friends who make more money than me and truly
>
> have a 9 to 5 job. But then I think about the greater good or the bigger picture, and the
>
> reason why I am here. To me, I am serving the next generation, and helping them with
>
> whatever their life goal is, and whatever their dreams and desires are.

Understanding the values, philosophies, and history of the field helped provide a framework for

how to do the work. Caroline said, "thinking about the values, philosophies, and history of our

field helps me understand why we do the things we do, and they provide a framework on how to

do them. They help ground our work." Some of those approaches included seeing students as

holistic students, being student centered, and creating a sense of belonging.

New professionals perceived their approach as being holistic. They understood that

higher education was more than academics. Caroline realized that she did not teach students

geometry, but she said, "I'm having the impact of teaching them life skills, like how to write a

resume." Emma shares how she understands holistic student development.

The anchor of our work is that we see the whole student. We understand that students are not just coming to our institutions just for the academic side. Our role came to be because we see students as a whole person, and so, that is the whole reason why we have an entire student affairs side of higher education.

Audrey added,

Our field is valuable because we help develop students, empowering them to be leaders. We provide experiences and resources that are outside of the classroom that matter and are meaningful. Something that really grounds our work is to care about students holistically.

The holistic approach student affairs professionals use adds value to institutions of higher education. Julia said,

Knowing that student affairs was founded on serving the whole student requires a lot of empathy, and I think that student affairs tends to project more empathy than other departments. The holistic care of students brings a lot of personhood to the institution.

Holistic student development is the cornerstone of the approach new professionals take upon entering the field.

Importance of the Role of Supervisors, Mentors, and Staff

The influence of student affairs mentors, supervisors, and staff impacted new professionals' transitions into the field. Often, new professionals learned the values of the field from student affairs staff who they interact with, and that interaction helped shape the way new professionals viewed the importance of the field. Emma recalled that "as an undergraduate student, I got to form relationships with student affairs administrators. I understood their values.

I wanted to be just like them, and I wanted to do the work they did." Julia had a similar experience and shared,

> In between my junior and senior year, I kind of realized that what my supervisor was doing was a full-time job, and she was a really important mentor in my life. I realized that I wanted to do what they did and make an impact on students and help walk them through life.

The role of their supervisors helped shape the way they understood the field and the work. Meghan mentioned,

> During my graduate assistantship, I got to work in residence life. I had a phenomenal boss who really shaped the way I saw this career and how there is so much to higher education. They taught me how to lead students who were different from me.

> Harriet said, "My supervisors in my undergraduate job in Residence Life taught me the importance of creating positive environments for students to learn. They also taught me to really consider my 'why' for choosing the field of student affairs." Sophia said, "My academic advisors during my undergraduate career looked like they really enjoyed working with students and that it seemed like the work they did didn't feel like work." The student affairs professionals who were making a difference in the participants' lives, served as role models and provided a framework for how they could one day be student affairs professionals.

Being student centered is a value new professionals internalized, and it impacts how they workday in and day out with students. Participants discussed how new professionals are often more student-facing than middle managers and administrators. Being student-centered helped them create closer bonds with students by utilizing a student-centered approach where they are making themselves available to listen to students and to point them to resources that will help

them be successful in and out of the classroom. Meghan mentioned a powerful example of this dynamic. She said,

> One thing about being student facing is that we naturally have better relationships with students because we get to see and talk with them daily, interact with them, and come to care for them. This allows for them to feel like they can come talk to me. I think as a new professional I see more issues on campus, but also get to hear directly from students about solutions.

New professionals believed that being student-centered means being able to meet students where they are and putting them at the center of everything they do. Sam shared, "we're here for students and so we should meet them where they are and support them." New professionals' approach to their work included being available and accessible to students and their needs. Sophia mentioned, "When I think about the field of student affairs, I think about being student-centered. Some days are better than others. But, being there for students, being someone they can talk to, is something that is very important to me." Julia said,

> Something that I've learned from my supervisor is the importance of putting the student first and doing what is best for students. Not doing what is convenient, or doing what has always been done, but what is in the best interest of the students. This sort of student first mentality really influences what I do.

Student centeredness is a value new professionals understand because they experienced student affairs staff who went above and beyond to help them feel included and that they were learning from them.

Experiential Learning More Impactful Than Classroom Learning

While classroom learning was crucial for new professionals, many participants shared how their assistantships and on-the-job training were more valuable than in-the-classroom experiences. Additionally, some of the participants shared how their supervisors and mentors were instrumental in learning values, philosophies, and history. An assistantship can be a formal part of many graduate programs in student affairs. New professionals enjoyed this part of the graduate process and were shaped by the experience. Emma shared,

I really don't lean so much on student affairs philosophies because I learned so much more from my assistantship. I have found that the experiences I had during my assistantship were a lot more useful than the academic side. I learned so much more from my supervisors and students affairs mentors and the direct experience I had with students than I ever did in the classroom.

Meghan said, "During my assistantship I got to work with a phenomenal boss who really shaped the way I saw this career. And so, having a boss like that showed me that there is so much more to higher education."

For new professionals it was important to see theory put into practice for it to be meaningful. Julia admitted,

I don't think in formal theories when I'm working with students. I'm not pulling up Schlossberg throughout the day as I'm working with students. But I have adopted philosophies from our dean of students that have helped me. I think new professionals can read through a theory and see how it happens every day. But we don't bring the theories into our everyday work.

Audrey added,

When it comes to theories and philosophies of our field, I have been able to see how

sometimes they help make sense of what is happening with our students or a group of

students. It's not always obvious, but from time to time I do see when a theory or

philosophy is happening.

The participants of this study thought back to their graduate experience, and the most memorable

is the assistantship and any hands-on learning opportunities to work directly with students. It was

important for new professionals to observe.

An important approach to their work is creating a sense of belonging. Not only is this

important among the students they serve but also among staff as well. Caroline shared how her

vice president imparts this approach to their staff. Caroline said, "It's important that us as staff

feel belonging as well. Our vice president over student affairs invites staff who are new to town

or maybe don't have family around to come to her house for thanksgiving." New professionals

value belonging and helping students feel connected to their campus and to others. Caroline

continued to say,

So much of what we do is getting students to belong, helping them feel connected to

campus and to other people. This has an impact on how I try to reach out and connect

with students, making sure that I'm really listening to them and connecting them with

others and with resources.

New professionals perceived their role as the ones to help create opportunities for students to

embrace a sense of belonging. Olivia said,

I like creating a village and helping students feel like they are not alone. That is the kind

of community that comes with college. One thing that drew me to the field of student

affairs is that we can make an impact on students' lives. Knowing that I can help students

who might not have the support and feel like they must navigate it on their own, is

essentially why I do what I do. I like being able to help develop students throughout their

journeys.

Creating a sense of belonging brings a sense of fulfillment and creating spaces where students

feel safe and accepted is important to new professionals.

VPH Instilling Authenticity and Wellbeing

One of the values that new professionals cared about was being able to enjoy the work

they do. In order to enjoy the work they do, they needed positive work environments where they

could be their authentic selves and have fun. Sophia said, "I like that everyday looks different

and that the work is fun. We want our students to enjoy what they do. So, if we don't have that

sense, how can we expect our students to find it as well?" New professionals believed that they

had to model being their authentic selves to the students they serve. Robert said,

I think us being able to be ourselves while being there for students is important because

students will look at us as role models in a sense and being our authentic selves will

encourage them to be their authentic selves.

The participants of this study prioritize wellbeing and authenticity and feel that they need to be

the ones to model it for their students.

VPH Structures Work-Life Balance

New professionals wanted to leave the workplace at the end of the day and feel like they

had a life outside of work. While they loved the work they did every day, they understood that it

was important to exist outside of work to be better versions of themselves. Sam shared how

work-life balance looked with two different versions. Sam said,

I think maintaining a work life balance is important as a new professional. I think that was something that really impressed upon me during my assistantship. I had two different supervisors in two different years. One of the supervisors I could see the toll that working too much was having on their life. On the other hand, the other supervisor was very conscious about work life balance. They really taught me that it is important for me to be a person first for myself, so that I can be there for students.

