# SKILL DEVELOPMENT AMONG STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS IN THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATORS REGION III

A Dissertation

by

DARBY MICHELLE ROBERTS

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2003

Major Subject: Educational Administration

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## ABSTRACT

Skill Development Among Student Affairs Professionals in the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators Region III. (May 2003)

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Student affairs practitioners develop a variety of skills in order to serve students and the institutions in which they work. This research study used a newly developed instrument to assess the perceived performance of a variety of skills and the methods that student affairs professionals use to develop those skills.

The population included professional affiliates of Region III of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators. Faculty members and those not practicing in student affairs were excluded from the surveyed population. The professional affiliates were identified as new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers.

The instrument identified 72 skill statements in ten categories: leadership; student contact; communication; personnel management; fiscal management; professional development; research, evaluation, and assessment; legal issues; technology, and diversity. For each skill category, fifteen learning methods were identified. A usable response rate of 61.6% was obtained.

The data supported the stage theory of student affairs professional development for nine of the ten categories: senior student affairs officers rated their mastery of skills

greater than did mid-managers, and mid-managers rated themselves higher than did new professionals. All groups rated their communication skills high. In several categories, there were statistically significant differences between the administrative levels. The exception was for the technology category. There was not a statistically significant difference between the groups.

Professionals use a wide variety of methods to gain competence in the skill areas. The most common methods involved interaction with other practitioners and included mentoring, discussion with colleagues, and professional conference program sessions. Very few professionals have taken a sabbatical or on-line course to develop the identified skills. Several skill categories revealed differences between administrative levels, although the student contact category did not reveal any statistically significant differences.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Just as student affairs professionals have an obligation to be familiar with student development theories, they also have an obligation to understand their own growth and development (Grace-Odeleye, 1998; Conneely, 1994). Within student affairs there are distinguishable skills and stages that professionals attain in their careers (Carpenter & Miller, 1981). Knowing those competencies and stages assists in planning, supervision, conference planning, and mentoring (DeCoster &Brown, 1983).

Similarly, adult learning theory provides insight into the motivations for professionals to continue their education, either formally or informally. Situated cognition, for example, integrates the learning process and the situation where the learning takes place (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Cognitive apprenticeships incorporate real situations, coaching through new tasks, and internalizing and generalizing new learning (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Cervero (1988) believed that the more a professional is involved in the learning process, the greater the likelihood that learning will take place. For learning to happen from experiences, the learner must connect past and current experiences. In addition, the experiences have value because of the interaction with the person and the environment (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999).

The area of career development provides insight into adult learning as well. Zunker (1998) described some of the major themes in human development: development proceeds in multiple directions, the whole person develops throughout

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The style and format of this dissertation follows that of the *NASPA Journal*.

his/her life, people adapt, people are active in their lifelong development, and development can be viewed from many perspectives.

Carpenter (1979) applied five principles of human development to student affairs professional development. First, "professional development is continuous and cumulative in nature, moves from simple to more complex behavior, and can be described via levels or stages held in common" (Carpenter, 1979, p. 49). Second, the best development comes from the interaction of the whole person, who is striving for growth, and the environment. Third, preparation includes mastery of a body of knowledge and a group of skills within the context of personal development. Fourth, credibility and excellent performance depend on the quality of professional preparation. Fifth, "professional preparation is a life-long learning process" (Carpenter, 1979, p. 49).

There are several stage models of career development. Zunker (1998) describesd Kram's (1988) four stages and needs. People in the establishment stage need support and direction, while those in the advancement stage need coaching, exposure, and role models. Those in the maintenance stage need to make a contribution, share with others, and serve as a mentor. Finally, in the withdrawal stage, people begin to let go of their work identity.

Carpenter (1979) and Carpenter and Miller (1981) found that human development theory was useful in the study of professional development in student affairs. They originally proposed four developmental stages: formative (graduate and/or paraprofessional preparation), application (beginning to intermediate practice with further preparation), additive (intermediate to upper level practice with policy making

and increased professional sharing) and generative (upper level practice through retirement). More recent research (Carpenter, in press) concluded that the generative stage probably did not exist. He concluded that developmental stages can be identified and that growth can be measured to a certain extent.

Professional development is an important topic in student affairs research and practice. Conneely (1994, p. 5) described it as a "career-long process which is enhanced through structured and systematic opportunities." He viewed it from the perspective of human development theory and adult development theory. Bryan and Schwartz (1998b) quoted Merkle and Artman (1983) for a useful definition of staff development. Merkle and Artman (1983) described staff development as "a planned experience designed to change behavior and result in professional and/or personal growth and improved organizational effectiveness" (p. 55). The outcome of professional development includes rejuvenation and new ideas, skill attainment, and, ultimately, better service to students (Conneely, 1994).

The Council on the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), while not setting expectations for the profession as a whole, provides general statements that individual functional areas should "provide appropriate professional development opportunities" for staff (Miller, 1997, p. 34). The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators' Standards for Professional Practice (2001) indicates that professionals have an obligation to continually develop skills and enhance knowledge. Similarly, the American College Personnel Association (2001) in their Statement of

Ethical Principles expects that professionals possess a high level of professional responsibility through twenty-five standards.

Individual functional areas may also have standards. For example, the Association of College and University Housing Officers-International (ACUHO-I) in their published standards describe the experience necessary and the skills needed to be successful (ACUHO-I, 1991). Other student affairs specializations, such as the Association of Student Judicial Affairs (ASJA), have identified competencies of successful professionals. ASJA identified 46 skills, and the National Association of Campus Activities created a document called "Future Perfect" relating to professional development in that area (Schreiber, Dunkel, & Jahr, 1994).

Research has been conducted to determine competencies or characteristics of professionals in different levels of the profession, usually classified as new professional, mid-manager, and senior student affairs officer (SSAO, also known as Chief Student Affairs Officer). Randall and Globetti (1992) found that college presidents wanted Chief Student Affairs Officers (CSAO) to have (in order from highest to lowest) integrity, commitment to institutional mission, conflict resolution skills, decisiveness, motivation, support of academic affairs, staff supervision, planning skills, and flexibility. The lowest rated skills included scholarly publications, research capabilities, and facility management.

Fey and Carpenter (1996) found that mid-managers identified leadership, fiscal management, personnel management, communication, professional development, research and evaluation, and student contact as important skills to possess. In addition to

those, Scott (2000) included conflict resolution and mediation skills, mentoring, advising student groups, technology management, understanding the big picture, networking, and skills in chairing committees, writing reports, and problem solving.

Saunders and Cooper (1999) surveyed chief student affairs officers (CSAO) to determine skills that new doctoral graduates seeking mid-management positions should have. They found that upper level leaders wanted mid-managers to be competent in the area of personnel management, leadership, communication, and student contact. Fiscal management was seen as less important, while professional development and research skills ranked the lowest.

New professionals, those practitioners in the field with up to five years of full-time experience, have particular needs including understanding student development theory; learning to apply theory to practice; career development; learning how to network; developing a sense of professionalism; learning how to work with student leaders and groups; skill development; using technology; developing professional ethics; professional association involvement; relating to peers, colleagues, and supervisors; and balancing work and personal life (Scott, 2000).

Several graduate preparation programs also focus on competency development for people entering the profession. Schreiber, Dunkel, and Jahr (1994) described the programs at the University of South Carolina and Bowling Green State University. Both institutions focus on communication skills, diversity, counseling skills, and organizational issues, in addition to others unique to their programs.

Dunkel and Schreiber (1992) determined that professional development opportunities had a positive effect on recruitment and retention of staff. From a national survey of chief housing officers (CHOs), they determined 49 competencies necessary to become an effective CHO. Those competencies were categorized into three major areas: administrative (personnel management, planning and projection, and research), developmental (communication skills, diversity awareness, and leadership and counseling skills), and foundational knowledge of institutional organization, the student, and current trends. Based on that, the National Housing Training Institute was created as a week-long intensive learning opportunity for housing professionals.

In a meta-analysis published recently, Lovell and Kosten (2000) clarified the skills, knowledge, and personal traits that have been researched about student affairs professionals in the past 30 years. Skills included administration and management; human facilitation; research, evaluation, and assessment; communication; leadership; student enrollment and participation; role of educator; and entrepreneurial. Knowledge included student development theory, functional unit responsibilities, academic background; organizational development/behavior, federal policies/regulations, and student needs, values and behaviors. Personal traits included interactive qualities (such as working cooperatively) and individual traits (such as enthusiasm).

In discussing the integration of staff supervision and professional development, Winston and Creamer (1998) described the methods used to develop knowledge, skills, and personal qualities. On campus methods include self-directed study, reading professional literature, taking a course, redesigning jobs, shadowing, conducting a

research study, participating in an interdepartmental committee or task force, undertaking a special project, and volunteering for special assignments. Off campus efforts include attending professional association conferences, involvement in professional associations, and attending a workshop.

Scott (2000) reviewed the methods of staff development, including topic-specific workshops, teleconferences, discussion groups, training videos, administrative sabbaticals, self-directed programs, administrative internships, administrative shadowing, administrative exchange programs, site visits to other institutions, and orientation for new staff. Kruger (2000) reviewed some methods of professional development, including professional, scholarly, and informal writing opportunities; internships; professional presentations; service learning and community service; and workshops and institutes.

