



# GEORGIA JOURNAL OF COLLEGE STUDENT AFFAIRS

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# ABOUT THE JOURNAL

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As the official journal of the Georgia College Personnel Association (GCPA), the *Georgia Journal of College Student Affairs* (GJCSA) aims to promote scholarly work and perspectives from graduate students, practitioners, and scholars, reflecting the importance of professional and academic research and writing in higher education. The scope of the journal is focused on state, regional, and national higher education research, concepts, and practices that have implications for both practitioners and scholars within the field of college student affairs.

In addition to peer-reviewed manuscripts using a variety of methodological forms and perspectives, GJCSA will consider publication of other scholarly contributions such as case studies, media reviews (blogs, websites, books, videos, reports), articles highlighting best practices or current trends, and practitioner reflections. When possible, special attention will be made to include scholarly contributions from graduate students, new professionals, and junior faculty. In addition, the GJCSA may periodically call for proposals for theme-focused editions and volunteers to serve as guest editors for these special editions.

Specifically, manuscripts are categorized by:

- Research & Scholarship in Student Affairs (Research, Conceptual & Literature Reviews)
- Research & Scholarship for Professional Preparation
- Emerging Scholars - Graduate Student Manuscripts
- Book & Media Reviews

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# ABOUT GCPA

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## **Welcome to the Georgia *Journal of College Student Affairs*!**

Hosted by the Georgia College Personnel Association, the Georgia Journal of College Student Affairs (GJCSA) provides an exciting forum for scholarly-practitioner publications of original research & scholarship, book & media reviews, and editorials designed to inform student affairs practice within the state of Georgia and beyond. First published in 1985 as the *Georgia Journal*, the GJCSA has continued to evolve as an opportunity for graduate students, practitioners, and scholars to submit publications highlighting best practices or current trends in the field. We have assembled a profound group of scholars who will serve as Editorial Board Members, and are committed to the assurance of a timely review and publication process.

As we embark on our 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a journal, I am thrilled about the GJCSA and the opportunity it provides for innovative research and scholarship. We encourage submissions and perspectives from graduate students, administrators, faculty, and anyone holding marginalized, underrepresented, and/or intersectional identities, as we believe our collective contributions will increase our critical consciousness as scholar-practitioners. We hold true the values of deepening our knowledge, skills and awareness to continue doing the noble work of student affairs on college and university campuses.

As an organization supported by the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), we also invite you to explore publications and resources offered through this entity at: <http://www.myacpa.org/>. Further, we invite you to join the Georgia College Personnel Association, as a means to maintain involvement and engagement within the state.

We look forward to your contribution to the Georgia Journal of College Student Affairs!

Best,

Dr. Ashley M. Dobbs

President, Georgia College Personnel Association

# PUBLISHING AND/OR SERVING AS A REVIEWER

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## **PUBLISHING IN GJCSA**

The *Georgia Journal of College Student Affairs* is an open-access journal which means that all content is freely available without charge to the user or his/her institution. Users are allowed to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of all articles, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without asking prior permission from the publisher or the author.

In addition to peer-reviewed manuscripts using a variety of methodological forms and perspectives, GJCSA will consider publication of other scholarly contributions such as case studies, media reviews (blogs, websites, books, videos, reports), articles highlighting best practices or current trends, and practitioner reflections. Specifically, manuscripts are categorized by:

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- Emerging Scholars - Graduate Student Manuscripts
- Book & Media Reviews

All articles and essays are double blind peer reviewed. Authors will receive feedback from the reviewers through the editors as soon as possible. We ask that all authors thoroughly copyedit and proofread any materials they submit, and we will return material without further editing until this has been accomplished. The editors, in consultation with blind peer reviewers, will supervise all changes necessary for publication. All acceptances are conditional upon completion of all changes deemed necessary by the editors. All decisions by the reviewers are final. Conflicts between reviewers, authors, and/or other parties will be resolved by the meeting of editors.

### Submission Guidelines:

- Times New Roman font, size 12, double-spaced, 1-inch margins on all the sides, and left justification.
- Indent the first word of each paragraph by 1/2 inch, and number all pages consecutively, putting page numbers in the upper right.
- Double-space between paragraphs.
- Include a cover/title page with the authors names listed as "Blinded."
- Include an abstract.
- Do not include headers and footers.
- Phrases and isolated words in languages other than English should be italicized.
- Figures, tables, and photos should be inserted into the manuscript at the time of submission and should be appropriately titled, sourced, and numbered consecutively.
- Use in-text citations and reference list per APA 6th edition guidelines.
- The entire manuscript should not exceed 25 pages, including tables and notes.
- Consult the latest edition of the APA Manual for all other style issues.
- Manuscripts not adhering to the requirements will be returned to the author for revision.

## **SERVING AS A REVIEWER FOR GJCSA**

The *Georgia Journal of College Student Affairs* is seeking peer reviewers with expertise in higher education and student affairs to serve as on-going peer-reviewers for the *journal*. The commitment to do so would be reviewing 4-5 manuscripts per academic year for publication consideration in *GJCSA*. To express interest in serving as a reviewer, please email your resume/CV to [thegcpajournal@gmail.com](mailto:thegcpajournal@gmail.com).

# From Collaborative to Collegial Communities: Transitioning from Student Affairs Practitioner to Faculty

**Michelle L. Boettcher** (Clemson University)

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**Mimi Benjamin** (Indiana University of Pennsylvania)

*While student affairs (SA) practitioner expertise can inform a faculty member's knowledge in the classroom, the transition into a tenure-track faculty role from student affairs administrative roles is complex. One of the differences new faculty members with SA administrator backgrounds experience is a change in the work community and shift from collaborative to collegial cultures. While studies have examined the transition of student affairs professionals from graduate programs to full time student affairs practitioner roles and graduate students into the professoriate, there is limited scholarship on the transitional experiences of student affairs practitioners moving into faculty positions. This qualitative study examined the differences in senses of community based on the experiences of 30 former practitioners in tenure-track faculty roles. Loss of SA community and differences between faculty and SA communities emerged as primary themes from this study.*

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Student affairs (SA) graduate programs often benefit from having former practitioners as faculty. The expertise of those who have worked in SA offices enhances the dialogue and connections students make between classroom and practice as emerging professionals. While students learn about being part of a larger community of practitioners inside and outside of the classroom, practitioners-turned-faculty learn about the differences between their former SA collaborative communities and their new faculty collegial communities primarily on the job.

Many of these former administrators, now tenure-track faculty, come from a collaborative developmental SA culture focused on growth and service to others (Berquist & Pawlak, 2008) that is a community-oriented culture of collaboration and teamwork (Calhoun, 1997). They shift to faculty communities that are collegiality-focused cultures of autonomy (Berquist & Pawlak, 2008; Bess & Dee, 2014; Haviland, Ortiz, and Henriques, 2017; Kuh & Whitt, 1988). As a result, these emerging faculty can lack a sense of community and belonging.

The research question for this study was: How do experiences of community change for student affairs practitioners who move into tenure-track faculty positions? This study examined the transition experiences of former full-time SA administrators who transitioned into full-time, tenure-track

faculty roles. Our study builds on the work of Kniess, Benjamin, and Boettcher (2017) and McCluskey-Titus and Cawthon (2004) who examined challenges transitioning to faculty culture for SA professionals such as having confrontational colleagues and unproductive or adversarial faculty meetings. While the McCluskey-Titus and Cawthon (2004) study utilized a survey, we interviewed 30 participants who spoke about the loss of their SA community and the difference between SA and faculty communities. Participants shared that they lost a sense of team they had in their SA communities, lost the ability to connect with SA communities when they became faculty, and found faculty communities and cultures to be very different.

### **Literature Review**

Socialization in an academic context has often focused on graduate students (Austin, 2002; Weidman, Twale & Stein, 2001). However, Feldman (1981) identified three key areas of faculty socialization: acquisition of appropriate role behaviors, development of work skills and abilities, and adjustment to new norms and values. A focus on this final transition, particularly norms and values in work relationships and community, is absent from the literature about transitions of SA practitioners into faculty roles.

Previous work focused on the absence of socialization to faculty work in

graduate education (Austin, 2010) and the lack of socialization for new faculty members (Berquist & Pawlak, 2008; Fleming, Goldman, Correll, & Taylor, 2016). In addition, new faculty struggle with isolation in their new roles (Bogler & Kremer-Hayon, 1999; Haviland, Ortiz, & Henriques, 2017; Kniess, Benjamin, & Boettcher, 2017; Tierney & Rhoads, 1994; Trower, 2010). The lack of socialization and solitariness of academic work exacerbate the sense of disconnection from others and community for faculty coming from student affairs positions.

The idea of learning new organizational cultures was examined by Feldman (1981) through the roles of behaviors, skills, norms, and values in organizational socialization of new members. Similarly, other authors have focused on the importance of social support in employee transitions to organizations (Allen, 2006; Fisher, 1986; Jokisaari, 2013; Jones, 1986; Lapointe, Vandenberghe, & Boudrias, 2014; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Previous studies explored the

differences between administrative and faculty cultures (McCluskey-Titus & Cawthon, 2004) and transition from SA practitioner to faculty roles (Kniess, Benjamin, & Boettcher, 2017), however, this specific transition from administrator to faculty and the experience of community (or lack thereof) has not been fully explored in the context of community and culture.

For this study, we use Schein's (1984) definition of culture as an organization's artifacts, values, and basic assumptions about relationships to examine the transition of SA practitioners to faculty roles as a theoretical framework. The table below identifies different priorities of SA and faculty communities and how each culture affects individuals engaging with one another. (See Table 1). The existing literature identifies differences in work (culture, mindsets, relationships, and styles); different guiding documents; and differences in measures of success and achievement.

**Table 1.** Faculty & Student Affairs Cultural Factors

	<b>FACULTY</b>	<b>STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTITIONERS</b>
<b>Primary Identity</b>	<b>Scholar</b>	<b>Administrator</b>
<b>Work Culture</b>	<b>Collegial</b> (Berquist & Pawlak, 2008)	<b>Developmental</b> (Berquist & Pawlak, 2008); <b>Administrative</b> (Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Bess & Dee, 2014)
<b>Mindsets</b>	<b>Self-Focused &amp; Autonomy-Oriented</b> (Berquist & Pawlak, 2008; Bess & Dee, 2014; Kuh & Whitt, 1988).	<b>Learner-Centered &amp; Community-Oriented</b> (Berquist & Pawlak, 2008; Bess & Dee, 2014; Kuh & Whitt, 1988).



<b>Work Relationships</b>	<b>Collegial</b> (Berquist & Pawlak, 2008)	<b>Collaborative</b> (Calhoun, 1997).
<b>Work Style</b>	<b>Individuals working toward individual goals</b> (Kniess, Benjamin, & Boettcher, 2017)	<b>Individuals working toward collective goals</b> (Kniess, Benjamin, & Boettcher, 2017)
<b>Guiding Documents (Artifacts)</b>	<b>Tenure &amp; Promotion Guidelines</b> (Sax, Hagedorn, Arredondo, & DiCrisi, 2002)	<b>Job Description</b> (Hirt & Winston, 2003).
<b>Measures of Success / Achievement</b>	<b>Tenure &amp; Promotion</b> (Sax, Hagedorn, Arredondo, & DiCrisi, 2002), <b>Teaching</b> (Perry, Menec, Struthers, Hechter, & Schonwetter, 1997)	<b>Evaluation by Supervisor</b> (Creamer & Janosik, 2003).

The components in the chart above make for dissimilar work cultures and communities. Additionally, former SA practitioners often retain their administrative mindset and SA identities as they take on faculty roles (Kniess, Benjamin, & Boettcher, 2017), further complicating their culture shift.

While faculty appreciate the autonomy in their new roles (Couture, 2014), many have sought to develop their own communities. Pifer and Baker (2012) found that early-career faculty developed connections by networking, awareness, and impression management. Other researchers focused on the role of mentoring for newer faculty in building communities as sources of connection and support (LaRocco & Bruns, 2006; O'Meara, Terosky, & Neumann, 2008; Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2008; Terosky & Gonzales, 2016). By centering the concept of community, this study contributes to existing literature by examining its role in the transition of newer SA

faculty and specifically on how SA practitioners navigate past and enter into new communities.

### Methodology

The focus on understanding participant experiences in deep and meaningful ways made qualitative research appropriate for this study (Creswell, 2013). Our focus on the lived experience of participants made a phenomenological framework appropriate for this study (Van Maanen, 1990). This approach aligns with Bollen and Hoyle's (1990) work on perceived cohesion. Additionally, phenomenology is appropriate because "[this framework] is suited to understanding a variety of collective affiliations, formed in large environments, that can contribute to an individual's sense of belonging to the larger community" (Hurtado & Carter, 1997, p. 328). In this study, we focused on participants' own experiences with SA's collaborative work relationships and developmental /

administrative culture in the past and their current experiences in collegial faculty relationships and culture.

### Researcher Positionality and Reflexivity

As former student affairs professionals in tenure-track faculty positions at the time of the study, we wanted to explore the practitioner to faculty transition. Each of us worked in the field for at least 11 years and transitioned to tenure-track faculty roles just prior to data collection. Our background was similar to participants and provided a “more truthful, authentic understanding of the culture under study” (Merriam, Johnson-Bailey, Lee, Kee, Ntseane, & Muhamad, 2001, p. 411). The shared experiences of transitioning from practitioner to faculty also helped build rapport with colleagues and were vital to data

meaning making (Creswell, 2013). Our team engaged in researcher reflexivity (Gouldner, 1971) by debriefing throughout the process to identify how constructed themes related (or not) to our experiences.

### Participants

Participants were recruited through a faculty listserv (CSPTalk) and social media (a Facebook group for new faculty), as well as snowball sampling (Creswell, 2013) via our connections. Thirty full-time, tenure-track faculty (11 men and 19 women) in SA/higher education programs participated over the course of three years (Table 2). Their full-time SA experience ranged from 4-20 years and included work in residence life, campus activities, leadership advising, and new student programs.

**Table 2.** Study Participants

Pseudonym	Gender Identity	Years in Student Affairs	Pseudonym	Gender Identity	Years in Student Affairs
Abigail	W	17	Mary Ann	W	16
Alex	M	5	Maxine	W	6
Alice	W	17	Melissa	W	18
Audrey	W	4	Mitchell	M	14
Beth	W	12	Mona	W	10
Callie	W	5	Nancy	W	12.5
Carol	W	18	Nathan	M	15
Deanna	W	17	Owen	M	7
Eileen	W	10	Artie	M	6
Erica	W	21	RB	W	20
Jason	M	11	Ruth	W	4
Joe	M	12	Ryan	M	12
Zoey	W	6	Sebastian	M	6
Leonard	M	10	Suzanne	W	13
Lynn	W	11	Virgil	M	5

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

We used semi-structured interviews to afford participants the opportunity to share their perspectives (Giorgi, 1997). Interviews were conducted by phone, transcribed and shared with participants for review to ensure accuracy. Open coding was used to create categories and construct themes (Saldaña, 2013). Each researcher reviewed categories for themes and we collaborated to narrow those themes. Throughout the data collection period, we discussed emerging themes, participant perspectives, and ways participants made meaning of their experiences. This began as interviews were conducted and continued through transcription, analysis, and development of findings.

### **Trustworthiness**

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), indicators of trustworthiness include dependability, credibility, transferability and confirmability. Typically, dependability is assumed if credibility is established (Lincoln & Guba), and we established credibility through triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing. Triangulation occurred as multiple investigators were immersed in the data (Lincoln & Guba). Member checking (Lincoln & Guba) was employed, with participants reviewing both transcripts and themes. While not all participants had the same experiences, there was consistency among

themes. Additionally, we engaged a peer reviewer familiar with the topic who confirmed our initial findings and themes. Finally, both confirmability and transferability were addressed through conference presentations where we received affirmation from attendees whose experiences mirrored those of participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### **Findings**

The research question for this study was: How do experiences of community change for student affairs practitioners who move into tenure-track faculty positions? Two overarching themes emerged regarding sense of community in transitioning from SA to faculty roles: loss of a sense of team and of SA community, and differences between SA and faculty communities. The findings are highlighted below.

#### **Loss: Loss of SA Community and Isolation**

For participants, loss included losing collaborative SA communities and SA connections in general. This was accompanied by more individualized and less team-oriented work. While participants had a desire to maintain connections with SA practitioners, that interest was not always reciprocated. Alice said,

I wanted to be connected and I felt like I made a lot of overtures for students and staff... I just felt like they

didn't care at all. Like they didn't really want me involved... I was really surprised there seemed to be no interest in partnership.

RB shared a similar perspective. Beyond an introductory meeting with departmental directors, he had no connection to student affairs on his campus. He said he believed there should be ways to connect, stating, "There has to be a logical way in which I can contribute. And maybe I haven't figured that out yet and so it's on me. And maybe they're not interested... It feels like we're underutilizing each other." Participants sought both competence as faculty and to be acknowledged for the experience as former practitioners but found their expectation to maintain SA connections unmet. Instead of utilizing their practitioner knowledge and experience, participants felt their expertise as former practitioners had gone untapped.

In their faculty communities, participants noted challenges in making connections. Zoey said faculty do not encounter one another often. She said that in SA, because most people are working and on campus at similar times, they have more interaction. This is often missing in faculty connections since faculty do not have to be on campus to do their work. She said, "When you don't see people as frequently... you can't just have happenstance that you're going to run into someone." Participants' sense of connection

in SA went beyond job tasks, and included locations and work style, which were different as a faculty member. Instead of working together in a single office or space on campus as a team focused on shared goals, faculty work on campus, off campus, at research sites, and other locations on individual projects.

Faculty meetings were infrequent and interaction outside of meetings was rare, and as a result some participants felt they lost a sense of workplace community. Carol said, "I kind of miss that camaraderie from the office. When you're in an administrator position you have people around you all of the time, you're always in meetings, and you seem to be a little more socially connected." The transition from a highly engaged community to one with infrequent interaction was a significant change for some participants. However, not all participants experienced this community change as a loss. Jason said, "I don't think about it as I lost a community because I'm not [in] residence life anymore... I'm not sure I ever felt I needed to replace a community that I never felt I needed to begin with." Jason said he defined his community as immediate family and not work, so the need for a community at work was not an issue.

**Isolation.** Some participants experienced the shift to autonomy and independent work as not just a different type of

community, but as isolating. Joe said faculty do much of their work independently and rarely have opportunities to be “working closely with people, forming relationships with the staff you supervise or who are supervising you.” Deanna also spoke about the isolation her work required:

I prepare my classes alone, I teach alone, yeah students are there, but there's no other faculty member there, I grade alone, I do my research pretty much alone, even when I collaborate, it is usually at a distance.

Joe said, “What I found as a faculty member is [the experience is] so isolating.” Callie agreed, describing her experience as “incredibly lonely.” Though most participants realized this would be part of the nature of their work as faculty members, both the shift and the impact of that shift were greater than participants had anticipated.

Owen went so far as to share he felt unsuccessful in transitioning to a faculty role because of his lack of community. He said, “If ‘successful’ has to do with building relationships with other faculty, to build my community of folks that I can reach out to and connect with at my institution, then probably no, I haven't been very successful at that.” Participants measured success not only against the traditional academic areas of achievement – research, teaching, and service – but also against the residual measures

of success related to collaboration, connection, and community associated with their SA experiences.