Work life balance was incorporated into how they approached their work. Meghan said,

Balance has been something that I've learned and have incorporated into my philosophy of higher education and student affairs. The idea of how much time is put into this career that is so time consuming and can take up so much of my mind and how much should I give to other areas of my life. I am definitely finding a balance and remembering that I have to exist outside of work. I see people who eat, sleep, and breathe their job, and ultimately, it's not healthy for them and their relationships outside of work, but it's also not healthy for our students to see that.

New professionals realized that, as new professionals, they felt like they had to work harder to "prove themselves" and it seemed like the expectation of them to overwork was higher simply because they were new and had a lot to prove. Sam explained,

One idea that is prevalent, which is kind of toxic, is the idea that "oh, yea! Of course the GA is going to work over their prescribed hours. Of course, you're the new kid, so of course you're going to be working hard." I think I'm finding the balance between those mindsets. Yes, I do need to prove myself. I do need to be the person that I presented in the interview. But then also, I have to be mindful of my longevity.

New professionals were mindful of how they demonstrated work life balance and wellness to their students. They guided students to make decisions about what they would get involved in by assessing their workload. Sophia shared her approach,

> I encourage our students to get involved and to have self-authorship, but I also need to reel them back. I encourage them to not do too many things. You have to be able to say no to some things, too. And so, I also talk to them about, ok, let's list all the things you are involved in. I ask them, "do you have time to do schoolwork? Do you actually have time to do some self-care or just sit down and do nothing?"

Robert does the same thing with his students and uses an approach of assessing students' capacity. Robert shared his approach as,

> What I often do is have them make a list of the things they value and live by (i.e., family, social, spiritual, etc.). Then, based on their schedule and how much time they give to each value they get a reality check. I really help them come to their own conclusions about what they value by being honest with themselves.

The participants of this study show what it looks like to prioritize well-being and authenticity. They practice well-being and authenticity every day in the way they guide and develop students and feel a sense of responsibility to teach students how to prioritize well-being and authenticity as well.

VPH Emphasizes Serving Diverse Students

Several participants in the study shared how student affairs as a field has come a long way in terms of how we serve diverse students. Emma noted,

> Looking at the diversity of student affairs and how over the years, as higher education has become more diverse, student affairs has kind of had to change along with how we serve our students and become more equitable and create a sense of belonging for all students.

Robert points out the growth of diversity of programming and services for all students and the creation of safe spaces. However, Sam believed the field has not come far enough, "while this history excites me, it also makes me feel disappointed because there are times where I feel like we still haven't come all that far." Oftentimes, Sam encountered folks within higher education who share racist ideas, or an event will happen that will make him wonder, 'are we still doing that?' Many participants referenced how the system of higher education was originally not intended for people of color. Meghan shared, "I know that having a higher education was originally intended and only allowed for white people from upper class backgrounds." Meghan works at a predominantly white institution and shares how interesting it is to walk through their administrative buildings and see old pictures and memorabilia from the institution's past and realize that there are few people of color represented in their halls. Their institution is in the South but near a city with a large black population. While their institution has done a lot of work to increase diversity, Meghan believes,

> So much of what we do is still centered on that same population. I think the way we program, the way we educate, and the way we admit and allow students to enter our institution has to change. Because if we are going to admit students from diverse backgrounds, we have to be willing to serve and engage them.

For Sam it was important to attend a historically Black college and university (HBCU) as it helped him feel empowered. Sam explained,

My HBCU was built because higher education at the time was not a place that was

welcoming to black people. As an HBCU alumni I feel empowered knowing our history.

I think knowing that history makes me feel empowered. Like, every day that I am

navigating higher education is like an act of subversion because I'm not supposed to have

a degree but here, I am with two degrees, and now I'm helping other students get degrees

as well and helping them be successful.

Understanding this history helped new professionals solidify their inclusive approach to their

work. Robert came to realize that "the values, philosophies, and theories of student affairs is

never one size fits all." Olivia shared her approach,

The history of student affairs helps me in my professional role because it has taught me to

be inclusive with everything that I do and to always think of the needs of others and how

I can help them be successful.

For Sam, it was important to approach their work by validating students and their

existence. Meghan believed that the approach to serving diverse populations had to change, "if

we care about students then we have to make those changes and do what we need to do to shift

and to reprogram because students are our priority." As an example of this approach, Meghan

had the opportunity to work with a group of LGBTQIA+ students in her graduate school

experience. This experience came as a bit of culture shock for Meghan, but it was an experience

that she was excited about and wanted to learn a lot. Meghan added,

It was interesting to see how the history of this particular college was specifically created

to train Christian pastors and held a very traditional theological view, had welcomed and

finally allowed these students to have a place on campus. This goes back to the idea that

if we are going to admit these students, then we have to be willing to serve them, educate

them, and to engage them.

This experience impacted the way Meghan approaches their work. Meghan felt that this

experience allowed them to have a different perspective and said, "I see my students better,

especially students who are often on the margins here, and I get to be a safe space for that." The

participants in this study believe that higher education needs to change in order to better serve

students and to create safe space for them to learn and develop.

Summary

This study explored the perception of 10 new professionals who had zero to 5 years of

full-time professional experience in student affairs. This study looked at new professionals who

were employed at 2- and 4-year colleges and universities, serving in entry level position in

student life and/or student development services departments, on how the ACPA/NASPA

professional competency Values, Philosophy, and History helped socialize new professionals to

student affairs. The present chapter shared a careful analysis of data and reported on the five

themes that emerged which shared the perception of new professionals and their transitions into

the student affairs profession. Chapter 5 discusses the results and connects the findings of the

study to Weidman et al.'s (2001) theoretical framework of socialization.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This study examined 10 new professionals who were employed at 2- and 4-year colleges and universities, serving in entry level position in student life and/or student development services departments, on how the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) professional competency Values, Philosophy, and History (VPH) aided the socialization of new professionals. The research question guiding this study was:

RQ1. How does the ACPA/NASPA professional competency Values, Philosophy, and History help new professionals as they are socialized into their professional roles in student affairs?

The previous chapter introduced the participants and a brief overview of their professional experience and outlined the findings of this study. The present chapter discusses the findings of this study as it relates to the Weidman et al.'s (2001) theoretical framework of socialization and other relevant scholarly literature. Additionally, the present chapter highlights the implications of the study and offers recommendations for future research as it relates to the transition of new professionals into the student affairs profession. Finally, the limitations of this study will conclude this chapter.

Revisiting the Problem of Practice

The literature review outlined the body of research that exists regarding the development of competencies among student affairs professionals (Ardoin et al., 2019; Bureau, 2018; Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017; Muller et al., 2018; O'Brien, 2018), but little is known about new professionals entering the field and their perceptions on their socialization process. New professionals in the field of student affairs make up 20% of the student affairs workforce

(Pittman & Foubert, 2016; Renn & Hodges, 2007; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008), yet attrition rates among new professionals are between 50 and 60% (Naifeh & Kearney, 2020). Research on the perspective of new professionals is vital to their retention and overall attrition rates in student affairs (Duran & Allen, 2020).

Revisiting the Methodological Approach

The purpose of this study was to explore the perception of new professionals in the field of student affairs on how the VPH professional competency helped them transition into their first professional role. Using phenomenological inquiry in this study allowed me to gain a better understanding of the lived experience of new professionals. Phenomenology permitted me to focus on human consciousness and understand the social reality behind one's thoughts about their lived experiences (Leavy, 2017).