## Statement of the Problem

The literature suggests that identification of skills at each level and methods of learning are necessary to enhance professional growth. Although competency/skill development has been addressed previously in the literature, the changes in the higher education environment have created new or updated categories for learning. Diversity (Benke & Disque, 1990), technology (Kruger, 2000; Lovell & Kosten, 2000), assessment and evaluation (Komives, Woodard, & Associates, 1996; Saunders & Cooper, 1999), faculty/staff collaboration (Kruger, 2000) and legal issues (Pope & Reynolds, 1997; Scott, 2000) are just a few areas that have expanded in the student

affairs profession. Some of the previous studies have focused on *importance* of skills and knowledge areas (Fey, 1991; Tillotson, 1995) and not as much on attainment of specific skill levels, self-assessment of those skills, and mode of skill development. Others have focused on a particular level, such as mid-managers (Fey, 1991; Windle, 1998). Research on professional development has implications for graduate preparation programs (Randall & Globetti, 1992), hiring practices (Gordon, Strode, & Mann, 1993), continuing education (Young, 1994), and professional associations (Bryan & Schwartz, 1998a).

## Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this investigation was to assess the self-perceived level of skill development of student affairs practitioners in Region III of the National Association of Student Affairs Administrators (NASPA). The secondary purpose was to determine avenues and strategies used to develop needed skills.

## Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in NASPA Region III regarding their attainment of various skills?
2. What methods do new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in NASPA Region III prefer to gain competence in 10 skill categories?

3. Are there differences between new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in their skill attainment perceptions?
4. Are there differences in methods used by new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers to gain competence?

## Operational Definitions

*Mid-manager*: An individual who (1) occupies a position which reports directly to the chief student affairs officer (CSAO) or (2) occupies a position which reports to a person who reports directly to a CSAO and is responsible for the direction, control, or supervision of one or more student affairs functions, or one or more professional staff members; an individual usually reporting to a CSAO who manages an administrative unit and normally supervises other professional staff, budgets, etc. (Fey, 1991). Scott (2000) defined a mid-manager as a practitioner with five to eight years of full time experience and budget/personnel responsibilities.

*National Association for Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) Region III*: A subset of the 2002 dues paying members of the student affairs professional organization (NASPA) that includes the following states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. According to the NASPA Region III Vice President (Jan Winniford, personal communication, March 28, 2002), there were 976 professional members.

*New Professional*: A person who has been working full time in the student affairs profession up to five years (Scott, 2000).

*Skill Development*: The process of enhancing knowledge or abilities to improve individual and organizational performance. Also called continuing professional education or staff development.

*Senior Student Affairs Officer (SSAO):* A practitioner with ten or more years of experience and division-wide responsibility (including assistant and associate vice presidents, deans, and directors) (Scott, 2000).

*Skill Categories*: Leadership; personnel management; student contact; communication; fiscal management; legal issues; technology; research, evaluation, and assessment; diversity; and professional development.

*Skills and Competencies*: Developmental tasks needed to be successful in performing a particular position.

*Student Affairs Professionals*: Individuals who work full-time in a functional area that usually reports to a Senior Student Affairs Officer.

## Limitations

1. Findings can be generalized only to the population from which the sample was selected.
2. Respondents were asked for their self-perception of skill accomplishment, which may differ from others' perception of their level of accomplishment.

## Significance of the Study

This research will help individuals plan for their own development, so they know the areas in which they need to improve to be successful. This information will also help supervisors coach their staff members to develop particular skills relative to their level within the organization (Winston & Creamer, 1998). Similarly, the topics that are covered by mentors and mentees (Cooper & Miller, 1998) can be enhanced through the understanding of skill development. In addition, professional associations will have an understanding of focus areas for conferences, institutes, standards, licensure, and publications (Bryan & Schwartz, 1998a).

Student affairs practitioners need to know what areas to develop to have successful careers in the field. By understanding their own growth needs, they will be able to plan for their own professional development. The profession also has a responsibility to provide continuous education to its members so they can best serve students on their campuses. As student affairs professionals understand their own professional development and career stages, they will be better able to successfully meet job challenges, continuously learn, and better assist the students they joined the profession to serve. Student affairs professionals have a responsibility to model personal and professional growth for college students who are also going through growth stages.

## Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized in five chapters. Chapter I has provided an introduction and overview of the problem. A review of the relevant literature is covered

in Chapter II. Chapter III describes the methodology used for the study. This includes the development of the instrumentation and the data collection. Chapter IV documents the results obtained from the questionnaire and the analysis of the data. Chapter V provides a summary of the study's findings and conclusions. Recommendations for practice and directions for future research are also included in the final chapter.

# CHAPTER II

# REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter provides an overview of the literature relevant to the present study. The review begins with a discussion of student affairs as a profession, then moves on to a definition of professional development, the purpose of professional development, adult development, professional development stages, methods and models of professional development, professional associations, certification issues, and skills related to various levels within the student affairs profession. The chapter concludes with a discussion of trends and issues of professional development.

## Student Affairs as a Profession

Bullet (1981) described a profession as "a well-defined body of knowledge, containing basic principles common to all applications and techniques unique to the field, with practitioners skilled and experienced in applying these techniques, and dedicated to the public interest" (p. 5). Scheer (1964) proposed eight essential profession characteristics. They included a code of ethics, an organized and accepted body of knowledge, specialized skills or identified competencies, a minimum education requirement, proficiency testing, a process ensuring that members fulfill their responsibilities, promulgation and exchange of ideas among members, and enforcement of the disciplines of the profession.

To distinguish between occupational classifications (profession, semi-profession, para-profession, etc.), Gilley (1996) used the properties of level of knowledge

requirements, the importance to society, and control by members. Houle (1980) described fourteen characteristics of a profession to include mastery of theoretical knowledge, capacity to solve problems, use of practical knowledge, formal training, credentialing, self-enhancement, creation of a subculture, legal reinforcement, relationship to other vocations, and ethical practice. Yet, Houle (1980) argued that none of these characteristics could be completely achieved, making a definitive statement about a particular occupational group difficult. A professional, someone who practices in a profession, is considered an expert, has mastered a specific branch of learning, and continues to learn after initial education (Jarvis, 1983).

Student affairs is the "organizational structure or unit within an institution responsible for students' out-of-class life and learning" (Winston, Creamer, & Miller, 2001, p. xi). Sandeen (1984) stated that the field began about the turn of the century when college presidents decided that someone needed to watch over the students. The student affairs profession developed from fields such psychology, human development, business administration, medicine, nursing, and management information systems (Upcraft & Barr, 1990).

Specifically related to student affairs Creamer, Winston, and Miller (2001) described similar characteristics of a profession: theory-based practice, adherence to ethical standards, professional involvement, advocacy for students, and contribution to the educational process. Several authors have chronicled and debated the existence of student affairs as a profession. Carpenter, Miller, and Winston (1980), Creamer, Winston, and Miller (2001), and Carpenter (in press) described the professionalization of

student affairs using Wilensky's (1964) five-step model from pational sociology. The first step is to have a group of people working full time in a necessary job. Student affairs employs many people in full time positions. The second step is to have training programs so that professionals become teachers, rather than just service providers. In student affairs, the existence of master's level preparation programs provides evidence of success in this area. In the third step, the profession establishes associations. Student affairs has generalist associations as well as those for different specialty functions. Political maneuvering is the fourth step, which allows for legal sanctions and professional standards. The last step includes the development of enforceable ethical standards. The authors concluded that professional associations should increase the study of professional issues, the profession needs to create and enforce a unique code of ethics, professionals should emphasize the evaluation and research regarding student development, and practitioners should strive to conduct themselves in a professional manner.

Carpenter (1983; in press) based his research on student affairs as a profession on a revision of Pavalko's (1971) profession-occupation continua to include knowledge of theory and levels of skill, clarification of motivation and relevance to society, decisions regarding preparation and career, autonomy of professional behavior, developing a sense of professional community, activities related to professional publications, and developing a sense of ethical practice. Carpenter concluded that professionals must master the growth points at each level before moving on to the next level.

While Creamer, Winston, and Miller (2001) agreed that student affairs has some characteristics of a profession, they thought student affairs needed to improve retention to support it being a calling, convince the larger academic community that student affairs practitioners need specialized knowledge, provide unique service to students, and resolve tension between supporting the institution and supporting professional standards. Furthermore, Carpenter (in press) stated similar arguments and added others including that the debate continues about level of theory and techniques involved, relevance to society needs to be strengthened, professional preparation content needs to be determined, and service motivation versus self interest is difficult to discern. In addition, he proposed that although there is a strong sense of culture, it is fragmented, and the enforcement of a code of ethics needs to be strengthened. In conclusion, Creamer, Winston, and Miller (2001), and Carpenter (in press) still characterized student affairs as an emerging profession, which may not diminish the value of being a professional in practice in a complex environment. The profession is considered emerging because it has not completely met the standards of the definition of a profession. Practitioners have high performance expectations regardless of whether the external environment describes this line of work as a profession.

Carpenter (in press), looking toward the future, stated that student affairs is not a traditional profession, nor should it be. A modern model of professions may provide a better description of the diversity and expertise in the field. In looking at the future of student affairs based on a broader definition of development, Hallowell, Phelps, Kerr, and Reddy (1995) suggested that student affairs integrate diverse cultural perspectives

into theory and practice, connect with the academy, and think beyond existing philosophical and theoretical assumptions. They concluded "student development is now at a point of departure for new approaches, new insights, and new paradigms" (p. 65).

Hirt and Creamer (1998) described the student affairs practitioner as working in four realms: personal, institutional, extra-institutional, and professional. In the personal realm, they discussed the limited career mobility and attrition rate in the field, noting the attrition rate is 39% to 65%, with lack of career mobility as a major reason. Staff who cannot progress in the hierarchy may have the opportunity for lateral mobility, but only if they possess knowledge of current issues in other areas. In the institutional area, the authors cited technology, budget resources, and changes in enrollment. The extra-institutional realm included external constituencies, assessment and accountability, and legal issues. The professional realm included professional associations, preparation programs, accreditation and credentialing.