Ruth said she was ready for the transition but cautioned that others could experience loss moving to faculty roles. She said, “You really have to evaluate when you transfer into a faculty role... you have to be very conscious of why you're making that choice... because I think that student affairs professionals [may be] set up to be disappointed.” Trading SA community for faculty autonomy was not negative for all participants. Some were ready and had different community needs and expectations; they were ready for working independently on their own projects and tasks rather than expecting teamwork to be the focus as it had been when they were SA practitioners. Others felt isolated and a sense of loss in shifting from one type of community to the other.

### **Difference: SA versus Faculty Work Culture**

Although faculty and SA professionals work in the same campus environment, the culture of faculty work was identified as markedly different from SA culture. In addition to being surprised by the isolation they experienced, some participants did not realize how different the leadership of their academic departments would be from their SA departments; they also did not anticipate the pace of

administrative work that participants felt took longer.

#### **Loss of leadership and guidance.**

The role of leadership in participants' new work environments was different than in SA. Department Chairs and other leaders within the organization do not function in the same sort of hierarchy or with the same kind of influence as supervisors in student affairs organizations. Additionally, faculty administrative leaders often lacked the administrative training and skills of their SA counterparts, which was evident to our former administrators-turned-faculty. While participants were accustomed to departmental or divisional leaders with significant experience, Deanna talked about faculty leaders' lack of experience:

Some [faculty leaders] don't know what they are doing in terms of administrative work. They aren't good at running meetings, and they're not good at being timely, they don't know how to process paperwork.

Deanna did not see clearly demonstrated leadership in her academic department that aligned with what she experienced in SA.

Participants also talked about having less guidance as new faculty members than they had as SA professionals. Audrey expected more support from senior faculty, but "that expectation wasn't met." Eileen added,

"That has been one of the harder things for me to work through. I do feel like I'm working through [my new role] on my own." In SA, orientation, training and supervision tended to address these issues, but the independence of faculty work did not result in similar guidance.

**Loss of collective goals.** The collaborative versus collegial culture was highlighted by Melissa, who noted both the similarities and differences between her faculty and SA experiences:

We would have great discussion [in SA] and that's very similar to the faculty role. The one thing that was different when we sat around in my office, we had one specific goal ... As a faculty, we bring our similar expertise, but we have 10 different people in the room; we may have 10 different goals.

Nathan also noted differences between SA and faculty meetings:

The [faculty] meetings were so slow... [Faculty] would talk for hours about nothing... Senior faculty would just fill the time with air... [In SA] the supervisor says you've got to make it happen, and meetings are efficient.

As SA administrators, participants shared work and common goals, but when a group of faculty focused on individual goals came

together, the conversations were difficult to facilitate. Faculty work focused on individual achievement and personalized goals rather than shared goals accomplished by a team, and while participants understood this cognitively – individual research agendas and teaching assignments mean individual work - the lack of team focus on success of the organization or department remained a disconnect.

Zoey saw this lack of teamwork as a practical result of the nature of faculty work. “If [interaction] happens all the time as a faculty member, then you don’t get your work done.” Many participants talked about the need to protect their time. They appreciated having fewer meetings – even if it meant less connection with others.

Most participants expected and looked forward to a different routine and fewer meetings as faculty. Erica said, “I thought it would be different in that I would no longer have 20 meetings a day.” Leonard agreed, “I wasn’t interested in spending the rest of my career sitting in meetings from sun-up to sundown.” However, many participants did not understand the impact of the change. Robin said, “I spend a lot of my time working on my own and that’s very new. I think I expected that but I don’t think I expected it to the degree that I’m experiencing.” Navigating this change – whether seen as positive or negative (or both)– was an

important theme in their experiences of community.

Some faculty also shared how their work routine decisions impacted their ability to find time to connect with other faculty. Deanna said, “I rarely have to come to campus for anything after I teach... people come in, do their thing, and then leave.” Leonard agreed adding, “For the most part I’m only on campus one to two days a week and then when I teach at the satellite campus, I just go down there.” For some faculty, the lack of engagement was related to how they exercised autonomy in their schedules.

### Discussion

This study reinforces existing scholarship about faculty socialization and fills a gap in literature specific to former SA professionals shifting to faculty. Previous work focused on the lack of cultural socialization for first-time faculty (Berquist & Pawlak, 2008; Fleming, Goldman, Correll, & Taylor, 2016). While that scholarship is essential to understanding the experiences of faculty, our work further contributes by examining the cultural shift of practitioners moving into faculty roles. Similar to previous studies (Bogler & Kremer-Hayon, 1999; Haviland, Ortiz, & Henriques, 2017; Tierney & Rhoads, 1994; Trower, 2010), our participants discussed ways that they as new faculty struggled with isolation. All participants also affirmed they

experienced different cultures in SA and faculty contexts - a collaborative and administrative SA culture (Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Bess & Dee, 2014) and collegial faculty culture (Berquist & Pawlak, 2008).

### **Sense of Community**

An area addressed in this study that has not been fully explored in other studies is the sense of loss of participants' practitioner communities in exchange for faculty communities. Participants more quickly felt a connection to SA communities and their roles within those communities whereas it took longer to feel a sense of belonging in a community of scholars. This finding aligns with challenges identified in other studies on the experiences of early career faculty in terms of connections in new faculty communities (Berquist & Pawlak, 2008; Bess & Dee, 2014; Haviland, Ortiz, & Henriques, 2017; Kuh & Whitt, 1988). Participants acknowledged aspects of SA communities they missed, but also discussed advantages to the faculty culture such as autonomy and flexibility. What participants shared fits with what McCluskey-Titus and Cawthon (2004) found in terms of a trade-off in making the shift from SA to faculty; one trades strong senses of community for more autonomy.

Additionally, participants' struggles to navigate their new culture emerged as loss related to community. This loss surfaced in

participant descriptions of teamwork, leadership, and isolation. Participants highlighted the difference between collegial and collaborative work, teams, and communities that aligns with Berquist and Pawlak's (2008) work. Our study also highlights what surprised participants in navigating the new culture of academics and faculty communities – senses of isolation and a lack of shared goals, which LaRocco and Bruns (2006) found as well.

### **Implications for Practice**

This study provides a number of implications for practice and for future research. Sharing information about transitioning to faculty roles with SA administrators and full-time doctoral students with SA work experience can provide helpful guidance so they can best decide whether or not to move from SA practice to faculty roles. By providing first-hand accounts of what that transitional experience is like – particularly in terms of the changing nature of community – current practitioners can discern if faculty communities will meet their personal and professional needs. In addition, former SA professionals who take on faculty roles can be informed about the differences and potentially be change agents if a different sort of community is needed for faculty. Additionally, it can prepare potential faculty job seekers to ask



key questions about community and connections during the job search.

In addition to informing those considering making this transition, this study can inform the practice of SA professionals / supervisors. As staff members consider doctoral work, supervisors can encourage them to think strategically about the future. By sharing the themes that emerged here, SA practitioners can reflect on what they need and value through supervision dialogue. What values around group interaction do staff members hold? How might those be met (or not) in a faculty position? Answers to those questions can aid practitioners in making this career decision.

This study also highlights a need and an opportunity for professional organizations to play a significant role in the development of additional cross-institutional faculty communities that bridge both the student affairs and faculty cultures. Organizations planning faculty-specific events are important as well as planning opportunities for faculty and administrators to build and maintain connections around the work they each do. These initiatives could take the form of conference sessions, webinars, faculty-SA circles or learning communities, faculty retreat experiences, or other chances to foster connection and provide support to new faculty.

Participants shared that once they became faculty members, there was often no

longer a place for them in SA beyond research and teaching. Participants attributed the lack of connection with their SA divisions to a lack of interest on the part of SA to work with faculty. A number of possibilities for mutually beneficial collaboration emerged from this study. Examples include partnering around student projects, assistantships, and field experiences; research pairing faculty and practitioners; and the opportunities for faculty to meet service expectations through collaborations with SA. SA leaders should recognize that, while the general faculty may feel the need to “protect their time” and thus not be interested in student affairs-related service activities, those faculty in student affairs/higher education departments may feel differently and may welcome those service opportunities that are fitting with their teaching and scholarship.

### **Implications for Research**

In terms of future scholarship, this study provides the foundation for a variety of additional areas of focus related to communities for administrators moving into faculty roles. These include studies related to the role of identity in the SA to faculty transition and search for community; studies identifying strategies for academic administrators (program coordinators, department chairs and others) for onboarding new faculty who come from SA positions; and potentially how

understanding SA and faculty communities might help each group identify new opportunities for collaboration.

This scholarship can inform future research in a number of ways. While the study focused on SA, there is a need to explore similar transitions of other practitioners to faculty, such as business, K-12 education (teachers and administrators), and public administration. In addition, this study was not designed to explore issues of identity. How gender impacts individuals' experiences navigating academic culture as new faculty members is an area for additional research. Similarly, the difference in experiences based on race, ethnicity, ability, religious affiliation or any other identity (or the intersectionality of multiple identities) is important to explore. Finally including an examination of institutional type could provide deeper and richer information about these transitions and community (or lack thereof). An examination based on the types of institutions where individuals worked as practitioners and the types of institutions where they work as faculty would be useful. This could also include issues such as institutional size and geographic location.

### **Limitations**

In this study, nearly two-thirds (19/30) of the participants were women. While we had a number of women participants, this study

does not focus on gender issues and how gender identity influences one's sense of connection, desire for, or ability to build community. Although the data were not analyzed for themes related to gender, the disproportionate number of women participants may impact the findings. Additionally, we did not collect demographic information about race, which prevented any analysis of the experiences of community through a lens of race for faculty participants.

### **Conclusion**

Participants in this study experienced loss of their SA community and identified differences between collaborative SA communities and collegial faculty communities. Participants felt a sense of loss of previous SA communities and lost a sense of connection with SA altogether. While participants generally enjoyed the new autonomy of their faculty roles, they missed the sense of working together toward common goals. Additionally, participants talked about a lack of leadership and guidance for faculty. This study can serve to inform faculty orientation and onboarding for former SA professionals. By stating the differences between the work and the communities of each culture, new faculty will have an understanding that this is part of the shift rather than a shortcoming of their departments or their own abilities to navigate the job transition. Perhaps most importantly,

this work provides insight into the experience for SA practitioners considering a move into faculty roles.

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# Relationship between Required Corequisite Learning and Success in College Algebra

**Amy Smith** (Georgia Southern University)

*This study sought to answer if a relationship existed between required corequisite support and success in gateway College Algebra courses. Complete College America and Complete College Georgia initiatives over the last ten years have sought ways to increase access to higher education with high progression and completion rates. Efforts such as the Momentum Year in University System of Georgia schools utilize developmental corequisite courses for gateway English and Mathematics to ensure early success and progression. This study used a chi-square test to analyze two groups of new freshmen and their success in College Algebra—one group who participated in corequisite learning ( $n=55$ ) and one group who did not participate in corequisite learning ( $n=158$ ), finding that a higher proportion of students succeed in College Algebra when also enrolled in corequisite support.*

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In 2009, Complete College America (CCA) was developed as a nonprofit organization to focus on increasing access to higher education and degree completion in the United States (Complete College America, n.d.). CCA has six main strategies to help students succeed in earning a post-secondary credential: 15 to Finish, Math Pathways, Corequisite Support, Momentum Year, Academic Maps with Proactive Advising, and A Better Deal for Returning Adults (Complete College America, n.d.). These strategies are also part of Complete College Georgia (CCG), the state-level program stemming from CCA with the same goals, established in 2011 and now administered by the University System of Georgia (USG) (University System of Georgia, n.d.). Degree completion rates in Georgia are far below the national average, according to the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (2018). The Center reported a six-year graduation rate for the fall 2009 cohort pursuing a bachelor's degree of 38.7% whereas the national rate is 53.8%. In late 2017, the USG began implementation of the Momentum Year, one of the original CCA tenets, as a mandatory initiative for all USG institutions. Momentum Year, both at the national CCA level and in the state CCG level, incorporates many of the main CCA tenets, but is focused solely on the freshman year of college to give new students a strong

starting point to propel them through their degrees (Complete College America, n.d.; University System of Georgia, n.d.). Efforts include the use of academic focus areas with specific program maps, taking a fuller schedule, and pushing an academic mindset (University System of Georgia, 2016).

One key performance indicator in successful progression toward a degree—one that is also central to the USG and CCG Momentum Year plan and overall CCA initiatives—is completion of the appropriate gateway (entry-level) math course (Caccagno, Crosta, Bailey & Jenkins, 2007; Denley, 2016; Leinbach & Jenkins, 2008). Corequisite learning, widely discussed in CCA and CCG literature, has been found to facilitate success in gateway courses, including College Algebra (Berryman & Short, 2010; Brower et al., 2017; Denley, 2016; Logue & Watanabe-Rose, 2014; Mireles, Acee, and Gerber, 2014; Royer & Baker, 2018). This instructional model is proposed as a way to increase gateway success through participation in the college-level course alongside a concurrent course using the concept of “just-in-time academic support” (Complete College America, 2019), with remediation and support occurring in real time with gateway course learning. Additionally, corequisite learning can decrease time and cost to degree (Belfield, Jenkins, & Lahr, 2016; Mireles et al., 2014). The USG

has included this model in the Momentum Year with required corequisite support in gateway English and mathematics for students meeting certain criteria including low high school grade point averages (GPA) and college entrance exam scores. The criteria developed for mathematics differ based on the course; College Algebra has a higher exemption threshold, meaning students must have higher GPAs or test scores if they are starting a math sequence with College Algebra (University System of Georgia, n.d.). As of fall 2018, corequisite support is the only learning support option for students, with absolute discontinuation of prerequisite, or foundation, support.

While there is a wide range of research on corequisite learning and success in mathematics, the learning support requirements by the USG were new for the 2018-19 academic year. The purpose and significance of this comparison study was to inform the use of corequisite support for College Algebra and the overall learning support policy of the USG. This quantitative study compared College Algebra grades between two groups of freshmen—one group enrolled in corequisite support and the other group not enrolled in corequisite support—to discern if a relationship existed between required corequisite support and success in gateway College Algebra courses.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The Momentum Year initiative is “a suite of strategies” that lead students “on a path to achieve their educational goals, including successful degree completion and on-time graduation” (University System of Georgia, 2016, para. 1). Corequisite learning policies enacted by the University System of Georgia as part of the Momentum Year are based on evolving theory and research on college persistence, retention, and graduation at institutions across the United States. The use of corequisite learning as a strategy to increase degree completion can be traced through a review of the literature, looking at completion initiatives, gateway course success measures, and developmental learning practices. While still a fairly recent construct in education success theory, corequisite learning was designed out of a desire to find the best student-centered path to achievement.

### College Retention and Graduation

Complete College America (CCA) was developed to address achievement gaps in the growing population enrolled in higher education, noting that undergraduate degree completion rates had not increased in almost 40 years (Complete College America, n.d.). At the time of CCA’s creation, the national six-year graduation rate for a bachelor’s degree

was 55.5%; the national three-year graduation rate for an associate's degree was 29.2% (The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2018). In the time since, rates have not increased much. Shapiro et al. (2017) reported that students who began a degree program at a college or university during the fall of 2011 have a 56.9% six-year degree attainment rate. Additionally, they found variations in completion rates by student type, race and ethnicity, and institution type.

Research showing disparities based on student demographics are plentiful. Race was found to be a powerful predictor in completion with Whites graduating at much higher rates than Blacks, Hispanics, and other minorities (Arcidiacono & Koedel, 2014; Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Fletcher & Tienda, 2010; Tracey & Sedlacek, 1987). Socioeconomic status also played a factor (Castleman & Long, 2016; Goldrick-Rab, Kelchen, Harris & Benson, 2016; Witkow, Huynh & Fuligni, 2015), along with first-generation status (Petty, 2014; Stephens & Hammedani, 2014). Perhaps the top indicator is college preparation, defined as the combination of high school grade point average and college entrance exam scores (Daugherty & Lane, 1999; Pike, Hansen & Childress, 2014).

Aside from student factors that show a predisposition for completion, student success initiatives coordinated by the college or university showed to greatly affect graduation rates. Millea, Wills, Elder, and Molina (2018) pointed out the importance of scholarships and small class sizes. Social integration was noted as a key factor (Daugherty & Lane, 1999), along with determination and grit (Martin, Galentino & Townsend, 2014). However, CCA and CCG initiatives look beyond racial, social, and even incoming academic preparation factors to provide key institutional strategies that move students along their academic path, wherever they begin. CCA and CCG recognize the imbalance by these demographic factors but have developed scalable efforts that work for all students (Complete College America, n.d.). One key piece of these progression plans by CCA and CCG is early student completion of required college-level math and English courses.

### **Gateway Course Completion**

Nearly all core curriculums for associate and bachelor degree programs include at least one entry-level English composition course and one mathematics course, most of which are taken in the first year of college work. Denley's (2016) research in Tennessee showed that students who failed to complete these gateway courses were less likely to

persist and graduate. Denley (2016) reported that community college students who did not pass all three gateway courses in their first year (English Composition I, English Composition II, and general education math) had an 18% six-year graduation rate. Conversely, those who did pass the courses had a 48% graduation rate. Because the completion of these courses can have such an impact on persistence, instructional methods to aid in pass rates are highly sought. Developmental, or remedial, education is the approach most post-secondary institutions use to assist students in mastering the necessary skills to successfully complete gateway English and mathematics courses.

### **Determining the Need for Developmental Learning**

The role of developmental learning is to ensure that academically underprepared students can be successful in college-level course work. Logue (2018) reported that 68% of public community college freshmen and 40% of public four-year college freshmen enroll in at least one developmental course. However, the process of developmental learning has become a method of quality control that weeds out students who cannot complete the remedial work (Attewell, Lavin, Domina, & Levey, 2006). Stu-

dents are selected for participation most often based on high school performance, college entrance exam scores, college placement exam scores, length of time out of the classroom, or even self-selection. A mix of all indicators is considered best practice (Edgecombe & Bickerstaff, 2018; Rutschow & Mayer, 2018; Scott-Clayton, 2012; Woods, Park, Hu & Jones, 2018).

Placement exams are commonly used to assess students for remedial work, evaluating skill levels prior to beginning courses. However, California is moving to rely more on high school work and college entrance exams to decrease the number of students in remedial coursework while also placing them directly into college-level work (Smith, 2017). The University System of Georgia has moved to the exemption method, assuming all students should take a developmental course unless they meet one of many options that include a minimum high school GPA, college entrance exam score, or placement exam score (University System of Georgia, n.d.). Conversely, Attewell et al. (2006) found that placement into developmental coursework was rather arbitrary and varied greatly by institution and institution type.

### **Developmental Learning Support**

The traditional definition of remedial or developmental education refers to prerequisite

courses taken in advance of the gateway course, designed to help an underprepared student learn the skills needed for success in the college-level course. Studies to determine value in remedial education have nearly always been flawed and mixed results have been reported (Bettinger & Long, 2009; Rodriguez, Johnson, Mejia & Brooks, 2017). Recent studies showed that highly underprepared students who take remedial prerequisites have stronger degree completion rates than students who do not take the courses (Bettinger & Long, 2009; Boatman & Long, 2018). However, students on the cusp of being considered college-ready were found to have less success through remediation (Boatman & Long, 2018).