Revisiting the Theoretical Framework and Relevant Scholarly Literature

In Chapter 2, I provided an overview of the literature related to the socialization process of new professionals in student affairs and the factors that contributed to competency development. To provide the context and framework for the study, I introduced the Weidman et al. (2001) graduate socialization framework. I also presented critical research on the factors that contribute to competency development among new professionals in student affairs.

Revisiting the Weidman, Twale, and Stein Graduate Socialization Framework

Students in student affairs graduate programs are an example of the socialization process. The Weidman et al. (2001) socialization framework was developed to understand the socialization of graduate and professional students. The core and center of the framework (see Figure 1) include the institutional culture of the university (e.g., academic programs, peer climate, and faculty climate), the socialization processes (e.g., interaction, integration, and

learning), and the core elements of socialization (e.g., knowledge acquisition, investment, and involvement; Twale et al., 2016). Around the core of the framework revolves the interactive components of the graduate school socialization process: (a) entering students (e.g., preparation, background, and predispositions), (b) professional communities (e.g., practitioners, and associations), (c) personal communities (e.g., family, friends, and employers), and (d) novice professional practitioners (Twale et al., 2016). Intertwined in the framework were the interactive stages of socialization: anticipatory, formal, informal, and personal.

Figure 1

The Weidman-Twale-Stein Framework
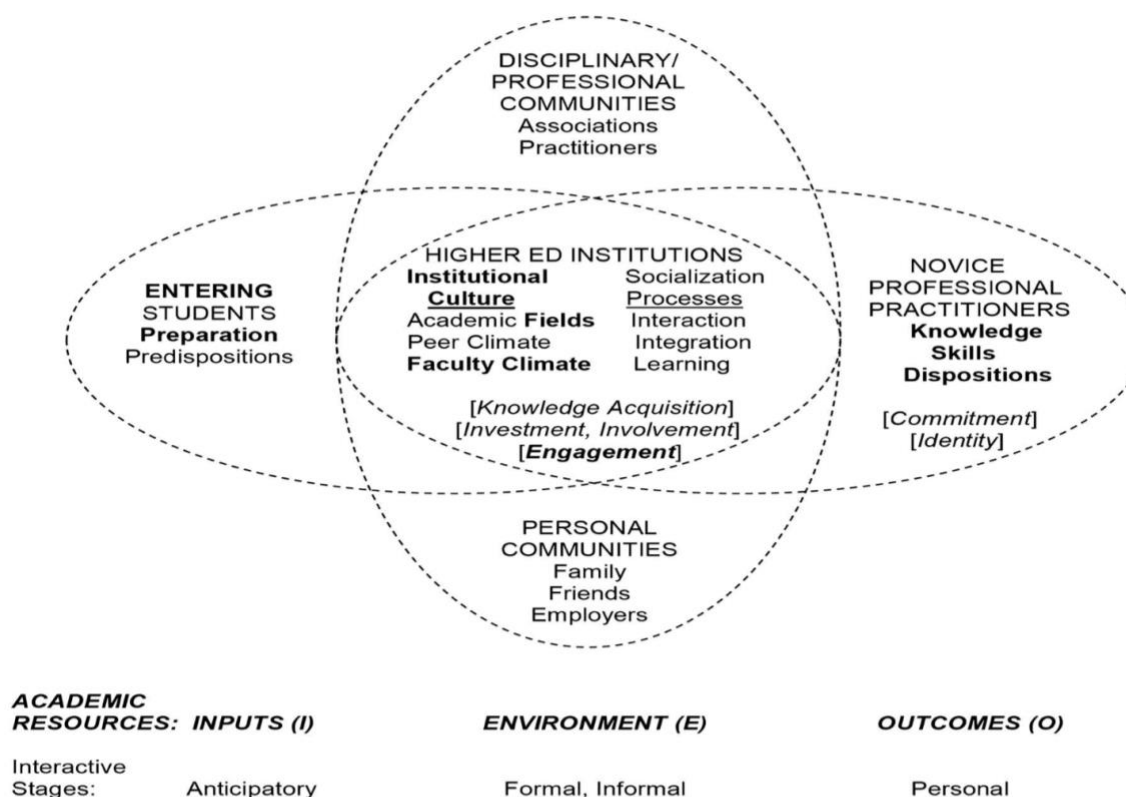
* Bolded elements in the framework differ from Weidman, et al., 2001.

The Weidman, Twale, and Stein socialization framework (see Figure 1) depicts the nonlinear and complex nature of professional socialization (Weidman et al., 2001). While one of the outcomes of this process was to form a professional identity, it was important to understand that the development of a professional identity and commitment to the field was continuous and developmental (Weidman et al., 2001).

Revisiting Competency Development and Socialization Into the Field of Student Affairs

In Chapter 2, I outlined the three factors found in the literature which contributed to competency development and the socialization of new professionals in the field of student affairs. The review of the literature revealed that through graduate preparation programs, professional associations, and workplace environments that new professionals were better prepared to take on new roles in student affairs.

Graduate Programs

Graduate programs are the birthplace for the development of professional identity and where new professionals learn the values of the field (Liddell et al., 2014). Many institutions utilize the professional competencies developed by ACPA/NASPA in their curriculum, which further defines the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that student affairs professionals should have upon entering the field (Hirschy & Wilson, 2017; Liddell et al., 2014). Through graduate assistantship/internship programs during the graduate program, new professionals can apply theory to practice and can gain confidence in their professional practice (Young, 2019).

Professional Associations

Professional associations can have an influence on new professionals' formative stages in their career. Professional associations encourage knowledge sharing, the scholarship of practice, and connecting to the field of student affairs (Duran & Allen, 2020). Duran and Allen (2020)

found that professional associations help new professionals build professional relationships with mentors who can help them navigate the field. Additionally, being connected to professional associations help new professionals stay abreast of trends and best practices through workshops, conferences, and webinars (Duran & Allen, 2020).

Workplace Environments

The workplace is a crucial part of new professionals' socialization into the field of student affairs (Duran & Allen, 2020). Marshall et al. (2016) found that new professionals can experience positive or negative transitions. Negative transitions can lead to attrition due to burnout, long hours, extreme work obligations, fatigue, and frustration (Marshall et al., 2016). Positive transitions include supportive supervisors who challenge new professionals, and the recognition of the need for work-life balance (Marshall et al., 2016) and wellness (Naifeh & Kearney, 2020). Supervisors who use a synergistic supervision style increase job satisfaction among new professionals by providing a quality work environment (Pittman & Foubert, 2016). A quality work environment means being able to have open dialogue about goals, engage in professional development and training, and develop relationships with supervisors and have a significant impact on well-being (Chessman, 2021). Allowing new professionals to engage in professional development is crucial for new professionals to feel trained, nurtured, supported, and challenged in the workplace (Adams-Manning et al., 2020).

Discussion

In the discussion of the results, I connected findings from this study to Weidman et al.'s (2001) socialization framework and to the factors that contributed to the attainment of professional competencies. Specifically, this section demonstrated how the values, philosophy,

and history (VPH) of student affairs impact new professionals' transition into their professional roles and are socialized into the higher education workforce.

Manifestation of the Socialization Framework

After coding the interview data and identifying the overall themes for this study, there was a clear connection between the Weidman et al. (2001) graduate socialization framework and the participants' transition into the field of student affairs. This section focuses on the elements of the framework and how they relate to the participants' perception of their transition into the field of student affairs. I outline the manifestation of the graduate socialization process and stages for each participant. Additionally, I connect the manifestation of the framework with the factors that contribute to socialization.

Anticipatory and Entering Stages

All my participants were introduced to the field of student affairs in similar ways. Near the time they were getting ready to graduate with their undergraduate degree, they learned about the field of student affairs through their student affairs supervisor and/or mentor and were influenced by their work. They became interested in student affairs work because they truly enjoyed their experiences interacting with and serving students. Olivia shared that as a student employee she was able to "interact with students daily. [She] really loved [her] on campus job in housing and it definitely enhanced [her] undergraduate experience." They enjoyed their work experience in student affairs offices where they chose to explore their careers.