Because of the changing roles of higher education institutions, student affairs administrators have been called administrators, counselors, educators, environmental designers, and student advocates (Garland, 1985). Winston, Creamer, and Miller (2001) called them educators, leaders, and managers, describing in detail required skills and knowledge as well as their scope and function. In behavioral terms, educators lecture, demonstrate, advise, coach, model, facilitate, learn, research, evaluate, collaborate, and structure. Leaders plan and organize, solve problems, clarify roles and objectives, inform, monitor, motivate and inspire, consult, delegate, support, develop and mentor, manage conflict and build teams, network, recognize, and reward. Finally, managers

supervise, plan and organize, make decisions, monitor indicators, control, represent, coordinate, consult, and administer.

Whether or not student affairs is accepted as a profession, practitioners perform a variety of functions within the higher education realm and have the responsibility to maintain professional standards. In order to be viewed as competent, professionals should have mastery of a body of knowledge, ethical practice, and continuing skill enhancement.

## Professional Development Defined

Professions have the expectation of continuing education, sometimes referred to as professional development. Many definitions of professional development have been proposed. Professional development is also known as in-service, post-basic, and continuing education (Jarvis, 1983). In the continuing professional education field, one definition is a "rational process of information processing, problem solving, decision making, and clinical reasoning and judgment" (Daley, 2000, p. 39). Another definition is "attaining expertise by taking a more intuitive approach to the topic" (Daley, 2000. p. 39). Continuing education is a "planned series of learning incidents, beyond initial education, having a humanistic basis, directed towards participant's learning and understanding" (Jarvis, 1983, p. 72-73).

In 1983, Carpenter asserted that professional development goes beyond inservice education and participation in professional organizations; it also includes developmental tasks and stages taken from a human development perspective. Jarvis (1983) proposed

that professional development is not a static occurrence; it involves conversing with other professionals about new developments.

Schreiber, Dunkel, and Jahr (1994) defined systematic professional development as "involvement in activities that are intended to enhance professional effectiveness, and are chosen as a result of a decision-making process based on assessment of skills and designed goals while targeting skill development" (p. 26). That same year, Conneely (1994) asserted that student affairs professional development (which focuses on the individual) is a subset of staff development (which focuses on the organization). Further, Conneely (1994) described it as a life-long structured process to develop skills and abilities needed for the future.

A few years later, Holmes (1998) described professional development in terms of human resource development, "a systematic process that includes training and development, organization development, and career development to enhance individual, group, and organizational effectiveness" (p. 15-16). Using human performance technology (an analytical process of linking organizational goals to individual ability to achieve the goals), student affairs professionals can systematically plan activities to attain specific objectives based on organizational needs and structures (Holmes, 1998).

Development of staff in student affairs parallels the development of students. As Winston and Creamer (1997) put it, "Both are conceptually focused on development as the primary outcome of education, and both recognize the central nature of the profession's covenant with human dignity, equality, and community and enduring values" (p. 219). In student affairs, staff development is described as "intentional efforts

by supervisors and administrative leaders of student affairs to improve staff members' effectiveness, leading to improved organizational effectiveness" (Winston & Creamer, 1997). Similarly, Merkle and Artman (1983) described it as "a planned experience designed to change behavior and result in professional and/or personal growth and improved organizational effectiveness" (p. 55).

Kruger (2000) proposed that, "The very definition of 'profession' suggests continuous professional development" (p. 536). He went on to say that, "The very practice and philosophy of student affairs implies on-going, lifelong professional development" (p. 536) and used the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), and American College Personnel Association (ACPA) as examples of how professional associations support and expect professional development. The CAS Standards, while not mandating expectations for the profession as a whole, provided a general statement that individual functional areas "must provide continuing professional development opportunities for staff including in-service training programs and participation in professional conferences, workshops, and other continuing education activities" (Miller, 1997, p. 34).

The National Association of Student Personnel Association's Standards of Professional Practice (2001) included a statement about members' responsibility for continued growth. Specifically, it stated:

> Members have an obligation to continue personal professional growth and to contribute to the development of the profession by enhancing personal

> knowledge and skills, sharing ideas and information, improving professional practices, conducting and reporting research, and participating in association activities. Members promote and facilitate growth of staff and they emphasize ethical standards in professional preparation and development programs. (p. 18)

In addition, the American College Personnel Association, another national student affairs organization, has a clear statement regarding members' responsibility to students, the profession, and themselves. As an introduction, their Statement of Ethical Principles and Standards stated that professionals:

> …possess the knowledge, skills, emotional stability, and maturity to discharge responsibilities as administrators, advisors, consultants, counselors, programmers, researchers, and teachers. High levels of professional competence are expected in the performance of their duties and responsibilities. (ACPA, 2001, p. 424)

In expectations of professional responsibility and competence, ACPA indicates twenty-five standards including maintaining and updating skills and knowledge, conducting and reporting research, and educating new professionals (ACPA, 2001). As Carpenter (2001b) stated, "Students have a right to expect that the student affairs professional with whom they are working has knowledge of appropriate theories, current research, and proven best practices" (p. 311).

Barr (1990) identified five ways people enter the student affairs profession: the intentional decision, the unintentional decision, organizational realignment, specialty preparation, and remaining uncommitted. People who intentionally enter student affairs

may have the requisite knowledge through a preparation program, but they are also the not the majority of student affairs professionals. The unintentional professional needs to learn student development theory, but has the skills to do the job. In the situation of organizational realignment, individuals (who may join student affairs through circumstances beyond their control) bring skills, but may need direct experience, knowledge, and an understanding of the student affairs culture. Because of the broad nature of student affairs, some practitioners may identify with their specialty (medicine, psychology, counseling, etc.) rather than the student affairs profession. The uncommitted person, who sees his/her position as a job rather than a career, does not share the same knowledge or beliefs with other members in the division and typically does not stay in student affairs very long. No matter the path, each group has its own professional development needs to improve their performance for self-improvement and organizational effectiveness. Professional associations and the profession, in general, provide development for individual needs to help practitioners achieve their career goals.

Because advancement opportunities are sometimes limited within institutions, professionals frequently have to move out to move up (leave their current institution in order to gain a higher position), which can create a frustrating environment for new staff (Barr, 1990). In addition, the author pointed out that there is not a quality and content standard for preparation programs, so new professionals do not all have the same skills and knowledge levels. Another frustration is that there are not clear, consistent promotion systems in student affairs. Scott (2000) related career satisfaction to

professional competence. Staff development programs should help identify career goals and strategies to achieve those goals.

To provide the best possible environment for student learning and development, student affairs professionals must have the best preparation, continue to develop professionally, test and evaluate different approaches, manage resources, understand institutional missions, and know individual and group theory building (Carpenter, 2001b). Carpenter and Miller (1981) stated,

> Professional development, like all human development, is best facilitated if it takes place in an environment in which change is planned for and anticipated. Initial preparation should therefore concentrate not only on skills needed for meeting the needs of entry-level professional positions, but also on the awareness of the professional development stages and the factors of professional development which come into play as careers continue. (p. 9)

Professional development, then, should be forward looking, intentional, and based on recognized stages.

An intentional professional development plan, which identifies needed skills and competencies, plays a key role in retention of student affairs professionals, although the content of the plan and specific activities are not always apparent (Dunkel & Schreiber, 1992). Individuals, supervisors, and institutions all play a role in providing that structure so that professionals can meet their career goals while meeting the needs of the institutions. Meeting individual needs in a structured manner may enhance on area of staff satisfaction.

While several definitions and structures of professional development exist, most experts agreed that in order to maintain quality, professionals should seek out opportunities for intentional growth and development. Educating the workforce has developed from simple training to career development, organizational development, and even adult learning (Rowden, 1996). Unfortunately, in Carpenter's (1998) opinion, continuing professional education in student affairs has been "treated in a haphazard fashion" (p. 159).

Professional development, defined in many different ways, focuses on the individual continually learning and updating skills and knowledge to improve the person and the organization. Because professionals enter the student affairs field in a variety of ways and may have specializations, professional development includes intentional, individualized plans for growth including specific outcomes and expectations for performance. In order to meet the needs of staff and university students, student affairs practitioners of the future need to understand the purpose and expectations of professional development, the skills required to be successful in their administrative level, and the trends and issues that may affect their future education.

## The Purpose and Outcomes of Professional Development

"Employers spend over $50 billion per year on formal employee training and education. Approximately $180 billion per year is spent on informal, on-the-job training" (Rowden, 1996, p.3). According to Mott (2000), professional education is a growing area in higher education, "with more than $5 billion spent annually on a variety

of continuing professional education programs, benefiting more than fifty million professionals" (p. 24). In studies of why adults participate in continuing education, most respondents indicated several reasons but the most common response was job-related (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999).

Many authors have gone beyond a definition of professional development to include specific expectations and outcomes. In 1979, Baier identified several objectives that should be included in a student affairs staff development program. They include providing an in-depth awareness of services and programs, keeping up to date on current issues and trends, learning to use technology to improve performance, developing new problem solving skills, providing incentives to grow, and building relations with coworkers and faculty.

Several years later, Jarvis (1983), a well-known writer about professional and adult education, asserted that the content of professional education is knowledge, skills and attitudes on top of a knowledge base for the profession. Continuing education, then, provides an opportunity to update knowledge about new developments, move from one occupation to another, and to acquire specialized knowledge (Jarvis, 1983). Practitioners need both knowledge and skills in order to be competent in their performance. Not only do they need to master a discipline, they must be able to apply theory to practice (Jarvis, 1983; Conneely, 1994).