While most colleges and universities are non-selective or open access, there has been a decrease in developmental education offerings over the past 20 years (Attewell et al., 2006; Bahr, 2010; Fair, 2017). This decrease can be attributed to the aforementioned mixed findings from research, increase in time to degree completion, cost to the student, low pass rates, and low persistence rates (Berryman & Short, 2010; Bettinger & Long, 2009; Smith, 2017). Poor pass rates and persistence to the next level seem to be the most influential factors in the discontinuation of developmental education and the call for reformation (Clotfelter, Ladd,

Muschkin & Vigdor, 2015; Complete College America, 2012; Denley, 2016).

With all the controversy surrounding remediation, revised methods have been tested, including accelerated/compressed remediation, modular courses, contextualized experiences, and corequisite learning (Brower et al., 2017; Saxon & Martirosyan, 2017). Research on these areas is burgeoning, but early studies showed positive results. Lucas and McCormick (2007) saw results indicating success at Middle Tennessee State University as the Tennessee Board of Regents pioneered the redesign of developmental learning. More recently, Park, Woods, Hu, Jones, and Tandberg (2018) found that students who self-select into accelerated developmental math courses had the highest subsequent pass rate in their gateway math (over those with no development education or corequisite support). Corequisite learning has garnered the most attention, though, with most developmental models morphing into this pedagogy.

### **Corequisite Learning**

Research on the corequisite model of developmental learning increased in the last two to three years and has become the hallmark of CCA initiatives (Complete College America, 2019) and CCG's Momentum Year initiatives (University System of Georgia, n.d.).

One of the primary goals of CCG and the USG is to increase the successful completion of gateway courses early in a student's academic career through concurrent enrollment in a support class and the college-level course associated with this support class (University System of Georgia, n.d.). Berryman and Short (2010) wrote that Austin Peay State University was one of the first to develop just-in-time learning when Tennessee overhauled all developmental learning, creating Supplemental Learning Assistance with support sections of college courses. Fair's (2017) dissertation asserted that students taking corequisites alongside their math course passed at the same rate as those exempted from developmental/learning support for the same gateway math course. Additional research published by Brower et al. (2017), Complete College America (2012), Denley (2016), Logue and Watanabe-Rose (2014), Mireles et al. (2014), and Royer and Baker (2018) concurred that this method has been successful in student completion. Despite the early success, Edgecombe and Bickerstaff (2018) argued that while corequisite learning is a step in the right direction, learning support does not end with 30 credit hours; and it should be integrated throughout the academic experience.

There are numerous side benefits to the corequisite model when compared to the

more traditional sequential developmental courses prior to the credit-bearing gateway course. Developmental learning has always been concerning as it adds to cost and time to degree (Lucas & McCormick, 2007; Mitchell, 2014; Scott-Clayton & Rodriguez, 2014); the corequisite model helps to combat these shortfalls by putting students directly into their required core courses, saving the time and money required to complete prerequisite courses prior to enrollment (Belfield, Jenkins, & Lahr, 2016; Mireles et al., 2014).

### **Success in Gateway Algebra**

Nearly all students earning a bachelor's degree completed an entry-level math course, and many of them likely took College Algebra, regardless of their program of study. Recent placement trends, however, focus on appropriate math pathways for students based on their major (Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, 2018; Merseth, 2011). College Algebra should be for students progressing to Calculus, which narrows down the population needing this traditionally challenging course (Complete College America, 2019). This shift not only places students in a more useful course for their degree, but also decreases the number of students needing developmental courses. Rutschow, Diamond, and Wallender (2017) wrote that 50-70% of community college stu-

dents enter unprepared to take College Algebra with less than 20% ever passing the course. Rodriguez et al. (2017) found significantly higher success rates for California community college students taking statistics or compressed algebra pathways over the traditional algebra paths. Completion barriers like this are key to CCA and CCG initiatives and were recently implemented in USG colleges and universities, along with the new corequisite model for gateway mathematics learning.

Reviewing the literature on college completion initiatives, gateway course success programming, and developmental learning systems showed that corequisite learning is the trending best practice, adopted by national and state college completion groups. Research on corequisite success is still limited, however, especially in conjunction with higher level gateway math courses like College Algebra. This study adds to the literature in this area of educational pedagogy and informs future practice.

## METHODS

With corequisite learning now the sole method of college readiness coursework in Georgia, and little definitive research on its success thus far, there is a need to examine early trends of student performance. This study begins that work, comparing students

at one institution who completed corequisite support for College Algebra with those who did not.

## Participants

Participants for this study were enrolled at a public Carnegie Doctoral/R2 comprehensive institution in the University System of Georgia offering associate, bachelor, master, and doctoral degrees. This multi-campus institution enrolled over 26,000 students for the fall 2018 term with over 87% undergraduate enrollment. Participants were from the fall 2017 (3,561 students) and fall 2018 (4,362 students) cohorts of new freshmen enrolled at one campus of the university. Institutional Research from the university defined the student records provided: “first-time freshmen are first-time, full-time, degree-seeking only” and “includes first-time summer and fall students” as well as “advanced placement students above the freshman level and joint enrolled students becoming regular students (Institutional Research, personal communication, February 13, 2019). These groups were narrowed down to represent (1) fall 2017 students who took College Algebra during the fall 2017 term and would have been required to enroll in corequisite support if the USG requirement had been in place during their enrollment, and (2) fall 2018 students who took College Algebra during the fall 2018 term and were also enrolled in—

and completed—required corequisite support.

To prepare the fall 2017 cohort for analysis, student records meeting the following criteria were removed: had a summer matriculation term, were considered freshmen transfers, did not have a MATH 1111 (College Algebra) grade, had a MATH 0999 (corequisite support) grade, and had a MATH 1111 W or WF grade. Next, each MATH 0999 exemption criteria was applied to remove students who would have been exempt had the requirement been in place for fall 2017: Area A math credit, math placement index over 1265, high school grade point average over 3.40, ACT math test equal to or over 20, old SAT math test score equal to or over 470, redesigned SAT

math test score equal to or over 25.5, or ACCUPLACER elementary algebra score equal to or over 79. After all record removal, 158 records remained.

To prepare the fall 2018 cohort for analysis, student records meeting the following criteria were removed: had a summer matriculation term, were considered freshmen transfers, did not have a MATH 1111 grade, did not have a MATH 0999 grade, and had a MATH 0999 or MATH 1111 W or WF grade. Two additional students were found to have met exemption criteria as listed above but still enrolled in MATH 0999; both student records were removed. After all record removal, 55 records remained. Table 1 shows a demographic overview of the two groups.

**Table 1. Cohort Demographics**

<b>Cohort</b>	<b>Mean Age</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>
Fall 2017 ( <i>No Corequisite</i> ) ( <i>n=158</i> )	18.22	55.1% female 44.9% male	4.4% American Indian/Alaskan Native 1.9% Asian 25.9% Black/African-American 5.7% Hispanic 1.9% Two+ Races 59.5% White 2.5% Unknown
Fall 2018 ( <i>Corequisite</i> ) ( <i>n=55</i> )	19.05	43.6% female 56.3% male	3.6% American Indian/Alaskan Native 0.0% Asian 40.0% Black/African-American 14.5% Hispanic 3.6% Two+ Races 36.4% White 1.8% Unknown



The fall 2017 group who did not take the corequisite course tended to be slightly younger than the fall 18 group who did participate in the corequisite course. The fall 17 group was majority female whereas the fall 18 group was majority male. The groups presented slightly different race/ethnicity breakdowns as well, with the fall 17 cohort being over half white, followed by just over a quar-

ter Black/African-American. The fall 18 cohort, however, was 40% Black/African-American followed by 36% White. Hispanic students also made up a larger portion for fall 18 group than for fall 17. Both groups are representative of the overall university demographics in age, sex, and race/ethnicity. An overview of the groups' academic achievements is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Cohort Academic Achievement Means**

<b>Cohort</b>	<b>Mean High School GPA</b>	<b>Mean SAT Total Score</b>	<b>Mean ACT Composite Score</b>
Fall 2017 (No Corequisite)	2.86	1049.64	21.73
Fall 2018 (Corequisite)	2.70	1040.32	20.15

The fall 2017 group had a higher mean high school grade point average, SAT total score, and ACT composite score than the fall 2018 group. It is important to note that admissions requirements changed for fall 2018 incoming freshmen at the university studied. The minimum high school grade point average rose from a 2.0 to a 2.5. The SAT total lowered from a 1090 to a 1030, and the ACT composite lowered from a 21 to a 20.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Data were gathered at a single point in time and included multiple demographic points,

information related to corequisite support requirements, corequisite course grades, and College Algebra course grades. The independent variable was enrollment in College Algebra corequisite support and the dependent variable was the grade earned in College Algebra. Descriptive statistics were used to show frequency (count and percent) and central tendency (mean) of sample students' age, sex, and race/ethnicity as well as mean of academic achievement levels. A chi-square analysis was used to determine if a relationship exists between the noted variables.

Data were provided from the university's Department of Institutional Research and the primary point of comparison for this study was earned grades in College Algebra. College Algebra was graded on a letter scale of A, B, C, D, or F; passing—or successful—grades include A, B, and C. The university catalog description for College Algebra, or MATH 1111, defines the course:

This course provides an in-depth study of the properties of algebraic, exponential and logarithmic functions as needed for calculus. Emphasis is on using algebraic and graphical techniques for solving problems involving linear, quadratic, piece-wise defined, rational, polynomial, exponential, and logarithmic functions.

The differentiation between comparison groups is Support for College Algebra, or MATH 0999. The University System of Georgia provided this course description:

This Learning Support course provides corequisite support in mathematics for students enrolled in MATH 1111 – College Algebra. Topics will parallel topics being studied in MATH 1111 and the course will provide support for the essential quantitative skills needed to be successful in MATH 1111. Taken with MATH 1111, this course provides an in-

depth study of the properties of algebraic, exponential and logarithmic functions as needed for calculus. Emphasis is on using algebraic and graphical techniques for solving problems involving linear, quadratic, piece-wise defined, rational, polynomial, exponential and logarithmic functions. (University System of Georgia, n.d.)

### Limitations

Several limitations were found prior to and during this study. Because this study looked at specific cohorts affected by state governing board policy changes, it is not one that could be replicated. Also, there were small and uneven population counts between the two groups. Prior to receiving the data sets, it was expected that the fall 2017 group would be smaller than the fall 2018 group due to new lower admission criteria. The opposite was true, however, with the fall 2018 group being one third the size of the fall 2017 group. Upon review of additional policy with the Director of the Academic Success Center at the university studied, this is attributed to better student placement into the appropriate math for their respective majors (personal communication, February 13, 2019).

Another limitation is that the review was only of the first cohort of students since implementation of the College Algebra

corequisite requirement. Over time, staff and faculty could modify instructional methods for this new course leading to changes in outcomes. It should also be noted that most of the previous research in the area of corequisite learning is regarding lower-level mathematics courses and not College Algebra. As a higher-level math course with higher exemption criteria, comparison to other research may be considered less applicable. While that does not impact the findings of this study, it is inaccurate to fully equate it to previous research, supporting the case for additional study on this level or course.

### FINDINGS

This study sought to answer if a relationship existed between required corequisite sup-

port and success in gateway College Algebra courses. The results of the chi-square test for independence were significant ( $X^2 = 4.593$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = 0.32$ ), confirming the presence of a significant relationship between these variables. Earned grades of A, B, and C in College Algebra (MATH 1111) were grouped as they are the successful, passing grades. Earned grades of D and F were grouped as they are the non-successful grades. Table 3 shows these groupings, with a larger portion of A, B, C grades for the fall 2018 group (72.7%) than the fall 2017 group (56.3%). From this analysis, it can be determined that students who enrolled in a corequisite math course did better in College Algebra than those who did not enroll in the corequisite.

**Table 3. College Algebra (MATH 1111) Grades by Cohort**

<b>Cohort</b>	<b>MATH 1111 A, B, C Grades</b>	<b>MATH 1111 D, F Grades</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Fall 2017 (No Corequisite)	89 56.3%	69 43.7%	158 100%
Fall 2018 (Corequisite)	40 72.7%	15 27.3%	55 100%

## DISCUSSION

Higher education is facing a number of obstacles: greater scrutiny of success measures like retention, progression, and graduation; shifts in the demographics of high school graduates with a majority of minority racial and ethnic groups; overall decreases in high school graduates; and increases in adult learners. All these issues have led to new methods of course support with a focus on remediation. The University System of Georgia recognized that successful remediation can be key to progression for many students and corequisite learning is central to their efforts. The purpose of this comparison study was to inform the use of corequisite support for College Algebra and the overall learning support policy of the USG, determining if early success could be found at the institution studied.

Results of this study showed that students who took the corequisite support course (MATH 0999) alongside College Algebra (MATH 1111) earned an A, B, or C grade at a rate of 72.7%, whereas students who did not participate in corequisite learning earned those passing grades at a rate of 56.3%. The outcomes of this research is consistent with findings from Brower et al. (2017), Complete College America (2012, 2019), Denley (2016), Logue and Watanabe-Rose (2014), Mireles et al. (2014), and Royer and Baker (2018), all of which asserted that

corequisite learning support produced positive results in gateway course completion.

Brower et al. (2017) looked at different versions of scaffolding for learning support—using additional knowledge or support to build up the student's own independent knowledge. Examining mathematics in Florida, Brower et al. (2017) found that corequisite learning was just one example of these methods, but all focus groups agreed on the positive effects of concurrent support through corequisite work.

Complete College America has been touting the success of corequisite coursework for years, and the *Spanning the Divide* website used early data from Georgia to back up the focus on the topic (Complete College America, 2019). CCA presented the national rate of gateway math completion within two years using traditional foundation remediation at 22% with the Georgia completion rate of gateway math within one year using corequisite remediation at 63%. This study showed completion of College Algebra as a gateway math within one semester with corequisite remediation at nearly 73%.

Denley (2016) presented research from Tennessee, showing higher retention rates of students who learned using corequisite models versus prerequisite models, tying success in gateway coursework to progression. Denley's research supported the longitudinal study by Logue and Watanabe-Rose

(2014) finding that students who took the corequisite support version of math instead of the prerequisite earned more credits early on in their college work, passed future math courses, and graduated at higher rates than those who started in the foundational prerequisite courses. And while Logue and Watanabe-Rose's work (2014) varied from the current study as a controlled experiment looking at a lower level of mathematics, inferences can be made that these students may be more prepared for future courses than their counterparts from the previous year.

Royer and Baker (2018) tracked changes in success with math learning support as the subject institution moved from traditional support to corequisite support, finding more students completed their gateway math and did so in less time. While this study did not compare students who previously would have begun in lower-level math to then reach College Algebra, the fact that corequisite support is required instead of a prerequisite means that more students enroll in College Algebra and therefore are eligible to complete it. This assertion was the finding by Mireles et al. (2014) as well.

### IMPLICATIONS

Despite the noted limitations, this study is promising, indicating that corequisite support can lead to greater success for students enrolled in College Algebra. It could also be

used to inform expanded models of corequisite learning for more students in additional courses with traditionally high D, F, W rates. This research should be shared with key constituents including the Director of the Academic Success Center, Associate Provost, and Vice President for Enrollment Management. University System of Georgia staff working with Learning Support policy should also consider the implications of this research. These key players can review this study as they look toward new policies or ways to implement existing policies.

Many new options for support are being explored, including embedded peer support and supplemental instruction. Supplemental instruction (SI), a system that uses peers to prepare informal study sessions outside of class in courses that commonly see high numbers of unsuccessful grades, is seeing early traction at Georgia State University (GSU), including resolutions from their Student Government Association to offer more sections ("Georgia State's SGA", 2016). The university studied plans to pilot embedded peer support, similar to the GSU SI, in the summer of 2019 through a summer bridge program. Research from Brower et al. (2017) found success in the peer support models as well. Continuation of these programs could further enhance achievement as they are consistent with corequisite just-

in-time support theory. As higher education professionals who work in student success and persistence initiatives design mechanisms to enhance students progression, these types of programs should be considered. Certainly the new USG policies on corequisite learning should continue, with additional research to strengthen practices.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH

Due to a small sample size and specific campus reviewed, it is recommended that this study be replicated with additional cohorts and campuses at the university studied, along with different institutions, to increase the number and types of students reviewed. The university studied has a level of selectivity and most admitted students are exempt, or close to exempt, from taking the corequisite learning support course with College Algebra. Boatman and Long (2018) found that students near college-readiness levels were less successful with remediation efforts, so a study of success at state colleges with open access enrollment may be useful. Conversely, Managan's 2019 report in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* asserted that students far removed from content—adult learners in particular—had significant struggles without foundational coursework. Studies considering these variables could produce a larger number of students, lower academic achievement levels, and a greater

age span. Examining outcomes at state colleges would provide a better indication of the large-scale impact of remediation through corequisite learning. Demographic variables could also be reviewed within each student group.

While this study focused on College Algebra, corequisite learning is now in place for all college gateway math courses as well as English. There is extensive room to study the move away from foundational level learning support to a solely corequisite model. Also, there are specific criteria used for exemption from these courses. Students who exempted could be examined to assess if all exemption criteria have equal relationships to grades in the gateway courses. And finally, it could be insightful to examine the Calculus grades of those who moved beyond College Algebra with corequisite support. While the course seemed to assist them in passing their gateway math, an additional research question could be if students were prepared for the next math in their sequence.

### CONCLUSION

It is critical that academic success professionals, enrollment managers, and higher education administrators continue to seek successful ways to ensure student progression and degree completion. Early research on corequisite support for gateway courses, as supported by this study, shows great

promise in using just-in-time support and instructional scaffolding to give students the supplemental help to move them along their degree path. Additional University System of Georgia research and policy is needed to ensure scalable methods to meet the Complete

College America and Complete College Georgia initiatives with system-level support, as has been implemented with corequisite learning this past year.

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# Understanding the Experiences of Provisionally Admitted Black Male College Students in the State of Georgia

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*Colleges and universities, both within Georgia and nationwide, admit students who do not fully meet institutional admission standards. Typically referred to as provisional admits, the students then have requirements they must meet in order to gain full admission status. In Georgia, small percentages of provisionally admitted students graduate on time. Coupled with nationwide graduation rates for Black male students, the number of Black male provisionally admitted students who graduate on time is concerning low. Further understanding of this phenomenon is needed to better support Black male students who enter Georgia institutions with provisional admission status. The purpose of the study was to explore perceptions of first-time, full-time Black male provisionally accepted students to achieve a clear understanding of factors that contribute to their academic success. The researcher utilized a phenomenological approach and multiple methods of data collection. This resulted in rich data that has been categorized into the overarching themes of “a provisional opportunity” and “family matters.” Implications for student affairs professionals, faculty, and other stakeholders are provided, as well as recommendations for future research on provisionally admitted Black male college students.*

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College students arrive on campus with various levels of academic readiness. Colleges and universities, both within the state of Georgia and nationwide, provisionally admit students who do not fully meet institutional admission standards. These students may not have a high enough Grade Point Average (GPA), high school class rank, and/or standardized test scores (Adebayo, 2008; Palmer & Davis, 2012). As provisionally admitted students are particularly at risk for non-degree completion (Adebayo, 2008; Nora & Crisp, 2012), institutions have established requirements for the population to meet in order to gain full admission status. These include provisions such as remedial coursework, minimum GPA requirements, required tutoring, and supplemental academic advising (Heaney & Fisher, 2011). These conditions, coupled with factors such as socioeconomic status, precollege experiences, and self-efficacy, may have a significant impact on Black male students' social and academic experience within the higher education setting (Harper, 2012).