They initially learned about graduate preparation programs and decided to apply and begin their journey into the field. This part of the story depicts the anticipatory and entering stage of the framework. Entering represented the predisposition, beliefs, and values prior to academic preparation (Twale et al., 2016). Entering also depicted the anticipatory stage where participants

came with stereotypes and preconceived notions about what it meant to work in the field (Bureau, 2018). Sophia described their preconceived notion about student affairs work as always "enjoying working with students." She further detailed, "It feels as though it's not really work because I would enjoy it so much." As new professionals were in the anticipatory stage and were entering a graduate program, they brought these preconceived notions and values that they cared about when interacting with people. Julia entered her program knowing that she wanted to be a part of the field but to also "have an impact on students and walk them through life." Harriet shared that she felt she could "create a better environment for our students."

Many new professionals were involved students during their undergraduate career. Being involved on campus added to their preconceived notions, beliefs, and values about the field. Robert served as the student government president which allowed him to understand the policies and procedures that govern a university. He learned the importance of advocating on behalf of students. Emma shared that it was her role as a student leader on campus that allowed her to see student affairs administrators as "people" and held values that they would like to replicate. Meghan credited her involvement with the student affairs office when discovering her calling to the field of student affairs and how that calling helped shape the way she viewed the importance of putting students at the "core of why we do this job and why we exist." For Caroline, getting involved in the university recreation center was where she found a sense of family and belonging and that is the primary reason why she chose a master's degree that allowed her to continue that work. As an involved student, Audrey realized that what she was experiencing as a student was a profession and wanted to make that same kind of impact on students. Similarly, Sam was very influenced by the student affairs staff during her undergraduate career. She became very close with them and wanted to be just like them, which led them to enroll in a master's program. All

participants, except one of the participants, obtained a Master of Education degree with a focus on student affairs. In the informal stage, students interact with peers and others who will further enforce role expectations (Liddell et al., 2014).

Formal, Informal, and Personal Stages

During the formal stage and informal stages of socialization, new professionals engage with faculty, peers, and other professionals who will further enforce role expectations through casual dialogue and partnerships (Liddell et al., 2014). During the personal stage, new professionals begin to integrate their personal needs with professional roles such as committing to personal and professional development (Weidman et al., 2001).

Meghan. Meghan's formal and informal stage began through her journey through her master's program in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Going through a master's program during a global pandemic really affected her experience, however, she noted that "higher education adapted." The program she participated in was a hybrid model between coursework and a graduate assistantship. Her coursework was instrumental in learning the history and theory of the profession and solidified the idea that "if we are going to admit diverse students into our institutions, then we should also be willing to serve them because they deserve the same level of education." Coursework also empowered Meghan to view herself as an educator who served students holistically. Meghan shared,

> Many people look at college as a time to go to class and learn the specific academic side of the word. I say that college is much more for your development. The opportunity we have to help students learn, grow, and develop into functioning human beings is huge. And if we allow for learning to only happen in the classroom, then we are missing a large focus area.

The assistantship taught her "how to lead students who were different from me" and introduced her to seasoned practitioners who were her supervisors and mentors. Meghan explained how she came from a Southern Baptist culture and experienced culture shock by attending graduate school experience and working with LGBTQ+ students. However, she mentioned "it was a culture shock that I was excited about and welcome[d] to learn more about." One of Meghan's professors in graduate school taught her that "students are people " and it served as a daily reminder that "people are it in the student affairs profession. They are the core of what we do and why we exist." Meghan's graduate school experience both in class and outside of the classroom shaped the way she works with students today.

Meghan admitted how rigorous and difficult the master's program was for her. Meghan showed her investment and involvement in the field by continuing in her master's program, and it helped her remember why she chose to pursue this field—the students. It was her investment and involvement in the socialization process that solidified her commitment to the field. Additionally, one of the factors that contributed to her persistence in the field was observing her peers and other student affairs staff and how they worked tirelessly to serve students. Meghan went on to say,

> One of the values of the field I took away from my graduate school experience was that in our field people are it. They're the core of why we do this job and why we exist. And so, seeing professionals that went ahead of me and that love people well, that is the value that I see most important.

Meghan values student centeredness and her commitment to the field is tied to her belief that students are at the core of everything she does in student affairs.

Julia. Julia began her graduate program during the COVID-19 pandemic, which impacted the format of her program. Her coursework was mostly online. When she got to do her assistantship, the program had to be done online so she did not encounter as many hands-on interactions with students. Her assistantship was not in a student affairs office, which was different for her, but it gave her the opportunity to work with faculty and understand the academic side of higher education.

Most of her formal and informal socialization processes came from her first role in the field of student affairs. Julia currently works at the institution where she received her undergraduate degree and where she was a heavily involved student. Transitioning into her first role after graduate school was a smooth transition because she understood the campus culture and felt that she had a solid foundation in that regard, as opposed to some of her classmates from graduate school who took a little longer to feel settled in their role. One of the most influential practitioners was the dean of student affairs at her institution. They taught Julia the importance of putting students first and doing what was in the best interest of students. Julia added, "she taught me about not always doing what is convenient, it's not doing what we've always done, but it's what is in the best interest of students." Through her first year as a practitioner, Julia learned,

> Student affairs as a whole is more inclusive or open minded than the rest of the
> institution, it is a challenge to try and convince higher administration why something
> matters. As a new professional, we come out of graduate school with a save the world
> mentality. You think, "I've seen all the problems, I've studied them, and now I'm going
> to come into the field and I'm going to be the solution." And then you slowly realize that
> you can't do it all. There are a lot of systems and politics.

Her relationship with her graduate school cohort continues, and she often reaches out to them to discuss how they were able to put theory into practice and shares how her relationship with her colleagues shaped how she uses theory in her practice. She added, "My graduate school friends and I talk about how we don't think in formal theories when working with students. It is not realistic that we have the time to do that in student affairs," and oftentimes they look at those working around them and adopt their philosophies. A philosophy that Julia adopted came from her Dean of Students, who shared doing things in groups of three; meaning, try a new program out first, evaluate it the next year, and then in the third year decide if it's working or not. Julia's peers further enforced the values of the field,

> My colleagues are always like, I care about students and I want to see them grow and develop. And that's why I got into this field, which I think is really neat to work in a place where people clearly aren't doing it for the money, but they do it because they genuinely care.

The role of her peers was instrumental in her socialization and in forming her professional identity. As she spent time with her peers, she also learned from them and was able to have conversations about how they practice caring for students.

Harriet. Harriet attended graduate school at the same institution where she obtained her undergraduate degree and is where she currently works. Harriet began her professional career while an undergraduate student working in residence life. It was her experience working with other professionals that influenced her to pursue a career in student affairs. Her previous supervisor at the time "made [her] want to create a better environment for [her] students." Her current supervisor challenged Harriet to "look deeper into [herself] and explore why [she was] here and why [she was] interested in serving students in the capacity" that she does in her role.

Harriet's current supervisor provided guidance and support as she navigated the field of student affairs and became a mentor to her. Harriet's graduate school experience taught her a lot about theories. She explains,

> Although there are a lot of theories that are tried and true, I think they all have pros and cons. What I learned from my graduate school experience is to continue being open to learning. I came out of graduate school feeling like I want to learn, change things, I want to modify and innovate things.

> Harriet found herself continuously reading books to help her grow, and said, "I believe

the more information that you have, the more wholesome an individual you can be." Harriet also believes her graduate school experience helped her better understand why student affairs programs exist, our roles and responsibilities, and how to communicate the need for our student affairs departments to others. She also enjoyed learning about the history of student affairs and finance. Learning about how the institution receives money and how funds are allocated gave her a better understanding of how to utilize budgets for students.