DeCoster and Brown (1983) summarized the objectives and curriculum of staff development: facilitating interaction with colleagues and associates, developing functional skills and specific competencies, promoting self-understanding and self-

actualization, exposure to innovative programs, providing opportunity for professional renewal, and conveying theory and philosophical knowledge. Similarly, Baier (1985) suggested that the purpose of staff development is to "help improve staff morale, stimulate creative problem solving, increase staff productivity and efficiency, facilitate goal setting, improve staff skills, increase staff awareness of the importance of keeping current and up-to-date, and raise skill levels" (p. 221). Both DeCoster and Brown (1983) and Baier (1985) reflected that the purpose of development is to improve the organization and the individual.

From a slightly different perspective, Cervero (1988) stated that professional education improves service to customers "by improving their knowledge, competence, or performance" (p. 25). Therefore, educators seek to help themselves and others improve performance, but they may also improve the relationship with their customers. In student affairs, customers can include students, families, other staff, and the general public.

In the beginning of a new decade, Bryan and Mullendore (1990) thought that the goals of professional development should be to create opportunities for staff to enhance competencies and skills in specific job settings. A starting point for professional development is performing a personal needs assessment (including perspectives from supervisors and staff), determining a performance measure, and determining what resources are needed. This cycle provides an opportunity for continuous improvement and planning. Paralleling the thoughts of Baier (1985) and Cervero (1988), Conneely (1994) thought the outcome of staff development included rejuvenation and new ideas,

skill attainment, and, ultimately, better service to students. Ideally, student affairs professionals should focus on continued learning and growth, rather than relying on their current knowledge and skills (Conneely, 1994).

Looking at staff development from a supervisor and employee relationship, Burke and Randal (1994) described four objectives: (1) to encourage internal promotion, (2) to develop internal talent prior to staffing needs, (3) to give the supervisors the responsibility of evaluating and developing staff, and (4) to give the employee the responsibility for his/her development. Their purpose of professional development focused predominantly on staffing issues to benefit the department within an institution.

Looking at a particular population, Blackhurst, Brandt, and Kalinowski (1998) found that women in associate or assistant director positions were dissatisfied with their work setting and had low organizational commitment, so they needed to be supported by their supervisors in their professional development and seek mentors. Professional development may provide these women greater skills that may lead to greater individual satisfaction and organization dedication. In the long run, this could affect recruitment, promotion, and retention of women in student affairs.

In their book, *Improving Staffing Practices in Student Affairs*, Winston and Creamer (1997) summarized Dalton's (1989) idea of the purposes of staff development. Dalton (1989) identified the benefit to students, the improvement of the staff member, and enhancement of the organization. Similar to Burke and Randal (1994), Winston and Creamer connected professional development into the larger human resources aspect of student affairs. As Winston and Creamer (1997) further reviewed some of the early

literature on staff development, they highlighted Truman and Gross's (1970) principal purposes that still apply today. In-service education should include appropriate planning, support for individual and institutional goals, be based on a variety of skill levels, be attuned to current and future issues, be geared toward application of new skills and knowledge, be evaluated frequently, and be supported by the senior student affairs officer.

Winston and Creamer (1997) stated that the process of staff development shows the common purposes of all staff and the important nature of knowledge and skills to perform duties to achieve the larger organizational goals. Bryan and Schwartz (1998b) quoted Canon's (1981) purpose of staff development programs to include professional growth, improving current skills, and developing new skills. Professionals often speak about refining current skills, rather than developing or expanding total competencies, although both strategies are needed for career advancement (DeCoster & Brown, 1983).

The purpose of professional continuing education is to improve professional competence, practice, or knowledge (Mott, 2000). "The bottom line of continuing education is to improve the practice…" of professionals (Cervero, 2000, p. 3). Ideally improving the competence of professionals will improve service to students and other stakeholders. Staff development programs lead to collaboration and cooperation among staff, increased staff morale, a more effective work environment, and preparation for the future. This positive work environment is especially important when considering that student affairs invites stress and burnout (Barr, 1990). In addition, staff development programs encourage those in specialty areas to master the theoretical underpinnings.

These efforts will help assure that well qualified staff are prepared to serve college students.

Mott (2000) concluded that the goals of professional expertise should be dynamic to reflect changing environments, focused on self-assessment, practice-based, collaborative, and future oriented. She believed that this is best accomplished through practitioner dialogue, reflection, theory building, formal education, and actual practice. One method of development does not provide a complete picture, nor does it challenge the professional to learn in different ways.

A goal of continuing education is to "encourage learners to apply what they learn, with resulting individual and organizational benefits" (Knox, 2000, p. 17). For professionals already working in their career field, education and professional practice sometimes occur simultaneously and provide opportunities to learn (Knox, 2000). In some final thoughts, Kruger (2000) concluded his chapter on alternatives for professional development suggesting, among other things, that supervisors should expect and reward self-directed development, and that professional development has two purposes: to improve the student affairs professional and to develop new skills, knowledge and abilities for the benefit of the student.

Creamer and Shelton (1988) examined two perspectives of staff development. The staff effectiveness model focused on the skills, job satisfaction, job attitudes, and adult development of the individual. On the other hand, the organizational effectiveness model focused on the contextual meaning of staff development in the nature of the

organization. In other words, professional development enhances organizational effectiveness (Creamer & Shelton, 1988).

Some literature has been published about the connection of organizational effectiveness, staff development, and ownership. Porter (1989) proposed that ownership directly relates to a sense of competence in an on-going cycle; owning a task aids competence in that task and vice versa; therefore, student affairs divisions must create opportunities for staff to increase skills, and successful experiences lead to increased knowledge and ownership.

DeCoster and Brown (1983) agreed that staff development programs address the interaction of individual development and organizational development. Creamer and Shelton (1988) proposed that "there exists a substantial relationship between effective in-service education and organization development and effectiveness" (p. 410).

Organizational learning takes place only after individual and group learning occur. Holistic development aids the organization by helping the individual in career planning, development, and assessment. The growth goes beyond individual task accomplishment; the entire organization is affected by continuous individual learning (Bierema, 1996).

Organizational learning integrates work and learning to create change and improvement for the individual, group, and organizational levels. This continuous learning supports the concept in the field of adult learning and development beyond training that the result is greater than the sum of the parts (Rowden, 1996). When organizational learning takes place, the institution is capable of responding to changes

quickly, fostering innovation, and remaining competitive in the marketplace (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999).

Although staff development should be an organizational issue, Kruger (2000) contended that, "lifelong professional development must … be a part of the individual responsibility of every member of the profession" (p. 550). Neither organizations nor individuals grow just by focusing on strengths and accomplishments. In order to grow, organizations and individuals must be willing to address negative outcomes and take action to improve performance (Schroeder & Pike, 2001).

Carpenter (1983) believed professional development is an individual responsibility, although institutions and associations should provide opportunities for growth. In addition, he suggested that professionals should engage in self-assessment, goal setting, and action. Later, Carpenter (2001a) continued to support the idea of organizations empowering staff to develop by committing resources, as long as employees are sensitive to the needs of the institution.

From a different perspective, Scott (2000) identified important organizational factors in staff development: responsibilities for staff development should be clearly identified and the goals communicated to staff, staff needs and wants should be assessed, supervisors should expect their staff members to participate, Senior Student Affairs Officers should communicate their commitment through expectations and resources, programs should be regularly assessed, and performance appraisals should include development plans. While staff development should be ingrained in the organization, the people make it happen.

On an organizational level, Woodard and Komives (1990) suggested departments or divisions create a continuous learning philosophy that includes intentional development programs. Bryan and Mullendore (1990) strongly suggested that the CSAO and even the institution's president support professional development programs in philosophy and budget. Staff that are provided professional renewal, reasonable work loads, and adequate salaries are likely to excel in their functional area, have a sense of satisfaction, and remain in student affairs (Woodard & Komives, 1990).

As a function of the staffing process, professional development includes several important aspects. When staff members develop, the organization benefits. This requires a long-term perspective. In order for staff to develop, organizations need to have an intentional developmental plan. Not only is the outcome of professional development important, the process of development can be just as worthwhile. While the connection should be clear between staff development and job functions, in reality that is not always the case. Because people and organizations change constantly, staff development needs to be creative and responsive to needs (Carpenter, 2001a).

While the organization can provide opportunities for growth and development, sometimes individuals do not take advantage of all of their opportunities. In studies regarding the individuals' reasons and deterrents for participation in continuing professional education activities in a variety of fields, professionals said that they participate for professional improvement and development, professional service, collegial learning and interaction, professional commitment and reflection, and personal

benefits and job security. The reasons do differ based on field, career stage and personal characteristics (Cervero, 1988).

On the other hand, adults express reasons for not participating, which can be divided into several categories including internal (personal), external (situational), institutional, or a combination of reasons (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Other deterrents include apathy, cost, family constraints, lack of benefit, lack of quality, and work constraints. Several of those deterrents are within the control of program planners (Cervero, 1988) and employing organizations. Using Carpenter's (1980) student affairs professional development stages, Young (1994) examined the barriers to student affairs professional development participation. Although the importance of each barrier differed by stage, he found that the highest rated barriers included time needed to participate, cost of activities, home/job responsibilities/support, and stress of studying. While those barriers are not impossible to overcome, they do dissuade some practitioners from participation.

In a recent review of literature regarding supervision, the authors concluded that the majority of studies on professional development in student affairs focused on practical applications, staff development and training, and the general student affairs audience (Cooper, Saunders, Howell, & Bates, 2001). Because many of the published articles did not use quantitative or qualitative research methods, the authors recommended that professionals become more aware of research methods. They further suggested part of the challenge is to develop outcome measures and validated

instruments to assess the effect of professional development programs (Cooper, Saunders, Howell, & Bates, 2001).