According to the University System of Georgia (USG), 37% of the student population at two-year state colleges and 18% of the student population at four-year state universities require remediation. More specifically, two-year state colleges have only 7% three-year graduation rate among provisionally accepted students; four-year state

universities have a 25% six-year graduation rate among the population (USG, 2016). State institutions are responsible for the most significant increase in graduation rates over the past ten years because of their accessibility nationwide (Doyle, 2010). State institutions provide admission and learning opportunities for students who otherwise would not be eligible to apply for admission, through provisional acceptance. In Georgia, these are students who do not meet minimum admission requirements such as acceptable scores on standardized tests such as the SAT and ACT and/or a minimum high school GPA (USG, 2016).

The purpose of the study was to explore perceptions of first-time, full-time Black male provisionally accepted students to achieve a clear understanding of factors that contribute to their academic success. The insights gained from this phenomenological study will help student affairs professionals, faculty, and stakeholders understand more clearly how provisionally admitted Black male students' lived experiences influence their self-efficacy, sense of autonomy, and collegiate experience. If needed, professionals can initiate early intervention opportunities for these students to become more engaged in their academic journey. The research question addresses students' perspectives of challenges and significant issues faced during the first academic year as

well as factors contributing to the success of those students participating in this study.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The intersection of race, gender, and other social identities complicate how students experience the college environment. In a multi-institutional study of 40 Black men engaged in campus life, Brooms (2017) discussed the concept of “Blackmaleness”, a framework originally developed by Matua (2006). According to Matua (2006), Black men develop identities and coping strategies due to societal forces that impede their success. Matua noted that Black men often encounter suspicion, have fewer opportunities, and face oppression because they are “both Black and men; that is, Black men are oppressed by gendered racism” (p. 6). Brooms (2017) indicated that framing research on Black male college students around the concept of Blackmaleness is beneficial as it provides context for the challenges Black males experience in society and how being Black and being male influences one’s college experience.

Harper’s (2012) qualitative study “The National Black Male College Achievement Study” focused on Black undergraduate men at 42 different college sites. The 219 study participants were Black males who had been successful in postsecondary education. Harper discussed the many factors

influencing the academic success, retention, and graduation rates of the population. These factors were categorized in three areas: precollege socialization readiness (family support, K-12 experiences, and college preparatory resources), college achievement (classroom experiences, engagement outside of class, and supplemental educational experiences), and post-college success (enrollment in graduate schools and career readiness). Harper found less than 50% of Black males graduated on time compared to nearly 80% of White males (2012).

Further, Superville (2015) asserted there was an increased graduation rate gap between Black and Caucasian males by nearly 20 points from 2009-2010 and 2012-2013, nationally. In 2012, the national graduation rate for Black males was 59% and 80% for White males (Superville, 2015). Superville noted of the 48 reporting states, 35 reported Black male high school graduation rates were lowest of all races and ethnicities when gender was also considered (20%). Georgia was included among the bottom six states with low Black male graduation rates, more specifically Richmond County (27%) and Chatham County (27%) (Superville, 2015). He contended it is difficult to find true data regarding graduation rates as it is often times manipulated by the state. The research provides insight on pre-college factors and missed opportunities to learn, for example,



the excessiveness of Black male students identified as special needs and receiving out-of-school suspension. These factors may have a direct effect on this group of students' college readiness as only 16-20% graduate from college in Georgia (Superville, 2015).

According to Jenson (2011), several factors influence retention on an individual level (educational achievement, assertiveness, and contentment), institutional (academic commitment), and social and external level (social and familial support). These factors illustrate the multi-layered obstacles students contend with as they try to matriculate and successfully adjust both academically and socially. These factors also influence student success. Jenson (2011) suggested students' ability to integrate into a new environment is based on past experiences such as their academic performance in high school, personal characteristics, and social skills. Black male students often struggle with this transitional and integrative experience.

Community colleges, according to Cooper (2010), provide growing academic opportunities for millions of students. These institutions have policies that support open admissions for students with college deficiencies, have flexible course schedules, and are cost effective. Cooper focused on the social support and services at community colleges as opposed to larger universities to

compare the success of students. These support services improved the academic success, including retention and persistence of students needing remediation (Cooper, 2010). The following examples of social support systems found on community college campuses have been found to help improve the academic success of students requiring remediation: academic guidance and advising, student success courses, learning communities, financial aid advice and support, and social networks (Cooper, 2010).

Flowers (2006) reported Black males struggled with academic and social integration at both two-year state colleges and four-year state universities. He noted Black males experienced lower levels of academic and social integration and engagement at two-year colleges than at four-year institutions. In short, what works at four-year colleges may not hold true at two-year colleges for Black males. The mission of community colleges is to provide "open-access to post-secondary opportunities for under-served communities" (Wood & Williams, 2013, p.2). Wood and Williams (2013) indicated Black male students represent 55% of enrolled students at two-year institutions. Of the total Black male population enrolled in two-year institutions, 82% of Black male students will enroll in public two-year colleges. In their research, Wood and Williams used two-year colleges and community colleges

interchangeably. The authors asserted this population of students enroll in community colleges because the institutions are flexible and facilitate a smooth transition while meeting their social and economic needs.

Although community colleges provide open opportunities for the under-served, Wood and Williams (2013) suggested factors influencing persistence, achievement, and graduation cause nearly 12% of Black males to drop out one year after enrolling, and 83% after 6 years without completing their program of study. The purpose of their study was to inform administrators of community colleges of the factors that affect academic success and persistence of Black males. Wood and Williams (2013) bridged the gap in literature by exploring the experiences of Black male students enrolled in community colleges compared to those enrolled in four-year institutions.

Wood, Newman, and Harris III (2015) explored self-efficacy as a determinant of academic integration among Black males in community college. Using data from the National Center of Educational Statistics Educational Longitudinal Study, the authors examined 212,703 Black male community college students enrolled in 2006. Specifically exploring math and English self-efficacy, Wood et al. (2015) found that math self-efficacy was predictive of several academic integration measures, including discussing

academics with faculty, meeting with advisors, and using library resources; English self-efficacy was not found to be statistically significant. Wood et al. (2015) provide programmatic and curricular implications applicable to both community colleges and four-year institutions. Programs designed to aid students in the transition from high school such as summer bridge, learning communities, and first year experience programming were of particular note. The researchers highlight remedial course offerings and availability of student support services as additional implications. Finally, the authors stress the importance of meeting with faculty and academic advisors, describing them as “integral to student persistence and success” (p. 15) among the population. The authors suggest strategies such as faculty requiring students to meet during office hours and academic advisors utilizing an intrusive advising model, particularly for Black men with lower levels of self-efficacy in the researched areas (2015).

McCarron and Inkelas (2006) and Bryan and Simmons (2009) both conducted studies on first-generation college students and the importance of family support systems. In McCarron and Inkelas’s (2006) quantitative study of 1879 students, parental involvement played a significant role in the degree attainment aspirations of first generation college students. For participants in

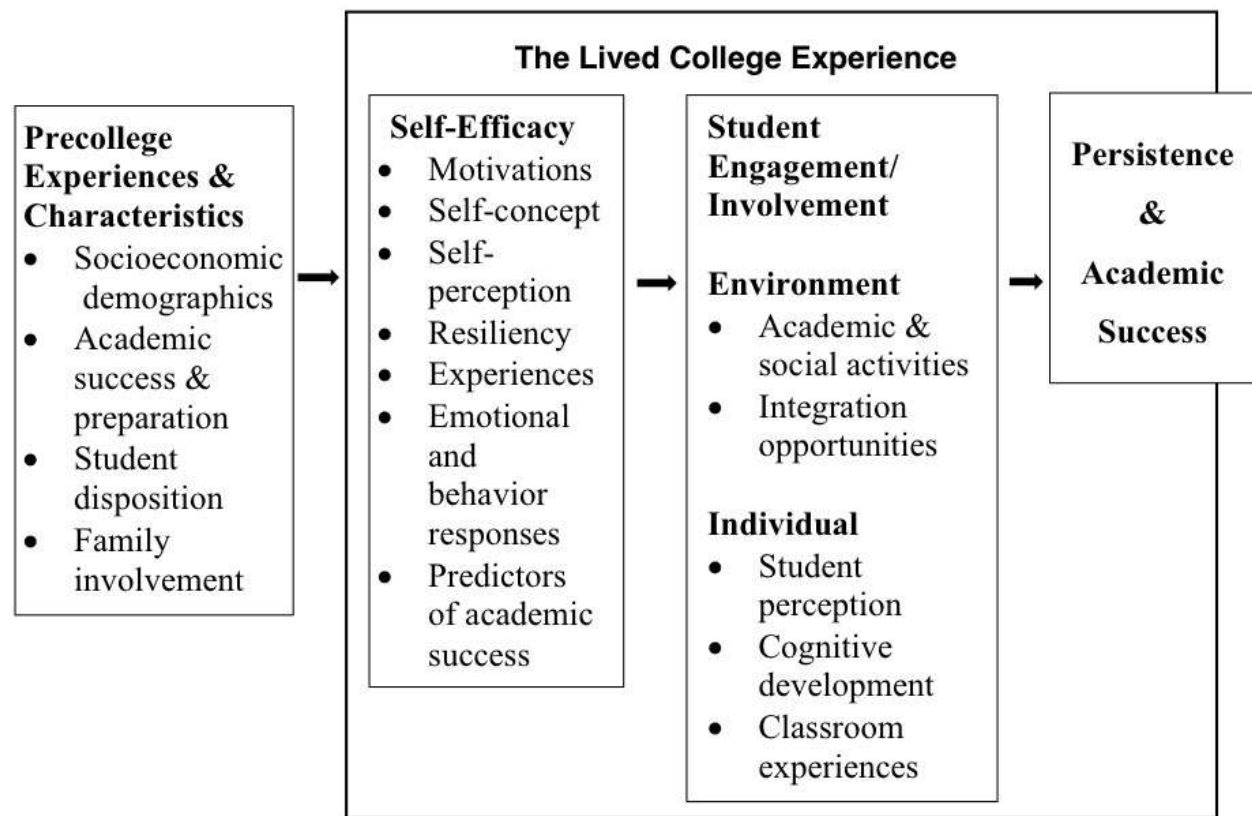
their study, home-based involvement such as discussions with parents about school had the biggest influence on their degree aspirations. Bryan and Simmons's (2009) qualitative study of 10 first-generation college students from the Appalachian region of the United States found several themes relating to family support systems: close-knit families and communities, separate identities [from their families], pressure to succeed, returning home, and the pervasiveness of poverty. The authors noted that for participants, "family relationships... have proven to be of the utmost importance in creating an atmosphere conducive to postsecondary educational success" (p. 404). While their study was specific to first-generation students, the findings can be applied to other marginalized populations, included Black male students.

### **Conceptual Framework**

To gain an in-depth understanding of the lived-experiences of first-time, full-time, provisionally accepted Black male students, it is essential to also discover the essence of those experiences by analyzing relevant literature and reputable research. The research focused on Black male participants' college experiences and self-efficacy through the lens of Pascarella's General

Causal Model. According to Pascarella's (1985) General Causal Model, there is a significant relationship between the organization, its environment, and student retention. According to Mayhew, Pascarella, and Terenzini (2016), there are five major factors affecting student retention: students' circumstantial and pre-college experiences, the organization as a whole, the overall institutional setting, student interactions with other students and faculty and staff, and the value of student determination. It is possible that limitations and restrictions along with other varying factors and experiences by first-time, full-time, provisionally accepted students may have an impact on retention and graduation rates (2016).

There are many factors that influence student persistence and academic success, student retention, engagement, motivation, and ultimately their lived-experiences (Pascarella, 1985). The following experiential framework illustrates how students' pre-college characteristics and experiences along with their perceived self-efficacy influence their lived experiences (Figure 1). Pascarella's (1985) General Causal Model is significant for evaluating the effects of varying college environments as it relates to student learning and cognitive development.



**Figure 1. Experiential flow chart for the lived college experiences: How experiences and self-efficacy influence the college experience, persistence, and academic success.**

## METHODS

The researcher explored the lived experiences and perceptions of provisionally admitted Black male students at state institutions in Georgia to address the following research question: What are the common perceptions of provisionally admitted Black male students that influence their academic success at colleges and universities within the University System of Georgia? Data were collected using 90-minute in-person interviews, a Skype follow-up interview, and a 90-minute Skype focus group. The richness of data from the in-person interviews helped

construct the questions for the follow-up Skype interview and focus group.

Participants reflected on their provisional admittance and beginning college; the researcher gained an understanding of perceptions of their lived experiences. Potential participants were selected based on information gained from Georgia state institutions that provisionally admit students. Each campus's office of institutional research provided a list of full-time students who self-identified as "Male" and "Black" or "African American" on their demographic records, and who were provisionally admitted by the institution; a

total of eight students self-selected to participate in this study. Table 1 provides an overview of the participants' pseudonyms, age,

classification, major, institution type, and participation in student support services and involvement in clubs or organizations.

**Table 1. Participant Profiles**

Participant	Age	Classification	Major	Stu. Supp.	GPA	Org.	1 <sup>st</sup> Gen	C/U
Dexter	19	Sophomore	Marine Science	Yes	2.43	No	No	U
Eddie	19	Sophomore	Behavioral Analysis	Yes	1.65	Yes	Yes	C
Hawk	19	Sophomore	Chemistry	Yes	2.0	No	Yes	C
Hernandez	20	Sophomore	Engineering	Yes	1.69	Yes	No	C
Larry	20	Junior	History	Yes	2.5	No	No	U
Quincy	20	Freshmen	Mass Comm.	Yes	2.0	No	No	U
Ralph	19	Freshmen	Chemistry	Yes	2.0	No	No	C
Ronnie	19	Sophomore	C.I.S.	Yes	2.6	No	No	U

*Note: Stu. Support = Utilized Student Support Services, Org. = Organizational Involvement, 1<sup>st</sup> Gen = First Generation College Student, C = State College, U = State University*

The study was limited by the participants' degree of comfort and ease discussing personal experiences and feelings during the interviews and focus groups. It included four institutions within Georgia: two state colleges and two state universities. The findings are not generalized to all state colleges or state universities. Participants were asked to reflect on their lived experiences with the phenomenon of being a provisionally admitted Black male college student. To achieve the goals of this research, a purposeful, inductive approach was used to identify similarities of responses within the emerging data and to identify relationships between the participants and their personal

experiences and the context in which they both exist.

Data were transcribed, coded, and categorized. Using Strauss's (1987) process of classification reasoning, the researcher determined connections and themes, established categories, and analyzed the data according to patterns of similarity, frequency, causation, and sequence. Using multi-method triangulation as a reflexive process, the researcher aimed to ensure the interpretations of the participants' responses were accurate and unbiased. Once the participants agreed their responses were reflected accurately, the researcher considered the data trustworthy. To ensure both

methodological approaches support the limited ideologies of this phenomenon, the researcher employed multi-method triangulation using interviews and focus groups to build a rationalization of the themes and to ensure internal credibility. Semi-structured, one-on-one interviews captured the individuals' accounts of the phenomenon. To collect a general account of the phenomenon, the researcher conducted focus groups to verify and test the trustworthiness of the data retrieved from the interviews. By integrating the data from the individual interviews with data from the focus groups, the researcher added to the limited knowledge of this phenomenon by establishing a systematic guide for further research.

The following results provide an overview of student perceptions and describe themes associated with the researched question.

## FINDINGS

The results of the interviews and Skype focus groups with eight participants were used to provide insight into the lived experiences of provisionally admitted Black male students as it relates to their academic success. After coding the interviews and Skype focus groups and identifying topics, themes, and sub-themes for both groups, coding analysis was used to analyze the overall themes that were consistent among the participants.

Two overarching themes emerged from the data: "a provisional opportunity" and "family matters."

### A Provisional Opportunity

When considering the impact of the common perceptions of provisionally admitted Black male students, seven out of the eight participants expressed being accepted on a provisional basis was an "opportunity." Participants expressed taking a learning support course was essentially a way in. The participants acknowledged their academic deficiency from high school and during their first semester as "a struggle or weakness." Moreover, the men expressed there was no uniqueness to being a provisionally accepted student. Larry stated, "If I didn't have my learning support class, it could have been something else. I mean I don't think there is one student on this campus that feels like everything was perfect." These students do not perceive their admission status as unique, but instead as an opportunity.

Most of the participants believed being admitted provisionally was an "opportunity." Ronnie stated, "Though I was given a chance to go to college, I felt labeled. Yes, I struggled in math before, I felt like the class was a waste of time because we didn't do anything in the class. I didn't gain anything from it." He further stated, "I got more help from my roommate than my teacher." In the end,

apart from feeling “labeled,” Ronnie concluded, “I still had this chance, so I had to do something with it. Because someone else could have been accepted in my place.” Though there was initial resistance during the early part of this student’s first semester, he later described his admission as an “opportunity.”

The “opportunity” to be accepted was also described as motivational for some participants. Additionally, responses to questions regarding their overall experience being accepted provisionally, and how it impacted their success included, “It’s like it pushed me more every day.” Quincy stated, “It was a drive. Being provisionally accepted wasn’t going to determine who I am today.” The participants’ admission status was described as not having a negative connotation; seven out of eight participants found being provisionally admitted motivational.

Not all of the factors that impacted success were positive. Hawk admitted, “My laziness causes me not to do well in my classes. But, over the past semester or so, I have to learn how to manage my procrastination.” Hernandez discussed challenges relating to his housing situation, “Because I didn’t live on campus my first semester, I didn’t have access to everything I need to succeed. I had to ride to campus with a friend. The school ran out of housing, so I

had to rent an apartment. So, I struggled initially, but my mom pushes me every day.”

Three participants found there is a uniqueness to being a Black male student separate from being provisionally accepted. Eddie stated, “I think being a Black male altogether is kind of rough though. I feel like some people have different expectations of you as a Black male.” Another participant, Ralph, said:

There are a lot of stipulations that put us down as a culture and as a generation. Some times [sic] in our own race, our struggles are not recognized. For me being in college, many do not realize what I am here for is a daunting task. I feel like the odds have already stacked against us...us being here sets us apart. We are more than a statistic and what you see on T.V in terms of violence. One thing that motivates me is being everything the world says I cannot. So, because this school accepted provisional students, I have the opportunity today achieve great things. Maybe this makes me unique.

Lastly, Hernandez mentioned his professors were aware of the expectations of the world for Black males, so “they try to show us the right ways to handle certain situations and just be smart about what you do.” Statements such as Hernandez’s, as well as the

others above, indicate that regardless of past challenges, students viewed their admission as an opportunity and were willing to work hard to be successful.

### **Family Matters**

Each participant asserted his family motivated him to succeed. While students' families ranged in the amount and type of support they could provide, each played a major role in student success. Two of the participants self-identified as first generation. An additional participant had a parent enroll in college for the first time the semester in which his interview was conducted. Eddie stated, "I come from nothing. I am reminded of where I come from. My family, especially my mother, supports me here in school." Dexter discussed the need to support family, sharing "I want to graduate so, I can take care of my mother." Participants were also asked "What are the factors that impact your ability to succeed?" Ralph stated, "Having my family to support me each step of the way means a lot to me." Eddie expressed, "I don't want to let my mom and family down."