As a new professional, Harriet struggled to align her personal and religious beliefs and values with some of the more progressive beliefs and values of higher education. She expressed how "higher education institutions, as a whole, are pretty progressive, and I do worry that students may not feel as comfortable coming to me or that I might offend someone." Harriet reconciled this by focusing on being a resource to students and knowing when and where to refer students to other student resources. She leans on the support and guidance of her peers when making decisions that affect students. Harriet is able to consult with her peers on decisions and get feedback from them.

Sophia. Sophia's formal and informal stage included beginning her career in student affairs after graduating with her bachelor's degree and by obtaining a Master of Education. Her graduate school courses taught her the counseling skills needed to perform her work. Additionally, her coursework taught her about the history of the field. She remembered learning about the founding documents of the field and how there were women who were leading the standardization of the field. Sophia believed that "knowing the history of the field propels me forward and makes me think about how I am impacting the next folks in student affairs." Knowing that women were instrumental in the creation of the field of student affairs made a profound impact on Sophia and instilled a level of pride for the work she does.

During the formal and informal stages, Sophia learned about self-authorship and giving students the autonomy to create the things they want to do, within reason. Sophia gives her students the opportunity to share ideas on programs and events. This practice taught Sophia to think more outside the box and mentioned how some of the ideas that the students have come up with are things "I never would have thought of." Sophia added,

> We want our students to be involved, but I also need to reel them back in. I encourage
> them not to do too many things. You must be able to say no to some things, too. So, I talk
> to them about listing out all the things they are involved in, and then ask themselves if
> they will have time to devote to schoolwork, self-care, or time to do nothing at all.

Sophia also shared that she learned so much about herself and her role as a student affairs practitioner through feedback from her students and mentioned, "I tell my students all the time that no one is above critique." She learned the importance of being student centered and putting students at the center of everything she does even though there are "some days that are better than others." Being open-minded and someone that students feel comfortable talking to was very

important to Sophia and something that she learned from her experience in student affairs. Sophia added,

> I consider myself as being someone students can talk to. They may not relate to me, but I can be open-minded, and they can feel that they can come to me about anything. This has really helped me in the field.

A good sense of humor and creating a fun work environment was something that, as a new professional, Sophia internalized and valued. Being able to laugh with students and co-workers and still getting the work done was important. A positive environment was important for Sophia to feel that the work was enjoyable. Toxic work environments made her feel "confined, and that is essentially not going to work for me."

 Audrey. Audrey's formal and informal stage included obtaining a Master's of Higher Education. Audrey's graduate program included an assistantship where she worked with the student programming board. She had a professor that helped her understand the history of the field. She said, "my professor really cared about the history of student affairs and made it really interesting and engaging. They taught in a way that made history seem very meaningful and made me realize that we are part of something." Her coursework covered a lot of student affairs, philosophies, and theories. She admits that those theories were not always explicit in her work now, "but a lot of it is intuitive. Sometimes I'll realize "this thing is happening" and there is a theory that maybe we can look at to make sense of the situation happening with our students or group of students." She engaged with her peers in the cohort who were like-minded and made her feel very encouraged who became part of a community for her. At that point, Audrey had not been part of a group where everyone had the same entry story. Audrey's supervisor was also encouraging and supportive, and Audrey met with her often to discuss the things she was

learning and experiencing as a new professional. This first year of being a new professional helped her solidify the values of student affairs. Audrey learned that student affairs and higher education valued education and stated,

> Education is meaningful to our society and to individuals. Student affairs help students by empowering them, giving them ownership over the programs they are a part of and leading, and giving them an experience outside of the classroom that is meaningful.

Audrey believes that the role of student affairs administrators is to "make sure that students have what they need to be successful in their classroom, mental and physical health, and helping them connect and have community."

Caroline. Caroline's formal and informal stage began when she enrolled in a master's program out of state. Building her knowledge base was overwhelming, and she added, "when you're going through writing all the papers, you're kind of in survival mode." Caroline also participated in a graduate assistant program where she planned outdoor adventure activities, mentored students, and created a sense of belonging. Caroline's first job outside of graduate school was in a different state, which was a bit of a transition for her, but found success and has since been promoted in her department.

She was highly encouraged by her supervisors and peers to participate in the professional development series, which helped her learn more about the competencies needed in the field and understand the role of her department within the institution. Having this knowledge "to look back upon and think of why we do the things we do helps me have a framework to do them and also helps ground yourself and build roots in the profession." She was able to connect and collaborate with peers at her institution which led to forming meaningful relationships. Caroline was also able to participate in the New Professional Institute sponsored by the NASPA and

ACPA; another more formal education opportunity that helped further build her knowledge of the field.

During her first few years as a new professional, she learned the value of creating a sense of belonging. She learned this through interactions with her students, peers, and supervisors. Caroline shared how her Vice President of Student Affairs opened her house for staff who may not be able to spend the holidays with their family. Caroline gives an example of this practice,

> I started my job at the university two weeks before Thanksgiving, so I was not able to travel back home. It's my first Thanksgiving on my own. My Vice President sent me an invitation to spend the holiday with her and her family. Even though I didn't know her, just having that invitation really set the belonging value as one of the biggest things because it made that connection for me, and it was a high impact experience.

Caroline used the value of personal connection in her work with her students, "I have internalized the idea of belonging and finding a place for every student. Belonging impacts how I reach out and connect with students and connect them to resources."

The history of student affairs and how it was created to focus beyond the classroom and looking at students as whole students impacted how Caroline approaches her work. She emphasized how student affairs focuses on "not just going to class or reading this book or writing an assignment but finding those extra opportunities for growth, belonging, and connection to keep them engaged and help students succeed." Caroline understood that, while she was not teaching them geometry, she was making an impact, teaching them life skills, and giving them opportunities to build their resumes.

Robert. Robert's formal and informal stage of socialization began as a graduate student and continued in his professional role. Robert currently works with the student affairs professional who introduced him to the field of student affairs. Robert recalled,

> As an undergraduate student, I learned about the field of student affairs from my SGA advisor who was the director of student affairs. They helped me have a better understanding of the field; and when I started working at the institution, I hit the ground running with my involvement in the field.

Robert's current institution is also where we attended school as an undergraduate student and where he continues to grow, professionally and personally. His involvement and growth at the institution was a primary reason as to why he continues to persist within the field of student affairs.

Robert aligned his personal values with the values of the field by focusing on mental health and viewing students as whole people. Robert asserted,

> I think us being able to be ourselves while being there for the students is important because they look at us as role models. When we show up as our authentic selves it encourages them to do the same, or even better version of themselves.

It was important to Robert to live his life in a way that was an example to his students. Robert added, "As a staff person, I have to make sure my cup is full so I can pour into others. I make sure to take care of my mental health, my spiritual health, and my social health and operate well."

Robert conveyed that he does not adhere to one particular theory because they are "not one size fits all." Being in the field of student affairs taught him to help students prioritize and align their actions with their values and stated,

I often encourage my students to make a list of their values (family, social, spiritual) and

I'll have them assess what values they feel they are living by, and then help them base

their schedule and how much time they give to each. It serves as a reality check for them.

Robert worked towards helping his students form meaning and giving them validation by asking

them important questions about what they value and why those things are important to them.

Sam. Sam's formal and informal stage began while he was enrolled in a master's

program. One of the courses Sam enjoyed was about student development theory and found it

useful when putting together training. However, when directly interacting with students daily,

theory did not always come to mind. Sam developed his own approach to working with students

while working in his first professional role. Learning to listen to students and giving them a

voice were approaches that worked for Sam.

When working with students, I try my best to listen more than I talk. It is important to me

that students feel that they can say everything they want to say and that they feel heard. I

also try no tot impose my opinions on them but create space to sit and talk. I don't

necessarily want to be the same person with all the advice but become someone they

know will hear them.