Since professional development helps practitioners stay current in their skills and abilities, it needs priority when planning in an organizational environment. Not only do individuals learn from development opportunities, the organization and groups learns as well. The outcome of intentional planning is that competent professionals are better able to serve the students and staff on their campuses. In a larger context this development promotes student affairs as a profession. While some barriers exist in continuing education, organizations and individuals can overcome those barriers with support and planning. Student affairs organizations have the opportunity to determine what their purposes and expectations are when planning developmental opportunities.

## Adult Development and Learning

Once the outcomes of professional development are established, the methods are developed to achieve those outcomes. In order to understand the best methods to use, program planners need to understand how adults learn and develop. Adult learning and human development theories provide a philosophical perspective for student affairs professional development. In the beginning of the development of continuing education as its own field of study, the thought was that there were similarities across professions (such as medicine, accounting, and law) in that all adults share some basic human processes, some adults belong to a profession, and individuals belong to a particular

profession (Cervero, 1988). The author continued to draw similarities to adult and continuing education and human resource development and training.

Adults define themselves through their experiences. For learning to occur from experiences, the learner must connect past and current experiences. In addition, the experiences have value because of the interaction with the person and the environment (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Cervero (1988) posited that participation in professional activities has the potential to be educative, although that is not guaranteed. The more a professional is involved in the learning process, the greater the likelihood that learning will take place.

Learning happens in a variety of places that enhance adult learning experiences. For adults, in particular, appreciating and using prior knowledge and experiences helps educators reach students. In addition, if educators promote learning in a variety of ways, more adults might see themselves as active learners (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). When examining educational design situations, the adult learner and teacher may be involved at different levels. Individuals may be designing learning situations for themselves, or individuals or groups can design programs for groups. Likewise, institutions can design activities, or an activity may be designed for a mass audience (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999).

Adult learners are self-directed people who need autonomy to manage their own learning. They need to relate to a context, and may not rely on formal methods. Yet, the workplace may provide opportunities that are "formal, productivity-based and fragmented" (Bierema, 1996, p. 24). Professionals learn through a variety of ways

including self-direction, facilitation, being trained, discussion, and conditioning (Jarvis, 1983). “Adult education is concerned with the total human being and his or her insights into, and understanding of, his or her entire world” (Rowden, 1996, p. 4).

Carpenter (1979) applied five principles of human development to student affairs professional development. First, “professional development is continuous and cumulative in nature, moves from simple to more complex behavior, and can be described via levels or stages held in common” (Carpenter, 1979, p. 49). Second, the best development comes from the interaction of the whole person, who is striving for growth, and the environment. Third, preparation includes mastery of a body of knowledge and a group of skills within the context of personal development. Fourth, credibility and excellent performance depend on the quality of professional preparation. Fifth, “professional preparation is a life-long learning process” (Carpenter, 1979, p. 49). These human development concepts complement adult learning theories and have meaning for the student affairs profession.

Similarly, Zunker (1998) applied human development concepts to career development and adult learning theory: development proceeds in multiple directions, the whole person develops throughout his/her life, people are adaptable, people are active participants in their lifelong development, and development can be viewed from a variety of perspectives. Adults continue to learn in complex environments and apply that development to their careers and work life. While Zunker did not relate these concepts directly to student affairs, they apply nonetheless. Continuous professional development

activities provide those opportunities to develop the whole person in the direction he or she wants to go.

In 1984, Shaffer identified five preparation plan characteristics, based on adult learning theory, for entry or advancement in the field.

1. It must be developmental in nature, starting where the individual is in a particular skill, knowledge or attitudinal area and progressing to more sophisticated and professional levels.
2. It must concern itself with the operational value system guiding the individual's own interpersonal relations and behavior in various settings.
3. It must combine learning with doing, not just for understanding, but for developing the ability to initiate new and different programs, policies, and procedures where necessary.
4. It must facilitate and stimulate an individual's reaching out to new fields of knowledge that might contribute to depth, adaptability, and discernment.
5. Individual staff members must see good professional practice, in its broadest sense, as their base for security and confidence, and not just as a means of looking good to a professor in a class or a supervisor on the job. (p. 21)

Fox and Radloff (1999) identified skills and attributes for lifelong learning in adulthood. Skills include setting meaningful goals, identifying and using resources,

using technology, reflecting on the outcomes of learning, and overcoming obstacles. Attributes include belief in self as a competent learner; knowledge of strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles; persistence; and desire to learn beyond formal education.

Cervero (1988) described Schön's (1983) model of professional practice and learning that includes knowing-in-action and reflection-in-action. For professionals, knowledge-in-action includes acting without having to think prior to or during performance, not being aware that they have learned the skills, and not knowing what knowledge led to the action. On the other hand, reflection-in-action requires that professionals construct a solution to problems that are unique and uncertain. In Cervero's words, "professionals rethink some part of knowing-in-action, conduct an on-the-spot experiment to test its utility, and incorporate this new understanding into immediate action" (Cervero, 1988, p. 44). In terms of professional knowledge, preservice education provides knowledge-in-action or technical knowledge, but it also needs to focus on the acquisition of reflection-in-action, intuition, or the artistry of decision making as the professional gains experience.

Brown, Podolske, Kohles, and Sonnenberg (1992) studied the reflection-in-action theory with student affairs professionals. They found that student affairs professionals are reflective practitioners, the action phase is important to them (beyond decision making), formal learning played a minimal role in becoming reflective, and they used only a few strategies in their reflection time. In their conclusion, the authors suggested

that student affairs administrators at all levels could benefit from workshops and developmental opportunities in facilitating reflection.

Another aspect of adult education theory is situated cognition. Daley (2000) used Black and Schnell's (1995) description of situated cognition in the adult learning context. First, learning is situated in the context of authentic practice. Second, transfer of learning is limited to similar situations. Third, learning is a social phenomenon, and fourth, learning relies on previous learning. In support of situated cognition, Winston and Creamer (1997) stated that "activities requiring thoughtful interaction and reflection couched in a context of requirements of the job are far more likely to result in desired effects on behavior" (p. 240).

Continuing education practitioners and researchers emphasize that knowledge used in practice is a reflection of the challenges and complexities that provide the richest source of learning. Being able to reflect on a problem and then choose strategies helps adults learn in context and apply similar decisions in other situations. That knowledge is more useful than formal methods of education (Mott, 2000). Daley (2000) added that professionals construct their own knowledge through connecting new knowledge to on the job experience.

From an adult learning perspective, professionals need to be involved in their own learning, which is relevant to their lives and ongoing. They should also be given an opportunity to apply what they know, reflect on what they have learned, and adapt to unique situations. Just as students proceed through developmental periods with particular

needs, so do adults in the working world. Understanding adult development and learning theories helps individuals put professional developmental stages in perspective.

## Professional Development Stages

Carpenter and Miller (1981), from their previous research, proposed four distinct professional development stages, although Carpenter (in press) revised the stages to include the first three. The formative stage includes graduate students and/or paraprofessional workers. Their concerns are education and training, knowledge of theory and practice, developing student affairs values, and making contacts. In that stage, they work mostly under an external locus of control, although they also develop a commitment to the field. The application stage includes those beginning or in intermediate practice, along with further preparation. In the application phase, professionals apply skills, increase their responsibility levels, apply ethical standards, and continue their education through structured development opportunities. In this stage, self-confidence and decision-making increase. The additive stage includes intermediate-to-upper level staff with policy making responsibility and increased professional sharing. Those in the additive stage supervise and develop younger professionals, participate in the leadership of professional associations, and develop new approaches regarding student development. In this stage, professionals are leaders, role models, and contributors. The generative stage, discontinued by Carpenter (in press), included those in upper level practice through retirement and who mentor and influence the profession. They may critique new theories, postulate about current and future issues, and shape the

direction of associations. In sum, Carpenter (in press) described the cycle of professional development as learning, doing, and contributing.

There are also several stage models of career development that provide insight to professional development stages. Zunker (1998) described Kram's (1988) four stages and needs. People in the establishment stage need support and direction, while those in the advancement stage need coaching, exposure, and role models. Those in the maintenance stage need to make contributions, share with others, and serve as mentors. Finally, in the withdrawal stage, people begin to let go of their work identity. When looking at development stages, individuals progress through the stages at different speeds and with different challenges, so they need individual intentionally planned activities to help them be successful in each of the stages.

Based on previous research in adult learning and student affairs, professionals appear to progress through stages with specific needs and issues at each level. These concepts affect individuals, supervisors, organizations and professional associations in terms of continuing education, supervision, and career success. Therefore, professional development should address those needs and issues in format and content that encourages mastery of skills. Models and methods of professional development are based on a variety of philosophical perspectives.

## Models and Methods

"For most people, learning in adulthood brings to mind classroom settings" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 26), but adults can learn in formal settings (institutions,

adult education organizations, etc.), non-formal settings (community-based adult learning programs and indigenous learning), and informal or self-directed contexts (in natural settings guided primarily by the learner) (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999).

Several models of professional education have thrived throughout history (Mott, 2000). The update model focused on information transfer from a positivist perspective. It seeks to determine what the professional should know. The model does not include subjective, value-laden, or social aspects of knowledge. On the other hand, the competence model expands the update model to include skills, personal traits, characteristics, self-image, and self-direction. The curriculum is enhanced through learner involvement in role-playing, case studies, and problem solving exercises. Through competencies, it describes what good practice is now, but not what it should be. This model seeks to determine, in a broad sense, what the professional should do. Similar to the update model, it ignores the larger social and organizational systems. The performance model goes a step further to focus on individuals who are a sum of their environment, self-image, and values in complex networks. Complex performance cannot be changed by any one intervention. This performance model attempts to determine "what is the professional all about?" (Mott, 2000, p. 25).