Despite the differences in parental level of education of the participants, the men's family support is similar in terms of encouragement and motivation. The support differs in terms of participants who were not first-generation because of their parental knowledge of financial aid, the admissions

process, and available support systems on campus. Larry smiled ruefully, shook his head, and said, "Man, I know not to call financial aid for anything. My oldest sister could never get anything done over the phone." Quincy exclaimed, "Listen, my mom and I both are not good in math. She had to get help from a tutor on campus." Regardless of parental level of involvement, based on the quotes above, it is clear that this population, "family matters."

### **DISCUSSION**

Each of the two identified themes apply to previous research. The "a provisional opportunity" theme connects to Cooper's (2010) assertion that community colleges provide growing academic opportunities for millions of students. For the purposes of this study, state colleges and universities also provide the same opportunities. All of the institutions have policies in place that support open admissions for students with college deficiencies. Each of the participants had math deficiencies, all having standardized math test scores below the institution's requirement. According to the participants, the three most common support services they frequented were the Writing Center, tutorial services for math, and academic advisement.

The findings of the study represent one of Cooper's (2010) social support systems that are offered at each institution.



Cooper asserted community colleges help students requiring remediation improve their academic success. He found those social support systems included academic guidance and advising, student success courses, and learning communities (Cooper, 2010). Both Ralph and Ronnie discussed using student support services. Ralph stated, "The student tutors really help me out. When I still don't get it, they don't get frustrated. They tried teaching me another way." Ronnie said, "There are some students in the Writing Center that help me out." However, other participants discussed lack of engagement on their campus. "There aren't any groups on campus that focus on one subject" Larry noted; Hawk said, "I wish I can get together with others in my dorm."

The "family matters" theme supports Harper's (2012) qualitative report. Harper contended family support, an element of pre-college socialization, is one of the many factors that influences academic success, retention, and graduation of Black males. The findings of this study also support McCarron and Inkelas (2006) assertion that family support is one of the greatest predictors of academic success and inspiration for first generation college students. Further, while not all participants were first-generation college students, the findings support Bryan and Simmons' (2009) assertion that family relationships and experiences are significant in

promoting social development and academic success.

### **Application to the General Causal Model**

In this research, it was determined pre-college experiences, self-efficacy, and engagement impacted students' perceptions of their lived experiences during the first academic year. The results support Pascarella's (1985) argument regarding the many factors that influence student persistence and academic success, student retention, engagement, motivation, and ultimately lived-experiences.

Family and upbringing played a major role in the precollege experiences for this group. Eddie's statement, "I come from nothing. I am reminded of where I come from. My family, especially my mother, supports me here in school," is indicative of multiple participants, and the Black male population at many institutions. Further, and particularly for this group, provisional admittance status did not negatively impact self-efficacy. Statements such as Larry's "It was a smooth transition. I can't say I had a problem with it, as well as Hawk's "I was confident" and Hernandez's "Provisional acceptance is just a mindset!" indicate that students were confident in their abilities to succeed and would not let their provisional status impact their experience.

Finally, student engagement in campus services was a key factor for participants in this study. While some campus services such as the writing center or tutoring were viewed positively, others, such as financial aid were not. Regardless of perception, those services undoubtedly influenced student lived experiences.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The findings of this study indicate that participants understood they were given a chance to succeed, but acknowledge they need a support system in order to do so. Institutions should assess students' individualized self-efficacy to build understandings of the internal, self-existing, self-perceived competence of provisionally admitted Black male students. Creating increased opportunities for student engagement will allow provisionally accepted Black male students to more easily transition into their college experience, countering potential pre-college characteristics developed in K-12.

Administrators should encourage student affairs professionals and faculty to become more engaged with their students, both inside and outside of the classroom to establish lasting relationships and mentorship. Peer mentoring programs could help first-time, full-time, provisionally accepted Black male students transition successfully as well. As students saw admission to the institution

as "a provisional opportunity," structured mentoring programs could help students succeed with the opportunity. Other structured programming, for example Black Male Initiatives, have been identified as successful in their efforts to improve Black male retention, persistence, and graduation rate. By providing academic and social support, these programs aid Black men in developing a sense of belonging and gaining cultural capital (Arthur, 2017; Brooms, 2017; 2018).

Further, both student affairs professionals and faculty should help the students become engaged on campus. In addition to strategies such as Black Male Initiatives, an assessment of students' interests is needed to evaluate the needs for clubs and organizations offered on campuses. This supports both Harper's (2012) concept of Black male college achievement and Jenson's (2011) factors influencing retention. Even though institutions may offer a variety of clubs and organizations, students may not be aware of them. Larry's comment above, "there aren't any groups on campus that focus on one subject" is an indicator that, at least for Larry, there is a lack of knowledge regarding ways he could get involved. Given that, it is necessary for faculty, student affairs professionals, and undergraduate student leaders to make sure Black male students are not only aware of campus organizations, but that they also feel welcomed to participate.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH

Given the increasing population of students requiring remediation at state institutions, college administrators need to develop a greater understanding of students' precollege experiences and characteristics and perceptions during their first academic year. There is a need for research that explores various assessments of student interests for implementing on-campus organizations and programming. Student involvement and engagement is also a measurement of academic success, integration, and progress. A recommendation is to replicate this study at the same four institutions to determine if any modifications have been made to improve the experience, retention, and graduation rates of provisionally admitted Black male students. An additional recommendation is to reproduce this study in a different setting such as other Georgia institutions or in a different state to determine the impact of participants' precollege characteristics and experiences on academic success.

Further, other areas that could impact a student's self-efficacy and success in college as it applies to provisionally admitted Black male students can be explored. Relationships, technology use, substance use, and peer interactions and influences are some of many topics that could provide additional insight on the population. Finally, research on strategies designed to specifically

support Black male students, such as Black Male Initiatives and other formal mentoring programs, will help develop a greater understanding of not only the students themselves, but of the effectiveness of the programs designed to support their success.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study support the need for assessing institutional programming and organizations to attract the interest of a diverse student body. Additionally, it would be appropriate to consider the effectiveness of student support services such as academic guidance and advising, student success courses, learning communities, informed financial aid support, and social networks. One notable finding was that participants wanted to use campus services, but quickly became aware of which services were perceived as being more or less helpful than others. While no campus service will satisfy every student on every issue, it is imperative that services are viewed positively by students and when problems cannot be resolved, the student understands why they cannot. Student affairs professionals, faculty, and other stakeholders have a responsibility to best aid Black male students as they progress through this "provisional opportunity." Further, it is evident that "family matters" to this population of students. Family supported this population of students, and

the students wanted to support them. Understanding students' backgrounds and the role

that family plays in their lives can be a key piece in helping them succeed.

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# Pedagogical Approach to Developing the Hiring Practices of Higher Education Administrators

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*Most student affairs professionals will serve in a managerial and/or supervisory role at some point in their careers, yet we found only 11% of higher education graduate preparatory programs have required coursework focusing on this competency area. This situation is disconcerting, as there seems to be an assumption within the student affairs field that new professionals have the formal training and experiences needed to immediately be placed into these managerial and/or supervisory roles. In an effort to address this discrepancy, and in particular staffing practices, one higher education graduate preparatory program developed a course on staffing practices using an innovative pedagogical approach rooted in the theoretical framework of experiential learning. This approach enabled future student affairs professionals to apply theory-to-practice and develop the supervision skills they will need in their imminent careers. Recommendations are provided for faculty members, senior administrators, and a general calling for empirical research.*

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As large and complicated organizations, colleges and universities require significant numbers of administrative student affairs positions to facilitate their operation. As such, the importance of student affairs professionals to the academy and the operation of institutions within higher education cannot be understated. Beyond their immediate administrative functions, these professionals take on the following roles: “1) adviser, liaison, advocate, 2) counselor, assessor, conduct officer, 3) service provider, coordinator of programs, and 4) crisis manager, institutional preserver” (Barr, McClellan, & Sandeen, 2014). While their faculty counterparts cultivate student success within the classroom, these administrators play a central and parallel role to that of faculty, developing student success outside the classroom setting. According to Hamrick, Evans, and Schuh (2002) “with the new emphasis on an integrated approach to developing opportunities to foster student learning, student affairs has assumed a position of centrality and expertise in the educational process” (p. 128). Recognizing this elevated role of student affairs professionals in college students’ development and education, there is responsibility for the profession to ensure administrators are adequately prepared.

One of the most obvious areas administrators need formal training and continued professional development is in

supervision and management, sometimes referred to as hiring and staffing practices. While there is a plethora of positions administrators may hold (i.e. academic advising, managing residence halls, coordinating athletics and intramural sports, fundraising, tutoring and writing centers, etc.), a common responsibility will likely be serving as a manager and/or supervisor at some point in their career. For many, this responsibility will be thrust upon them immediately in their first professional position. Unfortunately, the ability to be an effective manager/supervisor does not come naturally to everyone, but rather, it must be intentionally learned and cultivated. There is a perception that if you have been supervised before, then you in turn know how to be a supervisor and that if you are a good employee, you must be a good supervisor. This is the same line of thought as professors not needing to learn to teach because they have observed their own faculty or that they were good students. However, as many professionals know all too well from personal experience, teaching, much like supervision, is not an inherent talent or skill.

While not all graduate preparation programs in student affairs are the same in terms of scope (some more theoretical, others more practical) and focus (administrative or counseling), most are designed to provide students with the requisite knowledge and

skills needed to develop into professionals who can meet the ever-growing challenges and needs of the contemporary college student (Long, 2012). Higher education and student affairs program faculty have the privilege and responsibility to craft curriculum and pedagogical practices to be inclusive, foster development of critical thinking, and provide the academic scaffolding needed to propel students into the student affairs profession. Since hiring and staffing practices are a common responsibility shared by jobs across functional areas within student affairs, it would stand to reason that the development of supervision and management skills would be included within most curricula of graduate preparation programs. This paper provides a cursory examination of the 201 higher education graduate preparatory programs compiled by the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) to determine the prominence of course requirements focused on management and supervision. In addition, an innovative pedagogical approach used within one of these graduate programs with a specific focus on the development of skills related to hiring and staffing practices of future administrators will be illustrated. Recommendations will be provided to graduate program faculty and leaders within higher education administration to further train and develop student affairs

professionals to be effective managers and supervisors.

### **Hiring and Staffing Practices**

Recognizing the importance professional staff have on the success of the university (Hamrick, et al., 2002; Ruben, 2010), effective hiring and staffing practices are critical. Conley, Powers, and Smith (2017) assert "...colleges and universities occupy a unique position within our society that requires them to go beyond effective human resource practices. As learning organizations, they must transcend the tenets of business and industry" (p. 75). To this end, it is apparent that the success of any organization is dependent upon successful hiring and staffing. Winston and Creamer (1997) reinforce this assertion and stress that effective hiring processes are critical as higher education is a reflection of the faculty and staff who shape it. Furthermore, they go on to argue that the most important role of student affairs professionals is the hiring, staffing, supervision, and development of administrators throughout the university. To this end, the intentional professional development of the supervision and management skills of student affairs professionals could be paramount to the success of student affairs and higher education institutions.

It can be argued administrators rely upon how they were taught to do something

(or simply observed it) rather than learning and applying the best practices established and reinforced through empirical research. There are many practices, such as hiring/staffing processes, where administrators may default to their own prior experiences, such as how they were previously interviewed and/or their experience serving on a search committee. Carroll (2014) finds this disconcerting and shares the concern that many supervisors are simply unprepared for this important role, as they assumed this role without formal training to do so effectively. This practice of higher education and student affairs is fundamentally flawed, as it assumes individuals can learn through observation alone. This is a great example of a managerial failure as it is a logical fallacy based on inadequate ideas (Bolman and Deal, 2013). The fact that institutions of higher education place the responsibility of securing the most expensive and important resource (the staff) of their organization on the shoulders of hiring managers that lack formal training is flawed at best and negligent at worst.

The authoritative source on staffing and hiring practices is the work of Winston and Creamer (1997). In their text, *Staffing and Hiring Practices in Student Affairs*, they outline and discuss the central components that future supervisors and managers must be aware of. Despite being the authoritative

text on this subject, it must be noted that a fundamental limitation of its use is the fact it is twenty years old at this point. While there are staples of hiring/staffing practices outlined that are timeless and true to this day, there is clearly a need to incorporate current trends and concerns in higher education (such as the Fair Labor Standards Act, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) rights, financial constraints of universities, and increasing demand for assessment and accountability).

Developing future higher education administrators in the best practices of hiring/staffing that are ethical, efficient, and effective should have a rippling impact on higher education. By improving the hiring/staffing practices, these administrators will strengthen our profession, which will transcend into the academic experience of students (Davenport, 2016). With that being said, it should come as no surprise that dissatisfaction with supervisors can lead to higher turnover rates of employees (Harvey, Stoner, Hochwarter, & Kacmar, 2007; Tepper, 2000; Tull, 2006). Coupling this turnover rate with the high attrition rate of higher education administrators due to low salaries, limited career mobility, geographic restrictions, and lack of professional respect from others within the academe (Bender, 2009; Lorden, 1998; Tull, 2006; Winston & Creamer, 1997) reinforces the need to develop future leaders

in the areas of management and supervision. The saturation of effective supervisors in higher education and student affairs has the potential to mitigate employee concerns and positively influence the attrition rate within the student affairs profession. Supporting this, Ruben (2010) asserts, "Perhaps more so than in many other organizations, the people who work in higher education determine the quality of the programs and services that can be offered" (p.57). Doing so can have a rippling impact throughout higher education, as it will not only strengthen the division of student affairs, but the university as a whole.

### **The Development and Training of Student Affairs Professionals**

Learning should be viewed as a lifelong process extending beyond the years student affairs professionals spend formally in their graduate coursework. Arguably, the greatest learning will come through professional experience as students will apply theory-to-practice and learn first-hand through their successes and failures in working in higher education administration. Graduate program faculty have the opportunity to establish the building blocks of these young professionals' journey as practitioners, but it is only the beginning of their development. With that being said, faculty and senior student affairs administrators should consider forming a

sympiotic partnership, in which both support one another, in this academic preparation.

This academic background should be coupled with professional development throughout the individual's career to make them most effective in their position. Recognizing the lifelong learning of these professionals, it is important for faculty and senior administrators to understand how adults learn (adult learning theory) and develop effective strategies for teaching these professionals in and out of the classroom (Brookfield, 1991; Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 1998; Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007). In doing so, faculty will be able to intentionally shape the academic experience of these graduate programs to complement and be congruent with the learning that will continue long after these students graduate and enter the profession. At that point, the reins are turned over from the faculty to senior administrators who need to continue to foster this learning and professional development of their staff.

Faculty members in higher education and student affairs programs have the ability (and arguably the responsibility) to develop future leaders in their graduate preparatory programs. This growth is critical and should continue in their administrative positions through formal training and professional development within their functional areas. As Roberts (2007) reminds us, professional

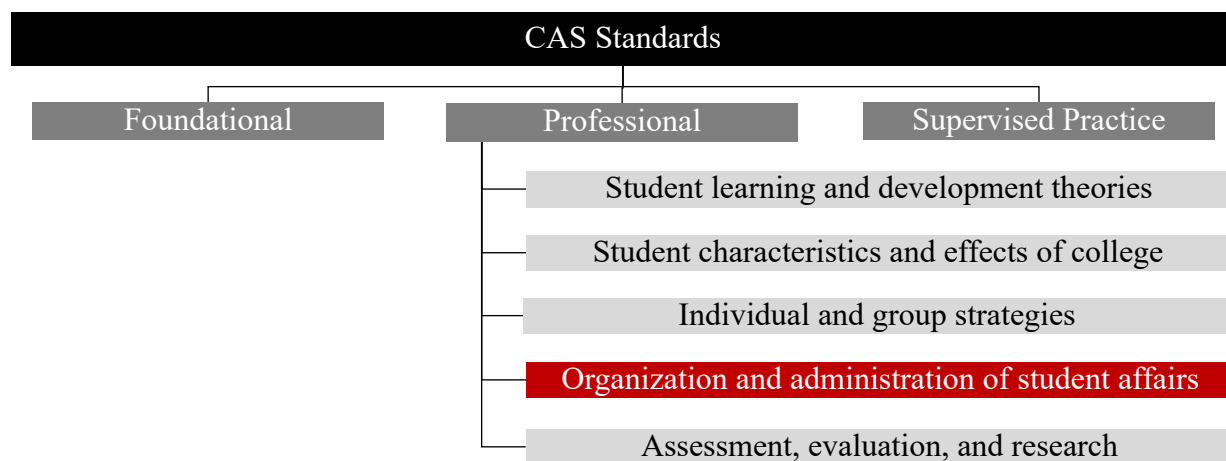
development (in and out of the classroom) is a foundation of student affairs practice within higher education. Ultimately, through this dialogue and professional development (and graduate preparatory programs), faculty have the ability to shape the next generation of leaders in higher education. As faculty within graduate preparatory programs, we recognize this is both a privilege and responsibility, and should not be taken lightly. There is the opportunity to establish an apprenticeship approach that is rooted in theory and best practices. It should be the goal of faculty to develop successful academic leaders. Our commitment to developing these principles in student affairs professionals will foster transformational leadership practices throughout our institutions. This commitment of higher education graduate preparatory faculty can be guided by the principles of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS).

### **Graduate Preparatory Programs and the CAS Standards**

Accreditation systems and academic guidelines are the foundation of the profession and guide the practices of scholar practitioners (McClintock, 2003). A guiding force in

graduate preparatory programs in higher education is the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). The CAS standards recommend “teaching approaches include active collaboration, service-learning, problem-based learning, community-based learning, experiential learning, and constructivist learning. Faculty members should use multiple teaching strategies” (CAS, 2012, p. 9). These pedagogical approaches are multimodal and align with adult learning theory (Knowles, et al., 1998). They are designed to provide an engaging experience for students that fosters the application of theory-to-practice. It is through application that students further develop their critical thinking skills and strengthen their practice.