Even after completing his master's program, Sam stayed open to learning and studying new

things and researching best practices of the field. Approaching his work as a student and being

open to learning always benefited Sam and enhance his skills as a professional. The history of

student affairs and higher education also gave Sam a sense of empowerment,

Knowing the history of higher education makes me feel like every day that I am

navigating the system of education somewhat successfully, I am committing an act of

subversion because I'm not supposed to have a degree, but now I have two, and now I'm

helping marginalized students get their degrees too.

The history was exciting to Sam and, at the same time, made him feel discouraged because "if

you look around or wait long enough, someone will say something or some event will happen

that will make you ask, "we're still doing that?"" This knowledge also impacted how Sam

worked with students and stated, "I am more mindful to be affirming to students and provide

validation."

Sam's supervisors also modeled the importance of supporting students, especially

marginalized students. Sam's current supervisor taught him the importance of knowing students

by name and checking in with them to see what support they needed. Sam observed the way his

supervisors prioritized work/life balance. During his assistantship, he had two different

supervisors. One supervisor was dedicated to the work and the students, but it was impacting

other areas of her life. The other supervisor, however, was extremely conscious about feeling

like they could exist outside of the work. Learning this in his transition impacted him by

prioritizing work/life balance, and he stated, "for me it's important to be a person first for

myself, so that I can be there for the students."

Emma. Emma's formal and informal stage of socialization occurred during her graduate

program. Emma shared that she learned more about knowledge and values of the field from her

assistantship.

I put more heart and energy into my assistantship. While I wasn't cutting class to be in

meetings with my supervisor or student, there were times where I was answering emails

or prioritizing being present with a student when I probably should have been working on

homework or an essay.

When it came to applying theory and student affairs philosophy, she did not focus too much on learning and being able to articulate them, but she learned so many valuable lessons from her assistantship about how to work with students. She added,

> As time goes by, I have found the experience I had in my assistantship was more useful than the academic side. However, there have been times where I've been working with a student and I think, "oh, this is that theory, and it's leading to this," and I realize that maybe I was paying a lot more attention in my theory class than I thought I did.

Emma developed her own personal philosophy by observing and learning from her supervisors, mentors, and my direct work with students. Service was a value and philosophy that resonated with Emma the most. Regardless of what position served as within student affairs, Emma believed that serving them was always a priority.

The history of higher education impacted her decision in choosing an institution where she wanted to work. During her history of higher education course, she learned about the different types of institutions and how they were formed. Due to this history, in today's day and age, there were certain institutions that were better funded than others, institutions that were better staffed than others, some had more resources than others or not as much political influence, and some that were more diverse than others. These were all factors that she considered when pursuing a job in student affairs and mentioned,

> I consider whether I want to serve somewhere that is super underfunded, understaffed, and not as many resources, but there's not as much politics and you are serving a more diverse student body. Or do I want to work at a well-funded, well resourced, a lot more politics, and a lot more issues that come with an institution that is over 200 years old.

The historical implications influenced her decision to pursue a specific institution that would impact her socialization into the field.

Olivia. Olivia began graduate school immediately after graduating with her bachelor's degree. Her graduate school experience was impacted by COVID-19. She quickly completed her master's degree and served in her first role in the field of student affairs. She was able to get a job at the same institution and office where she served as a graduate assistant. One of the first things she learned through her graduate assistantship is how important it is to her to have a job that was not stressful and where she felt more comfortable. During her internship she had to work in a conduct office, which was more stressful and less enjoyable. She enjoyed the cohort experience, and it was important for her to be able to interact with her peers. Olivia expressed, "I wanted to feel like I wasn't in it all by myself." Through her coursework, Olivia learned about the history of higher education. The knowledge of history helped Olivia be more inclusive with everything she does and how she works with students.

Having a good working relationship with her co-workers and being student facing were contributing factors to her persistence in the field. She stated, "I enjoy meeting with students, being able to help them and talk with them through whatever issues they are facing." Knowing that she could make a difference in the lives of her students was incredibly important to her. The relationship with Olivia's supervisor also made her transition smoother. She declared, "He is the ideal supervisor. He doesn't micromanage and I can trust him, and he trusts that I can do my job." At her current institution, there was not much access to professional development. However, she discussed how much she enjoyed professional development and wished that there were more opportunities when sharing, "During my graduate school experience, I got to attend a

conference and it was a great experience and I learned so much that it made me want to do my job better."

Being in the field of student affairs, Olivia understood that she was helping students in different areas of a students' lives, apart from the academic side. Olivia said, "We not only help students succeed academically, but we are providing social aspects, financial development aspects, professional development. Student affairs serves students to help them succeed in college and be their best and prepare them for life after college." The history of our profession empowered Olivia to know that she could help students be successful. Oliva said,

> Student affairs has proven to be needed for students to get the most of their degrees. Not only do students learn how to write papers, but they also learn how to manage their finances, how to lead organizations, and how to be a leader in your community. Students also learn how to make friends and how to get out of their comfort zones by being involved in student affairs departments.

Now that she is in her first year as a new professional in student affairs, she is navigating new work environments and expectations. During her first full time job, she shared,

> I'm learning that as a new professional I won't get everything I want from my first job. I had a lot of unrealistic expectations for my first job, and I thought that I would just get it because I have a master's degree, but that has not been the case. So, it's been humbling and a learning experience, but also very rewarding.

Implications

The purpose of this study was to explores the perception of 10 new professionals in the field of student affairs on how the NASPA and ACPA Values, Philosophy and History (VPH) professional competency helped them in their transition into their roles in the field of student

affairs and are socialized. This study adds to the limited body of literature on the perceptions of the socialization process for new professionals in the student affairs profession. The socialization process was continuous, and it did not conclude when new professionals earned a master's degree. Learning did not stop when coursework ended or when the internship concluded. When new professionals entered institutions in a student affairs role, they experienced a new phase in the socialization process where they (in)directly learned more about the VPH of their institutions and how they played into the larger VPH of the student affairs field.

The findings of this study indicated that applying theory to practice was much more effective at learning the values, philosophies, and history of the profession more than merely taking in information during a lecture. In conversations with the participants, they demonstrated confidence in themselves when making sense of what they learned in their years of practice. The implications of this study also indicated that there are factors that contributed to professional socialization. Developing competencies like VPH aided in, not only, their socialization but also in their commitment to the field. Without the intentional support of supervisors, faculty, and peers, we will continue to see high attrition rates among professionals in student affairs (Marshall et al., 2016). The findings of this study presented knowledge about how new professionals learn the VPH competency from observing those around them. Everything they knew about holistic student development, student centeredness, and belonging, they learned from other practitioners—especially supervisors and faculty members.

Recommendations for Practical Application

It is important to note that all participants in the study learned about the field of student affairs and were influenced to pursue the field as a direct result of their involvement within student affairs departments. As undergraduate students, they learned the importance of making a

difference and serving others, and they internalized those ideas and put them into practice as new professionals. Introducing undergraduate students who were leaders on our campuses to the field of student affairs was crucial in onboarding new professionals who internalized the values of the field early on in their journeys. Student Affairs departments at institutions could work more closely with their career services and centers and be intentional about how they introduced the field as a career option (Witkowsky & Fuselier, 2023). Therefore, I offer recommendations for practice based on the results from this study.

Connect Theory to Practice

As new professionals work on the front lines and are actively addressing student issues, they should also participate in reflective practice (Reason & Kimball, 2012). Reflective practice involves assessing how theories and research influence their interactions with students and how their practical experiences contribute to further development of those theories and the body of research (Reason & Kimball, 2012). In other words, new professionals should become scholar practitioners, connecting research to practice (Nguyen et al., 2019; Strietzel et al., 2020). While many of the participants admitted that they do not explicitly use theory in their everyday practice, new professionals should be encouraged to identify ways they can apply coursework to their professional practice (Ardoin, 2019). Supervisors and administrative leaders can integrate scholarly research practice into their departmental and institutional culture, along with providing professional development opportunities for new professionals to learn research skills (Gilbert & Burden, 2022; Strietzel et al., 2020).