Through developing goals and understanding their work environment, professionals may have a clearer picture of the methods they should use to develop particular skills. DeCoster and Brown (1983) developed a matrix for self-assessment related to career objectives. The model looks at immediate goals for the current position, short-term goals to achieve the next possible position, and long-term career goals

intersected by knowledge skills and personal qualities needed to functions at the different goal levels.

Not only is self-awareness an important component in creating a professional development plan, but those planning continuing education need to understand the development process as well. When planning professional education activities, organizers ideally should consider several items such as needs assessment, the learning objectives, learners' experiences, an educational plan, and outcomes assessment. If professional standards exist, those should guide the planning process (Cervero, 1988). In addition, Mills (1990) recommended that training, particularly regarding technology, should be in stages to build on acquired skills, rather than providing a one-time only session. He asserted that resources, including time and money, for self-paced training and off campus conferences with other student affairs professionals be provided. In terms of specific methods of staff development, he suggested teleconferences, computer conferences, videotapes, and access to resources in personal computers or institutional central computers.

Burke and Randall (1994) proposed that student affairs could learn from corporate development models that require a systematic approach supported at all levels. While the organization is not responsible for fulfilling employee needs and aspirations, the organization should provide tools and opportunities for individual development. Burke and Randall (1994) described companies such as Coca-Cola and Disney, both of which recognize that maximizing and improving employee performance will benefit the larger organization. Their model, the Student Affairs Staff Development Model,

provided a matrix with staff member's role, supervisor's role, and CSAO's role on one axis and career opportunities, matching/selection, performance review, career development sessions, and career development reviews on the other. It encourages individual development and mobility through job expansion and upward movement. The model is based on ten principles:

1. Staff development is a divisional priority.
2. Student affairs philosophies are institutionally defined.
3. Institutional loyalty is a desirable goal.
4. Multiple career goals can be achieved below the chief student affairs officer.
5. Helping relationships must exist between staff persons and supervisors.
6. Staff members are interested in career development.
7. Successful staff development programs are voluntary and based on staff needs.
8. Inter-institutional mobility is encouraged and facilitated.
9. Position qualifications are based more on skills, abilities, and divisional talent needs rather than years of experience in a particular job category.
10. The role of the student affairs generalist should be encouraged through on-going training and job diversification. (p. 79)

Using the ten principles, organizations can create an individual development plan for each employee that will ultimately benefit the organization through well-qualified employees.

From a different perspective, Daley (2000) considered professional development as honing intuitive approaches through artistry, reflection, and alternative ways of knowing. She goes on to describe a continuum from novice to expert. In that model, professionals "develop from novice to expert as they learn to rely on past concrete experiences rather than on abstract principles, as they understand situations as integrated wholes rather than as discrete parts, and as they begin to act as involved performers rather than as detached observers" (p. 39). This supports adult learning theory in that professionals are looking for experiences that they can understand through their previous experiences and can apply to their career development. As professionals grow, they know how to gather information, connect information to experiences, and change practice based on newly created knowledge (Daley, 2000).

Houle (1980) model of professional learning, which includes general education and content specialization, selection into the field, pre-service education, certification of competence, induction into the field, and continued learning. His later model also addressed changes in career choices and professions. The updated version includes a cyclical pattern of maintenance and modernization, preparing to change, induction to new responsibilities, and refreshing skills. This is similar to Daley's (2000) model described above in that professionals begin with basic knowledge and then master an area. Modes of learning include the instruction mode (passive learning of predetermined content), the inquiry mode (exploratory and cooperative), and performance (practice in the actual work setting) (Houle, 1980). As adults learn content of a particular field, they are better able to apply knowledge to particular actions consistent with the expectations

of that field. In order to maintain competence, practitioners must continue to update their knowledge and skill level.

While many models include structured activities or organization expectations, the individual's responsibility in the process cannot be overlooked. Since much of continuing learning in the professions is self-directed, professional education should build on that and help individuals identify their educational goals, needs, and resources, as well as assist in evaluating their self directed learning efforts (Knox, 2000).

Organizations are as unique as the individuals that work in them, and they have created their own expectations about models and methods accepted as development. While some focus on the individual, others focus on the organization as a whole. Several authors have written about the variety of development opportunities and some of the challenges and benefits associated with them. For example, Baier (1979) asserted that many student affairs programs do not have established professional development programs, in part because it is difficult to standardize the skills needed to be successful, and professionals enter the field with a variety of education and experience levels. Yet, Baier emphasized that steps need to be taken to in order to keep professionals competent. On campus methods include supervision, orientation, coffee hours (scheduled, informal conversations), workshops and seminars, mini-university programs, research grants, staff newsletters, self-instruction training modules, and research and literature reports. Other ideas include visiting other campuses, attending conferences and workshops, taking courses, and attending institutes. Individuals can take part in many activities for

development including conference attendance, reading, research, presenting, writing, and consulting (DeCoster & Brown, 1983).

Institutional programs do not have to be expensive or time intensive to be valuable—brown bag lunches, regularly scheduled programs and retreats offer opportunities for development (Gregory, 1994). He concluded that quality professional development include support from the top, regular evaluation, a committee to coordinate planning, and reflection of the institution's mission (Gregory, 1994).

Bryan and Schwartz (1998b) identified several levels of professional development including individual (courses, workshops, mentoring), group or program (cluster of individuals), departmental, divisional, and professional associations. Barr and Desler (2000) stated that at the very least, professionals should read the literature and attend professional conferences when possible. Further, for on campus programs, DeCoster and Brown (1983) made some suggestions to improve effectiveness: staff development programs should be integrated with organizational objectives; programs should be related to self-assessment, supervision, and performance appraisal; developmental experiences should be comprehensive; programs should target interest and needs of staff groups; and retreats serve as a good way to integrate individual and organizational development.

DeCoster and Brown (1983) reviewed methods of staff development, including courses, conference attendance, on campus programs, off campus workshops, staff social functions, organizational newsletters, staff meetings, committee work, relationships with colleagues, and fellowships and internships. Professional development strategies

included individual decision motivation and assessment, supervision, mentoring, structured learning activities, and professional participation (DeCoster & Brown, 1983).

In 1988, Shelton and Creamer reviewed several different preferred methods of in-service programs. They included off campus workshops offered by professional associations, bringing consultants to campus, developing internal programs, attending conferences, taking academic courses, and discussions with colleagues. In addition, they provided an overview of Miller's (1985) model that included academic instruction, department development, consultant directed, instructional resources, practitioner centered, inter-institutional consortium, and action planning.

Staff development programs can focus on getting a degree, continuing education on campus, personal development, and staff retreats (Adams, 1994). For degree seeking professionals, universities can offer sabbaticals, reduced workload, and matching tuition. On campus programs can include sharing resources with other divisions, ordering conference tapes, teleconferencing, reading lists and discussion groups, and job rotation. Adams continued his article by briefly describing personal development opportunities such as health education and recreation to prevent burnout. Finally, Adams (1994) encouraged staff retreats that can provide concentrated time and energy on specific topics.

In a review of the staff development literature, Winston and Creamer (1997) quoted Miller's (1975) study of staff preferences for educational programs. From most preferred to least preferred, the activities included professional association workshops;

bringing outside experts to campus; do-it-yourself in-service programs; attending national, regional, or state professional conferences; and graduate academic programs.

In discussing the integration of staff supervision and professional development, Winston and Creamer (1998) described the methods used to develop knowledge, skills, and personal qualities. On campus methods included self-directed study, reading professional literature, taking a course, redesigning jobs, shadowing, conducting a research study, participating in an interdepartmental committee or task force, undertaking a special project, and volunteering for special assignments. Off campus efforts included attending professional association conferences, involvement in professional associations, and attending a workshop.

Scott (2000) reviewed the methods of staff development, including topic-specific workshops, teleconferences, discussion groups, training videos, administrative sabbaticals, self-directed programs, administrative internships, administrative shadowing, administrative exchange programs, site visits to other institutions, and orientation for new staff. Kruger (2000) identified methods of professional development, including professional, scholarly, and informal writing opportunities; internships; professional presentations; service learning and community service; and workshops and institutes.

Denzine (2001) suggested student affairs practitioners use professional portfolios, as do other fields, to document work related experiences and skills. She proposed that strengths of portfolios are that they are developed within one's current role and provide an opportunity for reflection on learning and work experiences, supporting

Schön's (1983) idea of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. The portfolios can also be used to supplement performance appraisal and evaluate division goals. Finally, portfolios can be an "effective and low-cost strategy for encouraging professional growth among staff" (p. 505).

Winston and Creamer (1997) made six generalizations about staff development in student affairs. First, they found that developmental activities are sponsored universally in divisions of student affairs. Second, as far as modes, social events, invited speakers, and short departmental workshops seemed to be preferred. Next, individual initiative accounts for a significant amount of the staff development that occurs in divisions of student affairs. Fourth, few colleges have set line items in their division budgets for staff development. Fifth, most divisions do not have written policies about staff development. Last, although there are a variety of methods to carry out staff development programs, the most common approaches use divisionwide committees.

In conclusion, there are a number of methods that student affairs professionals use to hone their skills and knowledge. While some are individual actions with little or no cost, others involve a group of people and may involve considerable cost. Individual institutions can adopt a model that guides the planning of developmental programs that will ensure that the staff become more effective in their current and future positions. Divisions of student affairs usually offer some development to their staff, which is expanded through participation in group and individual activities. Through intentional plans based on individual needs and development stages, organizations promote the

growth of individuals and student affairs as a profession. Professional associations, specifically, also play an important role in developing individuals and the profession.