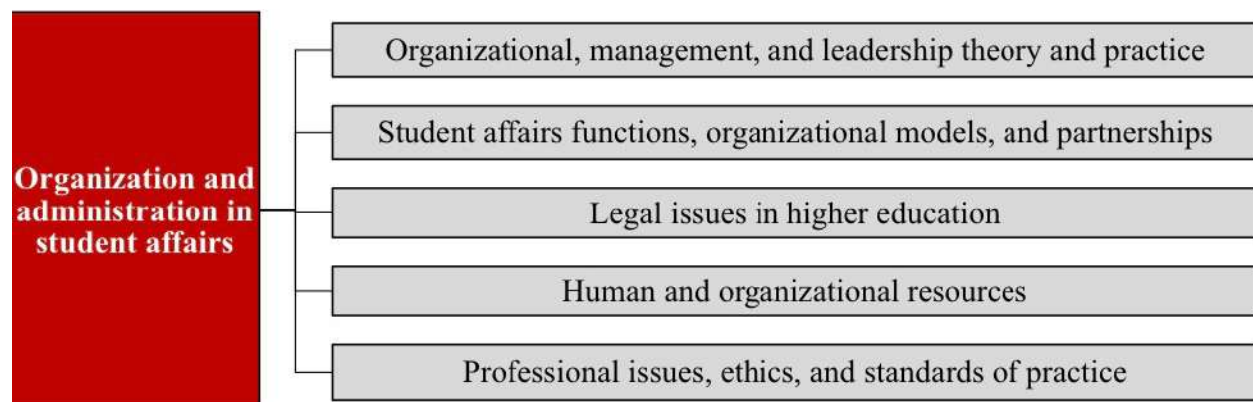
CAS (2012) recommends graduate preparatory programs in higher education address three content areas of study: 1) *foundational studies*, 2) *professional studies*, and 3) *supervised practice*. Of these areas, it is *professional studies* that is directly connected to supervision and management. *Professional studies* outlines five subcategories, of which ‘organization and administration of student affairs’ ties to management and supervision (Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Overview of CAS Standards and subsection of Professional studies.**

Within this subcategory of *professional studies*, there is a call to “include studies of organizational, management, and leadership theory and practice; student affairs functions, organizational models, and partnerships;

legal issues in higher education; human and organizational resources; and professional issues, ethics, and standards of practice in the context of diverse institutional types” (CAS, 2012, p.13) (Figure 2).



**Figure 2. Organization and Administration subsection of Professional Studies**

The inherent challenge in meeting and meaningfully adhering to the CAS Standards is the limited number of courses in graduate programs, which prohibits the inclusion of classes focusing exclusively on each of these components. Arguably, a program

could develop a dozen courses in this area of professional studies alone. While this would allow students to more deeply explore these topics, there simply is not the luxury of affording that many courses in a graduate program to one area. As noted above, there

are three primary content areas of study that programs strive to adhere to from the CAS Standards (*foundational studies, professional studies, and supervised practice*). Simply dividing the 12 courses equally between each of these three areas would result in only four courses being offered from each area in a typical 36-credit Master's degree program. Therein lies the challenge of program coordinators and faculty. Which of these areas warrants in-depth attention of the topic exclusively, and which courses can be combined and/or infused throughout the curriculum? It appears one such area being combined and/or infused is management and supervision.

### **Graduate Courses Focused on Management/Supervision**

An examination of the curriculum of 201 graduate programs in higher education/student affairs compiled on the ASHE website found 23 (11%) programs have a course requirement focusing exclusively on management/supervision. This cursory examination involved looking at the program of study for each graduate program and ascertaining if a course requirement was dedicated to management and supervision practices in higher education. The criteria for this categorization was identifying course titles clearly focusing on management or supervision. When available, course descriptions/syllabi were

reviewed to confirm these findings. While many of these 178 (89%) graduate preparatory programs without a management/supervision course likely blend the topic within other courses (i.e. organizational theory, leadership, administration, etc.), these courses cannot dig as deeply into management and supervision as they would if they focused exclusively on these topics.

It can be argued that inclusion of a course focusing exclusively on management and supervision is critical, as there is a need to develop higher education administrators to be strong(er) supervisors and managers (Ignelzi, 2013). While these new professionals from graduate programs will hold a plethora of roles and responsibilities, it is likely these roles and responsibilities will include supervision and/or management. Disconcertingly, Ignelzi (2013) asserts that "a troubling assumption among many student affairs supervisors on when learning ends for supervisees seems to be that learning ends with graduation from a student affairs graduate preparatory program" (p. 418). To this end, the higher education and student affairs profession often expects graduate preparatory programs to develop the supervision and management skills of graduate students, yet the findings from examining the graduate programs compiled by ASHE show only 11% of these programs accomplish this task. This illustrates a clear need for graduate

preparatory programs to focus on management and supervision practices within their curriculum and continued professional development throughout their career. There is a need to develop student affairs professionals to be active scholar practitioners, extending their learning beyond formal education. Professionals should view themselves as life-long learners who intentionally seek out professional development. This scholarly practice should be grounded in theory and research, include assessment and evaluation, and be driven by personal values, commitment, and ethical conduct (McClintock, 2003). In doing so, student affairs professionals will be able to build upon the foundation of the academic scaffolding they received in their graduate studies and continue to grow professionally (and address any deficits from their academic preparation). Acknowledging this, the formation of scholarly practice ought to begin in their graduate program, as that is a pivotal developmental period in which they begin to define who they are as a professional and develop into becoming a scholar practitioner.

### **Development of Management and Supervision Course**

As a profession, there is a clear need to develop and articulate widely the acceptable and unacceptable staffing practices in student affairs (Winston, Torres, Carpenter,

McIntire, & Petersen, 2001). Recognizing this inherent need to develop the management and supervision skills of future higher education administrators, we created and implemented a required graduate course in this area for a graduate program in Higher Education Leadership ('Management and Supervision') and paired it with an existing undergraduate course ('Foundations of Higher Education Leadership').

The 'Management and Supervision' course is a graduate level course introducing students to serving in a supervisory and managerial role within higher education and applies theory-to-practice of supervision and management practices (syllabi available at [www.tinyurl.com/Tolman-staffing](http://www.tinyurl.com/Tolman-staffing)). The inclusion of the hiring process in this 'Management and Supervision' course within the graduate program aims to strengthen the student affairs profession by instilling the best practices of hiring and staffing in future higher education administrators. This graduate course differentiates management vs. supervision, explores what good supervision looks like, applies leadership theories to management practices, and examines core processes to management and supervision (i.e. hiring practices, feedback and evaluations, communication, motivation and professional development, etc.). Despite the previously mentioned limitations and dated nature of the book, *Staffing and Hiring Practices in*



*Student Affairs* by Winston and Creamer (1997) was a tremendous resource in the development of the 'Management and Supervision' course. Within the course, students are responsible for chairing a mock search committee from start to finish. To enhance their experience and apply theory-to-practice, the course addresses the steps to effective recruitment and selection as outlined by Winston and Creamer (1997). At the heart of this course is the application of theory-to-practice. The course is rooted in the theory of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) and focuses on group projects, role playing, and case studies. While the course includes several projects and pedagogical approaches, this paper highlights the marquee project that focuses on hiring and staffing practices. Content includes the best practices for supervising, recruitment and hiring practices, processes for providing formal feedback, and professional development. Topics are situated within the theoretical framework of student development, management, and leadership theories. The course includes experiential learning components.

The 'Foundations of Higher Education Leadership' course is an undergraduate course open to current seniors that introduces Higher Education Leadership as a professional area of study (syllabi available at [tinyurl.com/Tolman-staffing](http://tinyurl.com/Tolman-staffing)). It is designed to provide an overview of the

profession and takes a broad look at the essential work of university administrators. This is the foundational course for those contemplating pursuing careers in higher education as administrators and leaders. The course explores career paths and graduate programs in higher education administration, provides professional development, and offers resources for conducting future job searches. The intent of the course is to offer an overview of student affairs as a profession and stimulate student interest in exploring academic paths in pursuing careers in higher education administration.

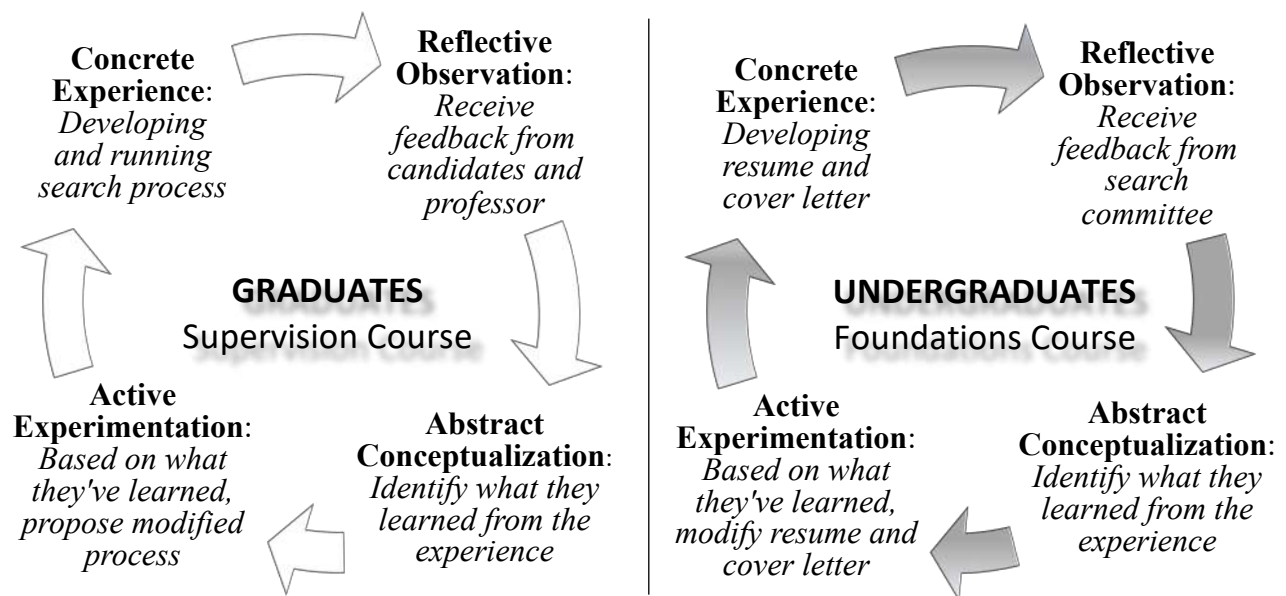
### **Theoretical Framework**

Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning is built upon the idea of learning through doing. It is a hands-on approach enabling students to learn through actually experiencing the subject at hand. This is powerful, as it fosters the application of theory-to-practice and in the reflection of doing so facilitates students to connect practice-to-theory. Kolb's experiential learning model has four components: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Figure 3). This model provided an excellent theoretical framework for designing the effective pedagogical approach for this course in supervision and management.

### Course Integration

In an effort to develop a hands-on approach to learning staffing practices, the two courses, 'Management & Supervision in Higher Education' and 'Foundations of Higher Education Leadership', were integrated for a shared class activity (Figure 3). This project involved undergraduate students within the Foundations course to apply and (mock) interview for a job in higher education administration that was being orchestrated by the graduate students in the

Management & Supervision course. This integration was a symbiotic relationship, as it gave undergraduate students the opportunity to better prepare for applying/interviewing for graduate/professional positions, which many of them will be doing as they embark on their imminent career in higher education. Conversely, it gave the graduate students practical, hands-on experience developing and chairing a search committee from start to finish.



**Figure 3. Course integration examined through the lens of experiential learning.**

### Application of Course Integration

The 'Management and Supervision' and 'Foundations of Higher Education Leadership' courses are offered in the spring semester in a 15-week, face-to-face format. Offering the course in the spring is ideal, as it takes place during the traditional

recruitment/hiring season in student affairs, when the major hiring conferences (NASPA, ACPA, OPE, etc.) take place in February and March. This allows students the opportunity to experience chairing a search committee around the challenges of time constraints of the spring semester, such as spring break,

end of the year banquets, etc. The timeline for the mock interview process is mid-February through late April (Table 1)

**Table 1. Timeline for mock interview process.**

	<b>Graduate Students</b>	<b>Undergraduate Students</b>
Week 1	Developing the job description	Resume and cover letter writing
Week 2	Developing recruitment & selection strategy	Peer review of resume/cover letter
Week 3	Developing rubric for screening resumes	Formal application to position
Week 4	Resume Screening	
Week 5	Resume Screening	
Week 6	Developing Phone Interview Questions	
Week 7	Phone Interviews	Phone Interviews
Week 8	Developing on-campus interview questions	
Week 9	"On-campus Interviews"	"On-campus Interviews"
Week 10	Call each candidate to offer feedback	Receive and give feedback
Week 11	Feedback and discussion on process	

### ***Management and Supervision course (graduate students)***

This experience afforded graduate students the opportunity to chair a search committee from start to finish. This began in the recruitment stage and concluded by offering the position to a candidate. This professional development provided intentional training to imminent student affairs professionals in an area that is often overlooked and assumed that professionals have competency in (despite not receiving formal training).

*Developing job description.* The graduate students are tasked with developing a job description for a fictitious entry level student affairs position. Prior to doing this, they examine existing job postings on higher-edjobs.com. This leads to the conversation of best practices of what should be included and excluded in job descriptions and job postings. The class collectively develops the job description to be used/advertised to the undergraduate students.

*Creating marketing/recruitment strategy.* Students are challenged to develop a

marketing and recruitment strategy, which includes where the position will be posted, how they will ensure to recruit diverse and well qualified candidates, and the timeline for the search process.

*Resume Screening.* Students discuss the best practices for screening resumes and develop a rubric for screening. Students then collect the resumes, screen them, and note feedback on each resume to share with candidates.

*Interviews.* The graduate students schedule and conduct phone interviews and in-person interviews with all of the undergraduate students. Additionally, graduate students develop an interview itinerary for the “on-campus interview.” Throughout this process, the graduate students note feedback on how well the candidates interviewed, which is shared with the undergraduate students at the end of the process (for their professional development).

*Candidate Follow-up.* At the conclusion of interviewing (phone and in-person) the undergraduate students, the graduate students speak with each candidate to update them on the search process, share the decision (negotiating a job offer to one candidate, while letting others know they had not been selected), and provide feedback on their resume, phone interview, and in-person interview.

*Feedback.* The graduate students are provided direct feedback (anonymous evaluation forms) from the undergraduate students who shared their experiences/perceptions of being interviewed. This feedback includes how comfortable the candidate was made to feel, their opportunity to express their ability to do the job based on questions asked, attentiveness of the interviewers, etc. Additionally, the course instructor observes the in-person interviews and provides additional feedback.

### ***Foundation of Higher Education Leadership course (undergraduate students)***

The timing of this project for the undergraduate students was ideal, as the majority of them in the class were preparing to submit their applications and interview for both admission into graduate school and graduate/professional positions in student affairs.

*Resume and Cover Letter.* Students explore the best practices of developing their resume/cover letter and learn how to tailor it to applying for positions in student affairs. As they develop their materials, they are strongly encouraged to utilize the Office of Career Services and seek advice from current student affairs professionals. In-class activity includes peer review of resumes and cover letters. Students use their finalized documents to apply for the mock position. Class discussion includes comparing their

current resume to job positions/descriptions of the positions they would like to hold once they graduate from their Master's program. This facilitates the conversation of creating a professional development plan for each student to intentionally gain the experiences during their graduate program that will lead to them successfully positioning themselves for the role they would like to hold after graduate school.

*Phone and in-person interviews.* Students are phone interviewed and "brought to campus" for an in-person interview by graduate students in the Management and Supervision course. These interviews are formal and parallel the experience they will have when applying for positions in the future. This includes professional dress for the on-campus interview and follow-up communication with the search committee.

*Feedback for Search Committee.* The undergraduate students are asked to complete an evaluation to give the graduate students feedback about how it felt to be a candidate in their search process. This is done for both the phone and on-campus interview.

### **Outcome of Course Integration and Lessons Learned**

True to the theory of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), this hands-on approach enabled both the undergraduate and graduate

students to learn through experiencing the hiring process. The undergraduate students were able to gain practical experience and confidence in their ability to interview for student affairs positions. The graduate students gained not only the experience of chairing a search committee from start to finish, but had the opportunity to learn best practices of how to effectively hire staff. This was a meaningful process that extended beyond the typical medium of a textbook and lecture. Students were able to experience firsthand the hiring process, which will realistically parallel their imminent experiences as they apply for positions (undergraduates) and are tasked with serving on search committees (graduate students). Like most processes, this course integration was one of trial and error. To further strengthen this course integration and hiring process activity, there is room for improvement.

If possible, it would be greatly beneficial for the graduate students to be involved with an actual search process in addition to the mock process. Due to the size of the class (typically 20+), it is not realistic for them to be intimately involved with the search process and serve on the committee. Alternatively, it would be beneficial for them to attend the presentation of the candidates to the campus (if there is one) and meeting with the chair of the search committee. In meeting with the chair of the search committee, the

graduate students could (independently of the search committee) establish a hiring timeline, develop a rubric and screen candidate resumes (blind review), create interview questions, and determine the on-campus itinerary. This would ideally be done in parallel with an actual search process, which would allow the chair of the search committee to compare and contrast their decisions with how the graduate students would have done it (i.e. compare/contrast who the graduate students would have phone interviewed with who was actually selected by the search committee).

It would also be ideal to have more faculty members and seasoned higher education administrators observe this process and provide feedback to the students. This could include review of their developed materials (i.e. rubric, timeline, interview questions, etc.), being on the phone interviews, and attending the in-person interview. In doing so, this will give students even more constructive feedback.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

As faculty develop the next generation of scholar practitioners to take the reins of our profession, it is critical to provide graduate students with the academic and theoretical scaffolding needed to meet the ever-changing needs of the contemporary college student. Supporting this belief, Davenport

(2016) stresses that higher education administrators have potential to have the greatest impact on student development and that the strengths of any student affairs divisions are inextricably linked to the efforts and abilities of these professionals. This begins with the recruitment and staffing practices of our profession. However, it must be cautioned that while seeking qualified candidates who can excel in the job, this desire should be tempered with having realistic expectations that are sustainable. The leadership insights of Fullan (2001) stress “superhuman leaders also do us another disservice: they are role models who can never be emulated by large numbers” (pp. 1-2). In congruence with this notion, we must also remember that our profession is founded on growing and further developing young professionals. With that being said, our recruitment practices should keep in mind not only who is an excellent candidate, but also who has great potential and is likely to develop into the ideal candidate.

Faculty and senior administrators have the opportunity to instill these principles in early career higher education and student affairs professionals. This sentiment is shared by Ignelzi (2013) who stresses that graduate preparatory programs in higher education have a responsibility to educate and train students in the area of supervision. Recognizing this need, the innovative

pedagogy employed to integrate these two courses (Management/Supervision and Foundations of Higher Education) proved to be successful for both the undergraduate and graduate students involved. This pedagogical approach of using experiential learning to develop the hiring practices of (future) higher education administrators should be further explored empirically and replicated. Furthermore, it could extend beyond the classrooms of graduate preparatory programs and serve as a calling for additional professional development opportunities for current administrators in higher education.

### **Recommendations for Faculty of Graduate Preparatory Programs in Higher Education**

This calling to develop the management and supervision practices is not an attack on the CAS standards nor necessarily a proposal to change them. Graduate preparatory programs in higher education (and the CAS standards themselves) face the daunting challenge of requiring the necessary courses needed to build a strong foundation while balancing the number of credit hours required in the program. The desire of students to complete their graduate work in shorter time has pushed many programs to become 36 credits instead of the traditional 48. Program Coordinators are faced with the difficult task of what to put in and what to

leave out. Adhering to Newton's (1846) third law of motion, "*for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction,*" to require a course in management and supervision would require removing a course. To this end, faculty should challenge themselves to determine which courses cannot be added but are important, and work together as graduate programs and the profession to intentionally infuse this into professional development. In graduate programs, this can potentially be done by overlapping these concepts into existing courses. These shortcomings could be identified by graduate programs and communicated to the profession. Doing so could help leadership in higher education to promote professional development opportunities to address these areas.

Another option for program coordinators might be, if their programs have some degree of flexibility, to include a course directly addressing supervision and management be included as an elective. Since, as previously mentioned, graduate preparation programs tend to have different focuses (Long, 2012), it is not uncommon to have students chose between several courses beyond the core classes, to further explore areas of student affairs they wish to pursue. For example, one graduate program includes an optional course on teaching within the higher education setting, while another includes a course on the Community College.