Prioritize Synergistic Supervision

Supervisors should be trained on synergistic supervision, a supervision model that emphasizes the collaboration between supervisors and supervisee, versus traditional approaches

to supervision (McCallum et al., 2023; Pittman & Foubert, 2016). The literature shows that synergistic supervision is most effective when working with new professionals (Pittman & Foubert, 2016; Shupp & Arminio, 2012). By providing positive feedback, highlighting early successes, and modeling effective supervision behavior, supervisors can increase job satisfaction among new professionals and decrease attrition from the profession (Pittman & Foubert, 2016). Effective supervisors can make a positive impact on new professionals and their ability to move through the socialization process and form a professional identity (Davis & Cooper, 2017).

Prioritize Well-Being

Institutions can support efforts to identify methods that promote well-being in the workplace (Chessman, 2021; Naifeh & Kearney, 2020). Student affairs professionals often serve as role models for students and play a pivotal role in nurturing the overall well-being and development of students (Haley, 2023; Soria et al., 2023). Additionally, new professionals can benefit from observing their institutional leaders and supervisors prioritize well-being practices and not rewarding those who overextend themselves (Perez & Bettencourt, 2023). This in turn leads to a culture of wellbeing throughout the entire institution (Perez & Bettencourt, 2023).

To maximize learning the knowledge, skills, values, and norms of the profession, supervisors and institutional leaders should focus on setting clear expectations, clearly defining roles, and boundaries for new professionals (Chessman, 2021; Green & Davis, 2021). Setting these expectations and boundaries can avoid role ambiguity, stress, and prevent burnout (Green & Davis, 2021). Implementing regular check ins between supervisors and new professionals to provide feedback, monitor workload, and recognize and appreciate their efforts is crucial to maintaining a healthy culture of well-being (Green & Davis, 2021). Supervisors and leaders

should establish boundaries around after-hours communication that often lead to overworking and burnout (Lynch, 2023).

Mentoring programs and building support systems like peer support groups can be a valuable method for providing a safe space to share challenges, how to cope with challenges, and gaining a different perspective (Baumgartner et al., 2019). The people who new professionals surround themselves with will be the ones who will contribute the most to their socialization and support in their journey (Ardoin, 2019). Supervisors should encourage new professionals to seek out mentor relationships that can have a positive influence in their transition (Pittman & Foubert, 2016).

Flexible work arrangements allow new professionals to maintain a healthy work-life balance (Lynch, 2023; Seifert et al., 2023). The participants in this study shared how having options to work from home from time to time makes a difference in their well-being. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the ability of student affairs professionals to successfully perform their work remotely, improving their sense of autonomy and job satisfaction (Seifert et al., 2023). The ability to work from home allows student affairs professionals the time and space to recover and heal from the overwhelming work of supporting students, particularly when students are experiencing trauma (Lynch, 2023).

Allowing new professionals to be their authentic selves is also mentioned throughout this study as the key to new professionals' well-being (Diaz et al., 2023; Herrera et al., 2022). Supervisors and institutional leaders should create inclusive environments where diverse identities are supported (McCallum et al., 2023; Perez & Haley, 2021). This requires supervisors and institutional leaders to strengthen their multicultural competence and include social justice work in their approach to leading new professionals (McCallum et al., 2023).

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research on new professionals is crucial to understanding the needs that they have upon entering the student affairs field. This study focused on new professionals who completed a master's program, specifically one that prepared them for the field of student affairs. Future research could expand on other ways new professionals are socialized through involvement in professional associations (Duran & Allen, 2020), institutional socialization (Hornak et al., 2016), and mentoring experiences (Olson & Ruiz Alvarado, 2023). Investigating the effectiveness of programs like New Professionals Institute have on the socialization process of new professionals would be key to enhancing those programs.

The participants of this study completed graduate preparation programs and work at 4-year universities. Therefore, research on how new professionals in student affairs become socialized into their roles and how they effectively apply the knowledge and skills learned through their graduate course work and internships at 4-year universities to a diverse institutional context like community colleges would be highly valuable (Hornak et al., 2016). Additionally, there are many professionals in student affairs roles who do not hold a graduate degree specifically in student affairs. It would be informative to student affairs-based associations and student affairs divisions to learn more about the perceptions of professionals in the field who do not hold master's degrees, learn competencies, yet are socialized to meet the expectations of the student affairs VPH.

The participants of this study alluded to the effects that the COVID-19 pandemic had on their development. Thus, research conducted on the perceptions of new professionals on their experiences during the pandemic could indicate that needs are shifting for those entering the field (Boettcher et al., 2020). Additionally, the participants of this study share how supervisors play a

crucial role in their professional socialization as new professionals. Future research could focus on how more effective forms of supervision such as synergistic (Davis & Cooper, 2017; Pittman & Foubert, 2016), inclusive (McCallum et al., 2023), restorative (Howard, 2022), and identity-conscious (Elliott et al., 2021) impact the socialization of new student affairs professionals.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the perception of 10 new professionals who have zero to 5 years of full-time professional experience in the field of student affairs. After careful data collection and analysis from the interviews conducted, three findings and three themes emerged which shared the perceptions of new professionals on their transition and socialization into the field of student affairs. The three findings included:

1. For new student affairs professionals, the socialization process begins well before beginning a graduate program,

2. The role of student affairs supervisors, mentors, and student affairs staff is crucial to the successful transition and socialization of new student affairs professionals, and

3. The importance of authenticity and wellness for successful socialization and transition into the field of student affairs.

The three themes included:

1. Their socialization impacted their approach to serving students,

2. Their socialization influenced their perception of the importance of experiential learning, and

3. Their socialization emphasized that while higher education may not have been built with diverse populations in mind, they are finding ways to serve diverse students.

   This discussion outlined the findings and connected the results of the study to Weidman et al.'s (2001) socialization framework. One aspect was evident when synthesizing the data—new professionals need the intentional support of supervisors, mentors, and peers. Finally, new professionals need their institutions to be a safe learning environment that could later translate into a deepened professional commitment—not only to the field, but also to themselves.

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Appendix A: Informed Consent

Date of Approval: 7/15/2022

Informed Consent Form (Saldana & Omasta, 2018)

Name of Principal Investigator(s): Ana Garcia

Title: The Perception of New Professionals on their Transition into the Field of Student Affairs

Request to Participate in Research: We would like to invite you to take part in a research project. The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the perception of 10 new professionals in the field of student affairs who are employed in entry level positions in their student life and/or student development services departments at two- and four-year colleges and universities, on how the Values, Philosophy, and History (VPH) professional competency help them as they transition into their professional roles and are socialized. You must be at least 18 years old to be in this research project.

Procedures: If you agree to participate in this research study, you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview that will take 30-60 minutes with the Principal Investigator via Google Meet and will be recorded. This audiovisual recording will be stored securely in the Principal Investigator's Google Meet account.

Risks: There is a risk of a breach of confidentiality of your information for taking part in this study. To protect your identity, you will be assigned a pseudonym.

Benefits: There are no direct benefits to you for participating in the study. There is no compensation for your participation in the study. However, this study will give you an opportunity to have your voice heard, and hopefully feel empowered by sharing your lived experiences.

22-083   Date of Approval: 7/15/2022

Voluntary Nature of Participation and Right to Withdraw Without Consequences: The decision to participate in this research project is completely voluntary and up to you. You do not have to participate and you can refuse to answer any question. Even if you begin the study, you may withdraw at any time.

Confidentiality: Your part in this study will be handled in a confidential manner. Only the researcher will know that you participated in this study. You will remain anonymous in any reports or publications based on this research. Pseudonyms will be used if any of your data is represented. We will not identify you or any individual as being of this project.