## Role of Professional Associations in Professional Development

Professional associations provide guidance to a profession, behavioral expectations, and individual learning opportunities. Student affairs practitioners belong to professional associations for a variety of reasons including professional growth, to benefit from the programs and services, to test professional competencies, to influence the future of the organization and the profession, and to advance the status of student affairs (Nuss, 2000). She summarized the reasons as professional development, contributing to the association, and helping the profession.

"Associations have provided important continuing professional education both to their members through their responsiveness to issues of concern to the membership and to higher education in general" (Moore & Neuberger, 2001, p. 71). Associations are able to address broad societal and institutional issues, provide information to and beyond membership, and work in conjunction to shape the future of the profession (Moore & Neuberger, 2001). Professional associations have a unique opportunity to provide information to membership about best practices in the field, in addition to funding delivery systems and finding educators to address the learning needs of the staff (Moore & Neuberger, 2001). Because of professional associations' philosophical foundation of adult learning, they provide both the method and the content of continuing education specific to the field.

Many professionals in student affairs are also supervisors who have some responsibility in their staff's development. Woodard and Komives (1990) expected that professional associations provide workshops and literature for developing supervisors. They believe that supervisors contribute a great deal to a new staff member's persistence and motivation. In addition, they suggested that the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) consider standards for supervisors who have some responsibility for their employees' development. Garland (1985) said that associations should provide direction for new professional roles and promote professional development at all levels.

Gregory (1994) described resources for professional development, including professional associations, CAS Standards, and institutional programs. Professional associations provide opportunities for specialized knowledge, journals and other publications, and technological advancements. Gregory also stated that the CAS Standards create an opportunity for staff to learn about other specialty areas, develop assessment and evaluation skills, and understand the legal requirements in specialty areas.

Although the debate continues about whether student affairs is a profession, associations still have an obligation to ensure quality practice. In a recent report to NASPA and ACPA, *Quality Assurance in College Student Affairs: A Proposal for Action by Professional Associations*, the study group based their model on the following convictions:

1. Professional associations have an ethical obligation to ensure and advance the quality of professional practice and professional preparation programs.
2. Quality assurance in whatever form must embrace diverse programs and practitioners.
3. Specialized preparation program accreditation, in its present form, has a multitude of problems.
4. Current credentialing processes, such as professional certification as practiced in counseling and psychology, will not work in student affairs.
5. The Council for the Advancement of Standards has developed standards for the professional practice that could be used for quality assurance for both professional practice and for preparation programs.
6. Certain skills and competencies are required for practice in student affairs no matter how one enters the field.
7. Practitioners enter student affairs from a variety of backgrounds that include professional preparation programs, related degree programs, unrelated degree programs, and no formal academic training.
8. Practitioners are at unique levels of professional development.
9. Practitioners must be assisted by national professional associations in their continuing professional education efforts.
10. Assessment necessarily precedes continuing professional education.

11. …(a) quality professional practice requires lifelong continuing professional education, (b) principles of adult education should form the basis for continuing professional education, and (c) continuing professional education can take place in many forms and arenas.
12. Professionals practicing in student affairs may, in addition to participating in continuing education programs in student affairs, have their identity in a related profession and participate in allied continuing professional education.
13. Practitioners who engage in improving their professional practice should receive recognition for those achievements. (Creamer et al., 1992, p. 358-363)

These 13 concepts address the need for specific skill attainment, adult learning principles, and the responsibility of both the individual and the associations in preparing student affairs professionals.

Carpenter (1983) agreed that associations have a place in professional development through leadership positions and publication activity but criticizes them for not providing intentional and comprehensive programs based on professional development stages. In addition, Young (1990) believed that mid-managers are ignored at association conferences. Several years later, in her conclusions, Tillotson (1995) recommended that professional associations take a more active role in providing professional development programs aimed at specific administrative levels and professional development stages.

Belch and Strange (1995) expected professional associations to provide learning opportunities, programs, and publications, particularly for middle managers. In addition, the authors wanted professional associations to develop internships, sabbaticals, and a job exchange network. Fey and Carpenter (1996) encouraged professional associations to provide intentional developmental opportunities for staff, particularly those not enrolled in advanced degree programs. In their survey of student affairs professionals, they found that staff prefer conferences, workshops, reading and discussions—which are the services provided by professional associations.

Professional associations serve as an important means of continuing education (Cervero, 2000). In student affairs, professional associations provide an opportunity for increased awareness of the profession, a way to shape the future by assuming leadership positions, opportunities to apply theory to practice, chance to explore current issues, a sense of belonging, and increased communication skills (Bryan & Mullendore, 1990). Carpenter and Miller (1981) agreed that professional organizations have a responsibility to provide workshops and programs that are intentionally planned to meet the needs of professionals at different career levels. They further stated that these associations should assist newer professionals break through the bureaucracy of the organizations to participate in associational leadership.

Even before professionals become involved in associations as a developmental activity, associations play a pivotal role in the recruiting potential staff members. In order to educate people about the profession, associations should develop marketing campaigns, provide undergraduate internships, promote graduate scholarships, and

sponsor research in recruiting efforts (Phelps Tobin, 2001). By providing these opportunities, professional associations serve a valuable role in recruiting, educating, and maintaining competent staff in student affairs.

Carpenter (2001b) emphasized that professional associations must take the lead in ensuring scholarly practice, determining standards, and developing continuing education methods. Specific issues included "what constitutes appropriate education and supervised experience to obtain and hold a professional position in student affairs" (p. 315), determining how professionals stay current (through defining professional levels, the content, and the process), and promoting and evaluating research in the field. Professional associations are the key to addressing those issues (Carpenter, 2001b).

Professional associations, which sponsor a variety of popular professional development and leadership opportunities, have an obligation and the resources to provide continuous education to practitioners. The diversity of functional areas within student affairs and professional preparation poses a challenge to associations in the creation of professional development activities. Associations not only provide education and resources about skills, they provide and understanding about the culture of student affairs. Many associations even have their commitment to development written into their goal statements or membership expectations. Some associations in other professions have even gone so far as to require continuing education for professional practice. While student affairs has not done that yet, the issues surrounding certification have been topics of discussion among practitioners and theorists in the profession.

## Certification/Licensure

Ellinger (1996) addressed the terminology surrounding certification. It can be defined as a "voluntary process by which a professional association or organization measures the competencies of individual practitioners" (Galbraith & Gilley, 1985, p. 12). On the other hand, licensure is a mandatory, legal requirement to protect the public from charlatans. Certification also differs from accreditation, which is recognition that an institution meets certain requirements (Ellinger, 1996). While Ellinger (1996) focused on training and human resources management, the concepts can be transferred to the higher education setting.

As early as the 1980's, Sandeen (1984) realized that student affairs was similar to other professions in that it requires "periodic if not continuous updating" (p.14). While he did not promote certification then, he did say that the profession may move in that direction through professional associations and certifying agencies. Shaffer (1984) echoed those remarks, saying that because there are so many different settings, no short period of groundwork can prepare a professional for a long period or even a career. So, preparation programs only impart initial information to get a new professional started in a career path. Even though some professions require continuing professional development as a part of the certification process, studies have not found that participation increases, so mandatory participation is not a motivator for participation (Cervero, 1988). Further, mandatory attendance does not always equate with learning.

Ellinger (1996) identified some trends in the workplace that influence certification. Because the workplace has become more complex in terms of technology

and the global environment, there is more emphasis on individual, team, and organizational learning. Therefore, professionals will be affected by changing expectations of skills and competencies. She also identified universal performance standards and the diverse backgrounds of (human resource) professionals. The challenges that the environment and diversity bring promote the idea of having continuing education requirements.

In the adult education and human resource development fields, the debate over certification still exists. Ellinger (1996) suggested that having a certification program may not represent the entire field, but it may be very appropriate for certain areas. Plus, having a certification may encourage a common body of knowledge through a common set of values. While administrative and regulatory issues have yet to be solved, certification could serve a gatekeeping function in selecting qualified professionals for a particular position. Overall, certification can benefit the individual through personal mastery, career advancement, a cost effective method of lifelong learning, and networking. It benefits the organization through a commitment from the individual, better selection, and greater productivity. Finally, it benefits the field because credentialing is one factor in distinguishing a profession from an occupation, it maintains competent practitioners, and it suggests educational curricula (Ellinger, 1996).

Alternatively, Gilley (1996) identified negative implications of the licensure debate in human resource development. Because it is a gatekeeping activity, which limits the entry into the field, it may not improve the quality of the professionals currently in the profession. Another difficulty is that no one association is able to

regulate the diversity within the profession. Gilley (1996) found that the debate over licensure caused divisiveness in the profession rather than fostering teamwork. One of the other challenges is that there are not appropriate criteria for determining measurable standards. Finally, Gilley (1996) concluded that there is not a need for certification in order to protect the public from incompetent practitioners.

While student affairs currently has a system of voluntary and decentralized continuous education, several professions go so far as to require relicensure and recertification to practice: medicine, engineering, accounting, law, social work, architecture, and public school education (Cervero, 2000). Alternatively, some fields not considered professions, such as cosmetology and plumbing, require licensure (Carpenter, in press). In student affairs, Carpenter (in press) suggested that a voluntary registry process would ensure that professionals would maintain an appropriate level of quality performance. In his model, there would be flexibility based on preparation program, specialization, and doctoral studies, for example. In addition, professional associations would play a large role in providing development opportunities.

In the debate about certification of student affairs professionals, Hirt and Creamer (1998) proposed that association activities would no longer be just for development; they would be a requirement for continued employment. Yet, the challenge to the profession is that it celebrates the diversity and openness of the field, which makes it more difficult to develop a standardized licensing process. While student affairs does not require recertification at this time, Komives, Woodard and Associates (1996) stressed that professionals should approach their own development as if

recertification were mandatory. Further, Sandeen (1991) criticized student affairs for not having professional development requirements and not valuing continuing education. While some institutions and individuals might have those expectations on a smaller scale, the profession as a whole has not adopted such a stance.