While these topics are likely touched upon in core coursework, students with interests in these areas can elect to take specific classes that go into greater detail in a particular area (though likely at the expense of another course, but that would be the student's prerogative). So, for students who wish to go beyond what is covered in the core coursework regarding hiring and staffing practices, they could have the option to take a course dedicated to supervision and management.

Regardless of suggested options provided here, it is clear there is both a need and an opportunity for faculty and researchers to further examine the areas of management and supervision within student affairs. The existing literature within higher education administration are scant and out of date, and new empirical research could be used to establish best practices in graduate preparation and professional development related to hiring and staffing practices. Any new scholarship in this area could be best informed by a partnership between faculty and student affairs professionals. This scholarly partnership will likely yield a wealth of information that could then be used to develop the supervision and management practices of students in graduate programs and current administrators through professional development.

Ultimately, faculty have the opportunity to directly shape the future of higher

education through their teaching and research. Shushok and Perillo (2016) remind the profession of this responsibility by asserting that graduate preparatory programs in higher education are well positioned to develop students to view themselves as scholar-practitioners who will tackle the adaptive challenges faced by colleges and universities. As teacher-scholars, our research and teaching can inform one another, which in turn will strengthen our graduate programs and successfully help propel students into their imminent careers in higher education and student affairs.

### **Recommendations for Leaders in Higher Education**

It has been demonstrated that the effectiveness of any student affairs division is directly related to caliber of the professionals who serve the students (Sandeem & Barr, 2014). Recognizing the limited attention graduate preparatory programs in higher education can give to management and supervision, administrators in leadership positions must be cognizant of this. Intentional efforts should be given to create professional development opportunities for young professionals that teach best practices of management and supervision. This would ideally be an intentional and proactive approach, not a crash course that takes place just prior to or concurrent with these young professionals



serving in this role. Consideration may be given to using experiential learning as the theoretical underpinning of this professional development.

Furthermore, this professional development could be designed to include all professional staff, not just new professionals. Few professionals receive formal or extensive training on the processes (and theoretical underpinnings) of effective management and supervision. This includes the areas of recruitment, hiring, conflict resolution, coaching, employment legal issues, etc. Professionals often must rely upon their academic preparation from their graduate program (which has been shown to not focus on supervision/management practices) and learn by trial-and-error once in the position. Our inattention to providing ongoing professional development relating to management and supervision may be a result of the belief that since all professionals have all been managed/supervised by others, they should know how to do it. But have they been supervised well? Are those in leadership roles on our college campuses demonstrating and implementing the best practices of our profession? This assumption that individuals know how to supervise is flawed. It assumes those who managed/supervised these professionals were effective, knowledgeable,

and adhered to best practices. Simply because we have seen somebody else do it, does not mean we can do it ourselves without training. Anyone who has watched a professional golfer swing a golf club can attest that watching is very different than trying to do it yourself. With all skills, supervision or golf, individuals must learn the fundamentals and mechanics, and practice them regularly.

As leaders within higher education focus on developing their administrators to be strong(er) supervisors and managers, areas must be identified for regular and intentional professional development. Recognizing the limitation of most graduate preparatory programs in fully developing students in this area of supervision and management, institutions of higher education should be intentional in the professional development of their staff in these areas. However, this idea of professional development can be a “hard sell as something to take seriously for many student affairs practitioners who would rather simply worry about serving students and doing their jobs” (Carpenter & Stimpson, 2007, p.279). To this end, there is a need to instill the core value of professional development into the career trajectory of all student affairs professionals, which should be viewed through the lens of their being scholar practitioners.

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# Intentional Leadership for More Just Experiences: Supporting Black Males on College Campuses

**John Egan** (Georgia Southern University)

*This essay explores the unjust experiences of Black males and minority faculty on college campuses that perpetuate inequality in higher education. The literature shows Black male undergraduates experienced both overt racism and more subtle insults on some college campuses, which serve as a barrier to integration into the college system. This essay also connects the underrepresentation of minority faculty as a contributing factor to the climate that inhibits the integration of Black male students into the college system. Through intentional leadership, educators should create or support existing Black male initiative programs on their campuses as this evidence-based practice contributes to the performance, retention, and college engagement of Black male undergraduates. To address underrepresentation of minority faculty and staff, educational leaders may consider advocating for an empirically supported three-pronged approach to include a hiring search toolkit, a biases video or workshop, and professional mentoring. The suggested interventions by no means serve as a “solution” to these complex issues, but collegiate leaders should take concrete actions that bend toward more just institutions.*

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Dewey (1916/2009) described public education as being crucial for a just democracy, and to avoid fatal stratification society “must see to it that intellectual opportunities are accessible to all on equable and easy terms” (p. 50). Accessibility and equity in education are called into question when two-thirds of Black males fail to finish college in six years (Harper & Harris, 2012). The unjust experiences of Black male undergraduates and minority faculty on college campuses perpetuates inequality. Through intentional leadership and the application of evidence-based practices, professionals in higher education can lead positive change as they contest these issues.

### **Unjust Experiences of Black Male Undergraduates**

Black males consistently represent the lowest college completion rate as 33.5% of the fall 2010 cohort graduated within six years compared to the national average of 62.4% (Shapiro et al., 2017). Coupling the work of Tinto (1975) with the literature surrounding the Black male experience in college provides insight into the stark contrast in graduation rates. In the creation of a seminal model that explicates college dropout, Tinto (1975) stated, “other things being equal, the higher the degree of integration of the individual into the college systems, the greater

will be his commitment to the specific institution and to the goal of college completion” (p. 96). This integration is particularly challenging for Black males who face racial hostility, isolation, racial stress, stigma as academically inept, and a variety of other hurtful stereotypes on college campuses (Barker & Avery, 2012; Brooms & Davis, 2017; Harper, 2015; Parker, Puig, Johnson & Anthony, 2016). Further exploration into the unjust experiences of Black males shows why their integration into the academic and social structures of the college systems are in peril.

A qualitative study including 21 Black male undergraduates participating in focus groups at a large institution in the Southeast showed the realities of what Black male students experience (Parker et al., 2016). One theme revealed a campus climate issue as participants noted false messaging of diversity. This messaging touting diversity was incongruent with the campus having only White fraternity houses, a lack of Black professors, and no buildings named after Black people. A sense of racial profiling was expressed as well as a lack of trust for campus police. This climate taxed participants as the researchers concluded, “Black males in our study felt pressure to represent their race positively, present themselves as perfect, counteract stereotyping, and prove that they are just as smart, or smarter than White students” (Parker et al., 2016, p. 87). Revealing

similar themes, another qualitative study included individual interviews with 59 Black male participants at three different historically White institutions (Brooms & Davis, 2017). The participants experienced limited social integration, and a clear racial divide was visible on campus. Alienation was felt as campus activities and events seemed to be geared toward the needs of Whites. One student experienced verbal pressure to join minority student organizations as opposed to more traditional student groups such as the Student Government Association. Finally, participants felt a need to be careful about the way they presented themselves on campus, both in posture and dress, as to convince faculty they could perform academically (Brooms & Davis, 2017). These two studies clearly show the difficulties Black males unjustly experience on some campuses, and additional literature reveals that high-achieving Black males are not exempt from this treatment (Harper, 2015).

Harper (2015) conducted a qualitative study that included a sample of 143 Black male undergraduates with a 3.0 grade point average or higher from 30 different predominately White institutions. Only two of these participants could not think of a time they experienced a negative stereotype on campus. Some common stereotypes included that they: were good dancers, knew where to find drugs, came from an urban

community, were a student-athlete, knew hip-hop lyrics, and knew slang terms. One participant was disturbed when a White student approached him to purchase drugs. The frustration from the participant was palpable as he frequently wore suits, was headed for law school, and was positioning himself to be the president of student government. This type of prejudice is reminiscent of experiences students reported in a study from the previous decade (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000).

Over 10 years prior to the previously discussed studies, Solorzano et al. (2000) conducted 10 focus groups with 34 Black male participants from three different predominately White institutions. In the academic space, the participants expressed feelings of invisibility while faculty had low expectations of them, and some were falsely accused of cheating. Racial segregation was experienced through study groups, and participants' admission into the institution was questioned. More overt racism was experienced outside of the classroom as participants stated that campus police ended Black social events and participants were perceived as a threat to public areas. These experiences led to self-doubt, loneliness, and frustration. Some felt their grades were negatively affected by the climate and had dropped classes or changed majors as a result. These descriptions and themes are not

a new phenomenon. After an extensive review of the literature on this topic, Harper (2013) stated, "Over 40 years of published research consistently documents troubling racial realities for Black undergraduates and other minoritized students on predominantly White campuses" (p. 206). This is a persistent problem that plagues predominantly White institutions, and evidence exists for the harm it inflicts (Nadal, Wong, Griffin, Davidoff & Sriken, 2014).

Racial hostilities on college campuses cause harm as evidenced by a quantitative study that explored the relationship between self-esteem and microaggressions experienced by college students (Nadal et al., 2014). A sample of 225 ethnically diverse participants from a large metropolitan campus in the Northeast completed a survey that included the Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS), and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (SES). REMS included six subscales that asked participants if they experienced specific types of microaggressions in the past six months, and SES contained 10 items assessing perceived individual worth. A significant negative correlation was found between the average scores of these two instruments ( $r = -.124$ ,  $p = .05$ ). Simply stated, the data showed there was an inverse relationship between a college student's self-esteem and frequency of experi-

encing microaggressions. "Microaggressions are subtle insults (verbal, nonverbal, and/or visual) directed toward people of color, often automatically or unconsciously" (Solorzano et al., 2000, p. 60). The literature reviewed in this essay showed that Black male undergraduates experienced both overt racism, and more subtle insults at some institutions. It is plausible that these experiences have caused some Black students to question their worth, which is an outcome that is inherently unacceptable.

The unjust treatment of Black male undergraduates, particularly at predominantly White institutions, is well documented, and this racial climate inhibits Black male undergraduates' integration into college systems, causes self-doubt for some students, and perpetuates inequality in higher education (Barker & Avery, 2012; Brooms & Davis, 2017; Harper, 2015; Parker et al., 2016; Solorzano et al., 2000). Biases that exist in the professional realm at institutions of higher education also deserve exploration as a contributing factor to the climate that inhibits the integration of Black male students into the college system.

### **Biases Surrounding Minority Faculty and Staff**

Minority faculty are underrepresented at institutions in the United States. Data analysis



using the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System showed that 77.3% of full-time faculty in the United States were White, 5.5% were Black, and 3.9% were Latino, while only 2% of full-time faculty at research institutions were Black in 2009 (Smith, Tovar, & Garcia, 2012). The analysis of these data also explored growth in the number of minority faculty from 1993 to 2009. Underrepresented minority faculty grew from 7.3% to 9.9% in this time frame, and Black faculty increased by one percentage point (Smith et al., 2012). While there are many complex factors underlying this underrepresentation, the simple reality is that Black male undergraduates must wrestle intellectually and emotionally with this lack of representation in the front of their classrooms. One possible factor for this underrepresentation may include the biases experienced by faculty on some campuses.

Support for this assertion is found in a mixed methods study that included 485 survey responses and 58 interviews with Black, Mexican American and Puerto Rican faculty at predominately White institutions (Zambrana et al., 2017). The survey responses revealed that 44% reported racial discrimination, 30% reported gender discrimination, and 23% reported class discrimination, while two-fifths of Black male and Puerto Rican male faculty reported discrimi-

nation as happening often or always by a colleague or superior. Qualitative data from interviews exposed themes of racism and deflation of accomplishments. Blatant racism was shown as a White faculty member expressed surprise that a Black colleague could do math, and a search committee chair posited that there was no need to consider a Black candidate because they currently over-serve this population. The concept of having enough minorities as a quota system was reported, and the participants experienced a lack of general support. Interviewees also reported experiencing pressure to have a larger load of service through an expectation of mentoring minority students and serving on multiple diversity related committees, which are not rewarded in the tenure process (Zambrana et al., 2017). These themes show the existing issues surrounding bias among professionals in higher education, and additional studies revealed similar themes (Salvucci & Lawless, 2016; Turner & Grauerholz, 2017).

A qualitative study included 10 Black males in professional roles ranging from faculty to professional staff at a large research institution in the Southeast (Turner & Grauerholz, 2017). Themes of feeling isolated, having credentials questioned, authority challenged, and being overburdened to represent diversity emerged from the interviews.

They were often forced to be the voice for diversity, expected to be on diversity committees, and consult on diversity externally. The Black males in this study also felt they had to be very careful in how they expressed themselves as not to be thought of as aggressive (Turner & Grauerholz, 2017). This type of marginalization experienced by minorities in higher education affects retention, and in turn exacerbates underrepresentation issues (Salvucci & Lawless, 2016).

A survey sent to a random selection of 667 nursing faculty in the United States received 103 responses (Salvucci & Lawless, 2016). Results indicated that 62.5% of Black faculty respondents ( $n = 16$ ) believed physical appearance and speech related to race or ethnicity did have an influence on hiring. Although less of an issue to the respondents, 31% believed that physical appearance had an influence on retention. This study provides some evidence that biases on campus among professionals are a contributing factor to the underrepresentation of minority faculty on campuses. Salvucci and Lawless (2016) concluded that administrators need to focus more on the barriers that hinder diversity among nursing faculty. The connection to racial ostracism and retention is stated best in the conclusion of the study by Zambrana et al. (2017):

Our findings confirm that respondents continue to experience barriers

to full inclusion within academic institutions and experience a variety of microaggressions, including implicit and explicit racism and discrimination, a sense of isolation— and a devaluing of their research, which can negatively affect physical and mental well-being and the rate of workplace retention. (p. 225)

Biases of professionals serve in the continuation of inequality in higher education and this likely inhibits diverse faculty representation.

### **Connecting Biases among Minority Faculty and Black Male Students**

This essay has demonstrated that both Black male students as well as minority faculty and staff experience microaggressions on some college campuses (Barker & Avery, 2012; Brooms & Davis, 2017; Harper, 2015; Parker et al., 2016; Salvucci & Lawless, 2016; Turner & Grauerholz, 2017). Biases among professionals has been linked to the underrepresentation of minority faculty (Salvucci & Lawless, 2016; Zambrana et al., 2017), and this underrepresentation serves as a contributing factor to the climate issues experienced by Black male students (Barker & Avery, 2012; Brooms & Davis, 2017; Parker et al., 2016).

A lack of black professors has been tied to campus climate issues and feelings of

isolation for Black male students (Parker et al., 2016). Additionally, Black male students have expressed that seeing and connecting with professors from their own racial group is important for their development. (Brooms and Davis, 2017). Brooms and Davis (2017) best summarized the student voice on this issues stating, "...students continue to desire increased diversity on college campuses in general and also call for increases in recruiting and retaining Black faculty members more specifically." (p. 322). Higher education faculty and staff should work to increase diversity among their peers on campus and should implement evidence-based practices to mitigate the experiences Black male undergraduates face on some college campuses.

### **Black Male Initiative Program as an Evidence-Based Practice**

Using intentional leadership, professionals in higher education should seek to support or create thriving Black male initiative programs on their campuses to address the inequity experienced by these students. This is an evidence-based practice that has contributed to the performance, retention, college engagement, and support networks for Black undergraduates (Barker & Avery, 2012; Brooms, Goodman, & Clark, 2015). A qualitative study with 16 Black male undergraduates who participated in the Black Men

Achieve Program revealed a theme of self-empowerment (Brooms et al., 2015). As a result of the program, participants reported a belief in their ability to succeed academically, to create change, and a sense of belonging as they created a new collective identity that debunked stereotypes. They were able to meaningfully connect with peers and faculty in a way that allowed them to learn from other Black men. Participants found positive role models and professional development to be important within the inspired learning environment fostered by the program (Brooms et al., 2015).

Similar themes arose from a study that included eight students from a Black male leadership program at a predominately White institution (Barker & Avery, 2012). The participants experienced greater levels of engagement, received important resources, and had a better understanding of areas they needed to improve academically. "Through the program, students were able to build relationships, gain their academic footing, and increase their level of institutional engagement, while forming connections with other Black males and faculty and staff" (Barker & Avery, 2012, p. 82). Creating a Black male initiative program does not serve as a "solution" to the unjust experiences some students face on campuses as this is a larger systemic issue. However, these programs provide an evidence-based practice that may

contribute to the successes of Black males in a collegiate setting.

Before this essay advances further into the intentional leadership approach that might be suited for starting a Black male initiative program, a tension pressed upon minority faculty and staff should be addressed. Evidence supports the need for their inclusion as mentors for minority students, and yet at the same time studies also show they are overtaxed in these roles as well as in other diversity initiatives (Brooms and Davis, 2017; Turner & Grauerholz, 2017; Zambrana et al., 2017). This is a difficult reality, and these contributions should be better recognized for their value in the tenure process. One possible approach that could be used by a Black male initiative program, suggested by Barker and Avery (2012), is to incorporate Black male leaders from the community as well as alumni to serve in this mentor role.

### **Intentional Leadership for a Black Male Initiative Program**

Practitioners should consider engaging in the process of intentional leadership to initiate such a program on their campus. Goleman (2000) suggested a framework in which leaders who get results use a variety of leadership styles at the right moment. Educational leaders who have no assigned authority to create a Black male initiative program should

focus on employing the democratic and affiliative leadership styles. The democratic leadership style entails working to include the voices of stakeholders to develop a consensus, and the affiliative style is focused on the value of individuals while building strong relationships with others. The democratic leadership style should be used because it is particularly useful when there is a need to garner support (Goleman, 2000). Practitioners should activate the democratic leadership style through the intentional incorporation of the voices of Black faculty, staff, and students. This might include campus wide invitations to an interest meeting on the creation of a Black male initiative program and gathering input through focus groups at the meeting. Creating the intentional space to gather input will increase engagement and improve programmatic development that meets the needs of Black male undergraduates on a specific campus.

The situation surrounding racial campus climate issues also warrants using the affiliative leadership style as Goleman (2000) suggests that the affiliative leadership style is best employed when there is a need to heal broken trust and when building team harmony is valuable. Using this leadership style, educational leader should attempt to build relationships with Black male student leaders on campus as well as passionate

faculty and staff who are committed to addressing the marginalization of these important students. Using both of these leadership styles the educational leader can build a team that is committed to creating change and can anticipate using team leadership to create a Black male initiative program rooted in empirically based practices.

Team leadership involves limited hierarchy, adaptive horizontal decision making, and distributed leadership among team members (Northouse, 2018). This leadership theory is ideal for developing a program in which no initial formal hierarchy exists and allows for team members to step forward to lead at the appropriate time. The specifics for developing a program would be unique to each campus in terms of how to seek funding, availability of structures for developing a formal program, and which stakeholders are important to include. The team should seek to include the following elements in the Black male initiative program found to be effective in the literature: workshops, professional development, features that enhance self-efficacy, thinking through negative racial experiences, and mentoring (Barker & Avery, 2012; Brooms et al., 2015). Finally, any such team should practice what Kouzes and Posner have termed as *outsight*, which is when leaders “look outside the particular program, department, or chapter they are in to find out, and even experience, what other groups like

theirs are doing” (2014, p. 127). This would likely include reaching out to or visiting other thriving Black Male initiative programs.