IRB Approval Statement: The Institutional Review Board for the protection of human participants at Abilene Christian University have approved this research study. If you have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 320 Hardin Administration Building, ACU Box 29103, Abilene, Texas ███████████████████████████ You may call anonymously if you wish.

Copy of Consent: You have been given two copies of this document. Please sign both and keep one for your records and return the other one to the Principal Investigator.

Contact Info: If you have any questions, you may reach me at ████████████ or a ████████ or Dr. Casey Reason, at ███████████ If you have concerns about this study, believe you may have been injured because of this study, or have questions about your rights as a participant, you may contact ACU's VP of Research, Dr. Rusty Kruzelock, at ████████████

Date of Approval: 7/15/2022

<u>Consent Signature Section:</u>

Please sign this form if you voluntarily agree to participate in this study. Sign only after you have read all of the information provided and your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. You should receive a copy of this signed consent form. You do not waive any legal rights by signing this form.

Researcher Printed Name   Signature   Date

_____

Participant Printed Name   Signature   Date

Appendix B: Recruitment Material

Recruitment Email (Director of New Professionals Institute)

Hi there, Director of the New Professionals Institute:

I am reaching out to ask for your assistance in identifying potential participants for my doctoral research study. I am looking for participants who work in the field of student affairs at two-and-four-year colleges and universities in the south who were past participants of the New Professional Institute co-sponsored by NASPA Region III and the Southern Association for College Student Affairs (SACSA) and who are within their first five years serving in their professional roles.

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the perception of 10 new professionals in the field of student affairs who are employed in entry level positions in their student life and/or student development services departments at two- and four-year colleges and universities, on how the Values, Philosophy, and History (VPH) professional competency help them as they transition into their professional roles and are socialized.

If you have potential candidates in mind, could you please let me know who they are so that I may reach out to them? If they seem appropriate for the study and you agree to connect us, I will provide you with a recruitment email so that we may get introduced. I thank you for your assistance and am happy to answer any questions you may have about this email. Please respond to and send any referrals you have to my student email address: █████████

Sincerely,

Ana Contreras

EdD Candidate, Abilene Christian University

Appendix C: Recruitment Material

22-083   Date of Approval: 7/15/2022

Follow up Recruitment Email (potential participant)

Dear _____ :

My name is Ana Garcia. I am a student at Abilene Christian University, College of Education, where I am completing requirements for a Doctor of Education degree. I am seeking participants for my qualitative study of new professionals in the field of student affairs. The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the perception of 10 new professionals in the field of student affairs who are employed in entry level positions in their student life and/or student development services departments at two- and four-year colleges and universities, on how the Values, Philosophy, and History (VPH) professional competency help them as they transition into their professional roles and are socialized. My interest in this topic stems from my own lived experience as a new professional in student affairs and it is a topic that is of personal and professional interest to me.

You are a potential participant because you are in the field of student affairs at a two-and-four-year college or university in the south and were a past participant of the New Professional Institute co-sponsored by NASPA Region III and the Southern Association for College Student Affairs (SACSA) and are within your first five years serving in your professional role.

Your contact information was provided to me by [insert name].

I am requesting your participation in this qualitative study, which will be in the form of a semi structured interview. The 60-90-minute interview will take place via Google Meet. If you would like to volunteer to participate, have any questions, or would like further information, please send an email to me at ███████████

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Ana Garcia
EdD Candidate, Abilene Christian University

Appendix D: Interview Protocol

22-083   Date of Approval: 7/15/2022

Interview Protocol (Saldana & Omasta, 2018)

Guiding questions for individual interviews: How does the ACPA/NASPA Values,
Philosophy, and History professional competency help new professionals as they are socialized
into their professional roles in student affairs?

Interviewee: Date: Time:

_____

Hello, my name is Ana Garcia. Thank you for taking the time to meet with me. Before we begin,
do you have any questions regarding the Informed Consent you signed earlier?

In addition to taking notes, I will be audio recording our conversation. I will be doing this to be
sure that I have the most accurate information regarding our conversation today. Do I have your
permission to record the interview? *(Proceed if there are no objections. If the participant objects,
explain that unfortunately I am unable to continue with the interview. Either way, thank the
participant for their time)*?

Today is (DATE/TIME), and I am speaking with (PARTICIPANT). I am going to be asking you
a few questions. If at any time you do not feel comfortable answering questions, or if there is a
question that makes you uncomfortable, that is no problem. Just let me know and we can skip the
question or move on or stop the interview.

All the interview data will be encoded to protect the identity of participants. The interview will
last between 60-90 minutes, and I will stop any time you ask me to. This interview will consist of
questions regarding your experience as a new professional in the field of student affairs.
Participation is voluntary, confidential, and there will be no personally identifying information
about you in the study. If you agree, a pseudonym will be used. Even if you agree to participate,
you may withdraw at any time.

Just as a recap, the purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the perception of 10 new

professionals in the field of student affairs who are employed in entry level positions in their

student life and/or student development services departments at two- and four-year colleges and

universities, on how the Values, Philosophy, and History (VPH) professional competency help

them as they transition into their professional roles and are socialized.

THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

The following open-ended questions are used to guide the interviewer.

_____

1. Please tell me about yourself.

2. As a new professional in the field of student affairs, how did student affairs values impact your transition into your first professional role?

3. As a new professional in the field of student affairs, how did student affairs philosophy impact your transition into your first professional role?

4. As a new professional in the field of student affairs, how did student affairs history impact your transition into your first professional role?

Those are all the questions I have. I want to thank you again for taking the time to meet with me. If you have any questions regarding the research project, please do not hesitate to reach out out to me. Thank you again!

Appendix E: IRB Approval Letter

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
328 Hardin Administration Building, ACU Box 29145, Abilene, Texas 79699-9145
325-674-2885

July 15, 2022

Ana Garcia
Department of Graduate and Professional Studies
Abilene Christian University

Dear Ana,

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board, I am pleased to inform you that your project titled
"The Perception of New Professionals on their Transition into the Field of Student Affairs",

(IRB#22-083　) is exempt from review under Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects. If at any time the details of this project change, please advise our office of the change(s) by email, so that the committee can determine whether or not the exempt status is still applicable.

I wish you well with your work!

Sincerely,

Russell P Kruzelock

ACU Vice President of Research

Additional Approvals/Instructions:

The following are all responsibilities of the Primary Investigator (PI). Violation of these responsibilities may result in suspension or termination of research by the Institutional Review Board. If the Primary Investigator is a student and fails to fulfil any of these responsibilities, the Faculty Advisor then becomes responsible for completing or upholding any and all of the following:

• If there are any changes in the research (including but not limited to change in location, members of the research team, research procedures, number of participants, target population of participants, compensation, or risk), these changes must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation.
• Report any protocol deviations or unanticipated problems to the IRB promptly according to IRB policy.
• Should the research continue past the expiration date, submit a Continuing Review Form, along with a copy of the current consent form and a new Signature Assurance Form approximately 30 days before the expiration date.
• When the research is completed, inform the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. If your study is Expedited or Full Board, submit an Inactivation Request Form and a new Signature Assurance Form. If your study is Exempt, Non-Research, or Non-Human Research, email orsp@acu.edu to indicate that the research has finished.
• According to ACU policy, research data must be stored on ACU campus (or electronically) for 3 years from inactivation of the study, in a manner that is secure but accessible should the IRB request access.
• It is the Investigator's responsibility to maintain a general environment of safety for all research participants and all members of the research team. All risks to physical, mental, and emotional well-being as well as any risks to confidentiality should be minimized.

For additional information on the policies and procedures above, please visit the IRB website
https://cdn01.acu.edu/community/offices/academic/orsp/human-research/overview.html
or email orsp@acu.edu with your questions.

Our Promise: ACU is a vibrant, innovative, Christ-centered community that engages students in authentic spiritual and intellectual growth, equipping them to make a real difference in the world.