### **Three-Pronged Approach as an Evidence-Based Practice**

Educational leaders can also apply evidence-based practices to address biases among faculty and professional staff that inhibit diversity and contributes to the climate issues felt by Black male students. Montana State University, for instance, implemented a three-step process within their faculty hiring process to remediate the issue of having 81% male faculty in science, technology, engineering, and math (Smith, Handley, Zale, Rushing, & Potvin, 2015; STEM). The process occurred in 23 STEM-faculty searches; this resulted in 6.3 times more likelihood of an offer being made to a woman, and women were 5.8 times more likely to accept the position. The first step of the process included the distribution of a search toolkit that provided search committees with practical strategies for steering a diverse applicant search. The second step included a presentation to the committee from another faculty member that included how to be aware of gender bias in an effort to avoid potential screening of candidates. Finally, the process included the final candidates meeting with a confidential, independent family advocate who could explain policies related to families or marital

status (Smith et al., 2015). Portions of this three-step approach with other empirically focused concepts could be used by professionals in higher education to address potential biases that affect diversity.

This essay proposes a three-pronged method that could be utilized to contend with the bias among professionals in order to enhance diverse representation. The first prong is identical to the first step found in Smith et al. (2015) with the exception that it would call for the development of a search toolkit that could be used both in hiring faculty and professional staff members. Another study provides additional depth to this first prong. Fujimoto (2012) conducted a case study that reviewed the affirmative action reports, human resource records of searches, and interviews of individuals involved in specific searches at a community college over a nine-year period. The study found that the usage of local data as a diversity benchmark and unnecessary minimum requirements in job postings led to stagnant growth in diversity. Fujimoto's (2012) first recommendation was to provide training to committees on conducting searches with an awareness of affirmative action and equal employment opportunity. The search toolkit in the first prong should include appropriate usage of data in hiring and improving job descriptions as not to unnecessarily exclude qualified minorities.

The second prong, again mirroring the work of Smith et al. (2015), would include search committees watching a brief video or attending a workshop on how to become aware of biases and inadvertent racism that affects both search processes and daily interactions with colleagues. Other researchers have called for similar raising of consciousness at institutions of higher education (Harper, 2015; Trevino, Balkin, & Gomez-Mejia, 2017; Turner & Grauerholz, 2017). The final and third prong is the development of mentoring relationships for faculty and staff that could be aligned with campus needs. The survey study involving minority nursing faculty previously mentioned in this essay also included a question focused on what respondents believed was important for recruitment and retention (Salvucci & Lawless, 2016). The majority of Black nursing faculty believed support including mentors was essential. Other scholars have suggested that mentoring for women or minority professionals in higher education is an important practice to either improve campus climate, gender equity, guidance in the tenure process, or create important social support networks (Johnson, Warr, Hegarty, & Guillemin, 2015; Trevino et al., 2017; Turner & Grauerholz, 2017; Zambrana et al., 2017). To address the biases that limit diversity on campus, practitioners need to be prepared to

apply intentional leadership in the development and implementation of this three-pronged approach or other similar initiatives that better fit their contextual needs.

### **Intentional Leadership for a Three-Pronged Approach**

Servant leadership is typified by organizational goals being secondary to the authentic service of followers and involves persuading by serving rather than through a command approach (Dierendonck & Patterson, 2010; Northouse, 2013). This serve-first attitude is concerned with the development of others and would be an ideal philosophical lens for an educational leader implementing the three-pronged approach that seeks to build others' knowledge of conducting a diverse search, awareness of biases, and capacity to develop professionally through mentorship. In order to pursue these goals a leader may need to lay organizational goals aside to serve followers through an intentional focus on their development. Goleman's (2000) coaching leadership style could be appropriately applied here as well by focusing on developing others for the future rather than on immediate goals. If the three-prong method were successfully implemented, possible outcomes might be an improved campus climate that increases the retention and recruitment of underrepresented faculty and staff.

In turn, this increase in diversity in the professional realm may improve the climate issues experienced by Black male students.

### **Summary**

Black male undergraduates face unjust treatment on many college campuses which is exacerbated by limited faculty representation. To create a more supportive and equitable environment, professionals in higher education should strive to develop or support thriving Black male initiative programs as well as incorporate a three-pronged approach for faculty and staff to include: a hiring search toolkit, a biases video or workshop, and professional mentoring. These interventions are by no means intended to "solve" the "problem" as the issues addressed in this essay are complex and systemic in nature. However, educators must still take some action as they strive for equity in education to maintain a just democracy. "...The deepening crisis in democracy is revealed by a systematic attack on those groups who occupy a fragile if marginal location in the structures of power that command the American economy and its various cultural apparatuses" (Giroux, 1996, p. 10). As a cultural apparatus, institutions of higher education must ensure they are not part of a systematic attack on marginalized groups. This will require higher education professionals to lead with intention and resolute conviction.

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## Applying Student Development Theories Holistically: Exemplar Programming in Higher Education (Book Review)

Branch, K., Hart-Steffes, J.S., & Wilson, C.M. (2019). *Applying student development theories holistically: Exemplar programming in higher education*. New York, NY: Routledge. 184 pp. ISBN: 978-1-351-21231-1. \$106.53 suggested retail price.

**Abigail Meert** (Georgia Southern University)

In the book *Applying Student Development Theories Holistically: Exemplar Programming in higher education*, Branch, Hart-Steffes, and Wilson provide student affairs practitioners with holistic and contemporary applications of student development theory in an effort to inspire intentional and research-based practice. Authored by faculty who teach college student development theory, Branch et al. saw a classroom need for “theory utilization taking place in actual practice settings” in addition to the applications found in case studies or those created by students in the classroom (2019, p. xiii). Although this text was foremost intended for graduate students seeking current applications of the information they are learning in the classroom, it could also

serve as a developmental resource for faculty and staff seeking to inform their practice using theory.

This anthology is divided into three parts: “Who Am I?”, “How Do I Make Meaning?”, and “Influences on Development.” Each chapter’s author(s) provides background information on the institution where the program originated, a description of the program, the guiding theories that informed the program, the implementation specifics, the assessment and evaluation process, and a personal reflection including lessons learned and recommendations for the future.

Part one, “Who Am I?”, discusses psychosocial and social identity development, or the development of one’s

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identity in various contexts. Student affairs practitioners are provided with four examples of programs that use theory to guide the development of student identity: *Launch*, a pre-orientation retreat for first-year students at Randolph-Macon College, *Mizzou Black Men's Initiative*, a program designed for first-year African-American men at the University of Missouri, *Tippie Buddies*, a "buddy" program between international and domestic students in the business program at the University of Iowa, and Western First Generation Students (W1GS), a student organization for first-generation college students at Western Illinois University. The guiding theories behind these initiatives include: Identity Development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993), Student Involvement (Astin, 1999), Mindset and Perseverance (Dweck, 2012), Microaggressions and Climates for Diversity (Sue, 2010), Black Identity Development (Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 2001), Sense of Belonging (Strayhorn, 2012), Ethnic Identity Development (Phinney, 1993), First-Generation Student Experience (Davis, 2010), Self-Authorship (Magolda, 2001), and Experiential Learning (Kolb, 1984).

Part two, "How Do I Make Meaning?", offers practitioners three tools designed to develop student cognition, or one's ability to learn, think critically, and make meaning of experiences: *Ethical Reasoning in Action*, a

campus-wide initiative at James Madison University that encourages students to reflect before making a decision, *Individual Accountability Plans (IAPs)*, personalized action plans that promote self-authorship and accountability for student-staff members in their positions at Miami University, and an unnamed curriculum model—a combination of meetings, readings, one-on-one interactions, and self-assessments—for student-staff members in the Pride Center for Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity at Lehigh University. Using the following theories, these strategies encourage students to make meaning of their experiences inside and outside of the classroom: Perry's Scheme of Intellectual and Ethical Development (1970), Stages of Moral Development (Kohlberg, 1981; Gilligan, 1982), Orders of Consciousness (Kegan, 1994), Self-authorship (Magolda, 2004), and Learning Partnerships (Magolda, 2004).

Part three, "Influences on Development", acknowledges the endless amount of circumstances that can affect the student experience (e.g., discrimination, family dynamics, changing majors, coursework, and preparation for graduation; Branch et al., 2019) and presents two initiatives designed to take advantage of these circumstances and inspire growth: *Transport Passport*, a joint program at Ivy

Tech Community College Indianapolis Service Area and Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis for supporting transfer students in their transition from a community college to a four-year institution and *Passion to Action*, a two-part program that encourages students at New York University to establish and partake in a residential culture rooted in social justice and advocacy. These initiatives were driven by the following theories: Transition Theory (Schlossberg 1981, 1984), Vectors of Identity (Chickering and Reisser, 1993), and Experiential Learning (Kolb, 1984). Part three also includes a thematic analysis of the reflections offered by the text's scholarly practitioners and a summary of the 26 proposals submitted for publication in the book (including the nine that were ultimately chosen).

The 26 proposals include programs from small, medium, and large four-year, public and/or private institutions across the United States. It is also important to note that submissions came from a community college in the Midwest and an institution that is religiously-affiliated. Although the nine initiatives ultimately chosen for publication represent various student populations and institutional types, this book has the potential to serve as a comprehensive guide for all student affairs practitioners with the addition of other student populations, institutional

types, and functional areas outside of those mentioned in the text.

Despite this, the text serves as an excellent resource for students and professionals alike. It is worth noting, however, that this book should not be taught or referenced in isolation. As the authors acknowledge, this text should be used in conjunction with other publications like *Student Development in College: Theory, Research, and Practice* (Patton et. al., 2016). This textual combination will allow the reader to reference primary source material, or the original publication of the theory, before referencing its contemporary application. Furthermore, readers should keep in mind that the initiatives described in the text are “not for wholesale or ready for transfer” to other institutions of higher education (Branch et. al, 2019, p. 161). Rather, the examples provided are meant to serve as inspiration for individuals seeking a starting point in this process. The success of a program is determined by a myriad of institutional, cultural, political, economic, and social factors; many of which cannot be duplicated.

As Susan R. Komives describes in the foreword, much like flying a plane, applying student development theory to practice is not magic; it is the union of science, art, and a little bit of luck. Although this process may seem supernatural to graduate students, new professionals, or

those outside of the field entirely, *Applying Student Development Theories Holistically: Exemplar Programming in Higher Education* demonstrates that applying theory to practice

is doable. What is magical, however, is witnessing the positive impacts of this process in the lives of our students.

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## ***Debunking the Myth of Job Fit in Higher Education and Student Affairs (Book Review)***

Reece, B.J., Tran, V.T., DeVore, E.N., & Porcaro, G. (2019). *Debunking the Myth of Job in Higher Education and Student Affairs*. Sterling, VA: Stylus. 264 pp. ISBN: 978-1-62036-788-9. \$35.00 suggested retail price.

**Jamie L. Workman** (Valdosta State University)

**Daniel W. Calhoun** (Georgia Southern University)

**Steven Tolman** (Georgia Southern University)

The recently published text, *Debunking the Myth of Job Fit in Higher Education and Student Affairs*, challenges the concept of job fit in student affairs. Editors Brian J. Reece, Vu T. Tran, Elliott N. DeVorre, and Gabby Porcaro bring together authors representing a wide variety of student affairs functional areas in an effort to reframe and more clearly define the concept of fit within the field of student affairs. The chapter authors (including the editors) share personal narratives and critically explore the concept of job fit as it applies to the intersectionality of their identities.

As current faculty members with a collective 39 years of practitioner experience and 17 years as full-time faculty members, the concept of fit is something that has been used throughout each of our respective careers, beginning with our own searches for graduate preparation programs in student affairs. We have been candidates for positions where we felt the fit was there and also when it most definitely was not. As hiring authorities in student affairs, we have discussed what we were looking for in a candidate and how each candidate fits our departmental and institutional culture. We have discussed fit with the graduate students we teach as

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they embark on their own internship and job search processes. So, when we learned that ACPA (the professional organization in which the three of us are actively involved) was co-publishing this book, we were eager to see how this concept of fit would be further explored and defined. Is fit truly a myth? Is fit a myth for some, and not for others? What about fit would we be “debunked” and in what ways would it challenge our thoughts and practices?

The book begins with a chapter entitled *From Fit to Belonging: New Dialogues on the Student Affairs Job Search*. In this editor-authored chapter, the purpose of the book is described as a means “to catalyze conversation about the use of job fit as an uncriticized tool for exclusion in student affairs by exploring the concept through multiple frameworks, lenses, and standpoints” (Reece et al., 2019, p. 3). Each of the remaining chapters provide detailed personal narratives that examine job fit from the perspective of class, race, gender, and sexual identity. They explore the ways policies, procedures, environments, and campus cultural norms can provide and promote inequalities in the workplace and during the job search process for individuals from marginalized populations.

### Reflection and Takeaways

As we read this book, we are reminded of our calling as student affairs professionals and transformative educators that we must intentionally and systematically interpret and reinterpret our organizations and practices to “....understand how the organizational culture impedes creation of a caring, democratic community” (Rhoads & Black, 1995, p. 420). To this end, to best reflect on the book, *Debunking the Myth of Job in Higher Education and Student Affairs*, we intentionally collaborated as faculty and scholar-practitioners to critique the book from our lived experiences in the field and then synthesize the emerging themes from our takeaways.

We appreciated reading *Debunking the Myth of Job Fit in Higher Education and Student Affairs* as it begins the overdue conversation about job fit within the profession. This notion of fit is ubiquitous throughout student affairs, from the grad student beginning their job search, to the seasoned professional exploring next steps in their career, to the search committees and hiring managers at universities. Reece, Tran, DeVore, and Porcaro do an excellent job of defining fit, situating it within the context of a socially just profession, and challenging the ambiguity of fit to justify hiring practices.

*Debunking the Myth of Job Fit in Higher Education and Student Affairs* opens

the door to larger conversations about the racist mechanisms and white privilege that are still inherent within higher education and specifically in job search processes. Highlighted throughout this book, the chapter authors show us how the concept of fit, as used here, does have diabolical oppressive roots that need to be brought to light and dismantled by those who have the power to do so.

More than anything, this book made us think about how the concept of fit is applied within the job search process. We may have used the concept of “fit” to raise concerns about a candidate who, for whatever reason, was not “what we had in mind” by challenging the very thought of what it was that we did have in mind. Is the concept of “fit” used to shy away from our own opportunities because it was out of our comfort zones? We particularly appreciated the insights shared related to the intersectionality of fit and social justice that will not only challenge the current practices of search committees but also those who hold leadership positions within student affairs. A great illustration of this convergence is found in *Chapter 5: No We Can’t Meet You for an \$8 Coffee*. This chapter illustrates the ways that class infiltrates the profession and further reinforces the hierarchy of socio-economic status. The authors examine the intersectionality of cost and power dynamics

associated with class. We are reminded that despite having good intentions, our actions can cause harm in ways we never would have imagined. This chapter teaches us to be mindful of how something as simple and well-intended as a request for coffee can be interpreted.

In addition, throughout our reading of the book we found ourselves challenging our own concepts of fit. The title of *Chapter 4: Holograms, Misfits, and Authentic Selves*, particularly stood out to us and we were excited to see how the chapter authors, Bennett, York, Bailey, Habermann-Guthrie, Wenoa, Wells, and Yamaguchi, would make use of the cartoon *Jem and the Holograms* as a vehicle to explore the topic of fit. While the 80s kid inside us loved these nostalgic references, the educator inside appreciated the questions raised within this chapter related to challenging the status quo, being asked to be something we are not, and when to be your authentic self. Can we truly be our authentic selves all the time, even in a field as embracing as student affairs? Are there times we put up holograms? When are there situations when a misfit is needed? These are all questions that are important to ask ourselves during the job search process that come from this chapter.

Other chapters are equally powerful, touching on the areas of case law (Chapter 2), providing recommendations for hiring

managers to avoid discriminatory practices (Chapter 3), hearing about the realities faced by women of color (Chapter 6), the exclusionary nature of PWIs through coded language (Chapter 7), the biases and “collusion” associated with institutional cisgenderism (Chapter 8), and examining Whiteness within higher education, confronting it in hiring practices, and exploring ways to become racially aware/cognizant (Chapter 9). The final chapter (10) ties it all together and provides a challenge by author Walter Parrish III to student affairs professionals to keep these discussions at the forefront.

Overall, Reece, Tran, DeVorre, and Porcaro have compiled a book that made us think, and more importantly, question and reflect on what fit really means not just to us, but to all members of the student affairs profession. It made us question conversations we have had and will have with our students, and rethink how we may have (mis)used the concept of fit as former hiring authorities and job-searchers ourselves. As faculty members who teach those who will become job seekers and who have chaired and served on countless hiring committees, the stories shared and the recommendations provided by each of the chapters’ authors are things we will infuse into future hiring practices and incorporate into our curriculum. We will refocus our conversations around “fit” with job-searchers to conversations around putting

up holograms, being a misfit, and being authentic selves. While “fit” is something that has been part of our process, it may not work for theirs.

We found this text useful in a variety of capacities. We will use it in our classes and/or discussions with job-seekers. We recommend that those embarking on the job search, both new and seasoned professionals, read it and discuss it with mentors. We recommend hiring committees read it before they begin a search process. Lastly, this book would make a great selection for a division of student affairs to read and discuss/debate, as it may foster engaged dialogue where meaningful change can happen.

### Conclusion

We found *Debunking the Myth of Job in Higher Education and Student Affairs* to be a compelling and insightful text and we agree with the authors that the ambiguity of fit is often used to justify maligned hiring decisions and in doing so it further perpetuates inequalities in the staffing practices within higher education. As Quaye notes in the foreword (p. xiii), “we cannot keep using fit to describe other things we are refusing to name.” While we agree wholeheartedly with his statement, it is important to not be so broad with our interpretation of “fit” that it does not apply at all. For that reason, we

believe there is still something to be said for the concept of fit.

The editors provide a great definition of fit used by Brene Brown (2010) in *The Gifts of Imperfection*. She says “fitting in is about assessing the situation and becoming who you need to be to be accepted” (p. 25) but we are not sure that is the way fit is or should be defined in all situations of the job search. From a job seeker perspective, we firmly believe the culture of the environment has a significant impact not only on their potential for professional success, but also their personal happiness. We think it is prudent for professionals to actively seek out a rich understanding of the institutional culture, departmental norms and expectations, and the general characteristics of the student body they’ll be serving.

Some of the ideas associated with fit, that gut feeling you get from an experience or encounter, that sense you have when you set foot on a campus, meet and interact with the individuals employed there, learn about

the values, culture, etc., have its merits in the job search process. Should fit be, as Brown states, something that we need to change? Is fit about “becoming who you need to be to be accepted” (2010, p. 25), or is it more about making sure that the place is right for who you are at that moment in time? These are questions about fit that still should be asked. It is for this reason that we are not fully convinced that the myths surrounding the concept of fit were “debunked” after reading this book. However, *Debunking the Myth of Job in Higher Education and Student Affairs* does provide us with a critical lens through which we should view fit in all facets of the job search process. It also gives voice to the real struggles that our colleagues from marginalized populations face each day in the job search process. As leaders and educators in student affairs, this book should challenge us to rethink our concepts and practices and push us to begin to dismantle the oppressive constructs that still exist in the field.

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