Woodard and Komives (1990) proposed that a national standard for certification or credentialing in student affairs be considered, which would include "in-service programs and creative continuing education units (CEUs)" (p. 231). They further suggested that student affairs professionals "need to establish and define the credentialing or certification standards for those who apply their related educations to the student personnel field" (p. 231), particularly on individual campuses. On the national level, Woodard and Komives (1990) suggested discussing the costs and benefits of a national registry, which would involve standards and/or examinations to confirm a practitioner's competence and skill. Hirt and Creamer (1998) also addressed the debate about credentialing and registry, which could include demonstration of competencies, documentation of education, and continuing education credits. Professional associations or peer review may provide structure for certification, although any sort of mandatory participation "might prove onerous for many" (p. 58).

The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) Board of Directors recently debated the establishment of a National Voluntary Registry of Student Affairs. In March of 2002, they approved the registry but rescinded that action at the July 2002 Board meeting after getting feedback from the membership including many senior student affairs officers (Jackson, 2002). The current NASPA President said,

"it is nice to see that so many people are concerned about continuing professional development and believe NASPA is leading in the development of relevant and useful programs, workshops, conferences, and publications" (Jackson, 2002, p. 7).

In the future, Carpenter (in press) hopes that recent efforts in the consensus of voluntary certification of preparation programs, emphasis on quality assurance standards, and formal continuing education may assist in resolving the certification debate. While the debate continues about mandatory certification in student affairs, there does seem to be consensus that professional development and continuing education are important factors in a professional's ability to maintain skills and knowledge essential in the service to students.

The debate about certification/licensure within student affairs will surely continue in the next several years. Questions still to be answered include who would need certification, what would the process look like, who would be responsible for certifying, how frequent the recertification would happen, what skills would be included, how the diversity of functional areas would be addressed, and what the consequences would be for non-compliance. The end product of assuring professional competence may be reached without having a mandatory or even structured process.

## Skill Development in Student Affairs

Jarvis (1983) said that a competent professional is "adjudged to have achieved a level of excellence in practice acceptable to those fellow professionals who make the assessment" (p. 104). He further stated that the professionals who make that judgment

can only measure competency to enter the field, not ensure that those who stay in the field remain competent, since knowledge changes rapidly.

For the student affairs profession specifically, the question is, "What should an individual know and be able to do with this knowledge in order to be effective?" (Schroeder & Pike, 2001, p. 346). While there are a variety of perspectives, most agree that there are necessary skills and knowledge areas that people in student affairs must achieve to be proficient in their careers. The competency areas described in this section are not ascribed to a particular administrative level or functional area but have been identified as important skills that student affairs professionals should accomplish.

Competency development can be used in a systematic way to identify skills, knowledge, and abilities needed for acceptable and outstanding performance. The competencies can be related to tasks, results, output, knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Holmes, 1998). In Kruger's (2000) review of the professional development process, he stated it must begin with a self-assessment for professionals to understand the necessary skills and abilities needed to meet current needs and future goals. Winston and Creamer (1997) supported that stance, indicating that a development plan includes current assessment of skills, needed skills, goals, and methods to achieve those goals. Bryan and Mullendore (1990) emphasized that supervisors should work with staff to identify goals for a professional development program to improve needed skills and career growth.

In 1979, Baier identified then-current skills as "counseling, group advising, leadership training, group dynamics, social psychology of late adolescents, student subcultures, financial aspects of higher education, and human relations" (p. 71). Baier

proposed new competencies needed as fiscal management, legal issues, program assessment and evaluation, computer technology, research design and statistics, and collective bargaining, which are not too different from skills reported in more recent publications.

In 1984, Sandeen identified computer technology, evaluation, needs assessment, and research as needed skills. He also forecasted that accountability would require professionals to demonstrate worth of programs. In addition, communication and public relations, as well as accounting skills were needed to relate to other constituencies within the university. Shaffer (1984) agreed with Sandeen, stating that computer technology, evaluation, accountability, student and institutional needs assessment, fiscal management, and research would be needed for the future. He added that communications, public relations, and interacting with a variety of constituents are necessary.

In 1985, Garland proposed that to be integrators, acting as professionals within the institution, student affairs professionals must:

1. assess the environment of the institution
2. comprehend institutional issues and internal policies
3. develop professional credibility with faculty
4. become experts on students' expectations, needs, and interests and be able to articulate them to others in the institution
5. be able to explain the goals of student affairs and student development to others in the institution in terms that are meaningful to them

6. contribute to the quality of the academic experience
7. contribute to the effective and efficient management of the institution and be prepared to take leadership in the formulation of institutional responses to changing conditions
8. develop appropriate skills. (p. vi)

While focusing on management skills, Garland (1985) argued that student affairs professionals needed skills in planning, information processing, financial management, and human resource management. He further identified political and diplomatic skills necessary to gain networking opportunities and program support. Finally, Garland concluded that student affairs administrators wanted to increase their skills in working with other administrators and faculty.

In 1985, Barr, Keating, and Associates identified issues for the future that mirror the current competency issues. They identified good fiscal skills, technological skills, evaluation and assessment, and communication skills, and knowledge of organizational change theory as requirements for successful perfo rmance as a student affairs professional.

In 1989, Delworth, Hanson, and Associates identified five critical skill areas: "assessment and evaluation, instruction, consultation, counseling and advising" (p. 324), and program development. They devoted chapters in their book to explain knowledge, attitude and skills, as well as why, when, and how they are used. Looking forward, Barr and Upcraft (1990) identified organizational roles and the ability to manage conflict and change as the most important skills. In the same book, Woodard and Komives (1990)

further listed the trends that will affect the needed skills: cultural diversity, technology, facility disrepair, and rapidly changing career fields.

For the future of professional development, the profession and organizations need to determine skills of those in student affairs without a traditional educational or experiential path (Woodard & Komives, 1990). They went on to assert that there are common skills, abilities, and knowledge bases that all student affairs professionals should have. In making recommendations for staff without a student affairs education, Woodard and Komives (1990) further thought that student affairs divisions should have an intentional program that includes the basic knowledge of student affairs.

DeWitt (1991) suggested that student affairs professionals become knowledgeable about budgets and strategic planning to incorporate student affairs into the university mission. They must also become more involved in research and marketing. In order for professionals to maintain skills, the author expected professional associations to provide development opportunities and encourage student affairs faculty to evaluate their programs.

Sagaria and Johnsrud (1991) suggested that minority staff members should take the opportunity to develop different skills such as financial management, long-range planning, and enrollment management to avoid being pigeon holed in narrowly defined roles such as minority student counseling. Looking at another population in student affairs, Schreiber, Dunkel, and Jahr (1994) in their literature review found that many earlier studies focused on entry-level professionals. Overall, they found that practitioners

rated interpersonal and transferable skills the highest, and that faculty, but not practitioners, valued the competencies taught in graduate school.

In terms of importance, Tillotson (1995) found that administrators view human skills as more important than conceptual or technical, possibly because of the counseling foundation in student affairs. In addition, she found no difference in importance depending on administrative level. In terms of Carpenter's (1979) professional development stages, professionals in the application and additive stages believed that human skills were most important. Finally, she found no gender differences. She recommended that professionals become more well-rounded, developing their technical and conceptual skills in addition to their human skills. Fey and Carpenter (1996) recommended that research and evaluation be given a higher priority among practitioners and faculty for the student affairs profession to be credible and progress.

In *Student Services: A Handbook for the Profession*, Komives, Woodard, and Associates (1996), suggested important skills through individual chapters including leadership, teaching and training, counseling, consultation and mediation, multiculturalism and diversity, program development and group advising, and assessment, evaluation, and research. Barr, Desler, and Associates (2000) dedicated an entire section of their book to essential skills and competencies for student affairs managers. Those skills included assessment, measuring student satisfaction and needs, translating theory and assessment results to practice, program planning and implementation, budgeting and fiscal management, understanding legal implications, developing effective campus and community relationships, managing conflict

constructively, maintaining high ethical standards, developing partnerships with academic affairs, and dealing with campus crisis.

In Barr and Desler's (2000) chapter on leadership for the future, they articulated the important skills in student affairs as "assessment and evaluation, budget and fiscal management, conflict management, crisis management, program planning, and personnel management" (p. 636). They specifically addressed the types of skills in conflict resolution including individual, group, organizational, town/gown, and alumni issues. In terms of program planning, Barr and Desler (2000) stated that professionals need to know how to assess needs, develop goals, and plan, implement, and evaluate.

In comparison, Winston, Creamer, Miller and Associates (2001) focused chapters in their book, *The Professional Student Affairs Administrator: Educator, Leader, and Manager*, on values and culture, multiculturalism, technology, staffing, finance and budgeting, resolving conflicts, enhancing learning, translating theory to practice in program interventions, needs assessment and program evaluation, assessing student learning, leading, and visioning.

Pope and Reynolds (1997) proposed core competencies in the following categories: administrative, management, and leadership skills; theory and translation skills; helping and interpersonal skills; ethical and legal knowledge; decision-making skills; teaching and training; assessment and evaluation; and multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills. Focusing on multicultural skills, they stated that preparation programs should include this as a part of the curriculum, but the authors also emphasized

that additional training and continuing education programs are needed to ensure effectiveness.

According to Winston and Creamer (1997), from a supervision standpoint, staff should be competent in four areas: knowledge and information, work-related skills, personal and professional development skills, and attitudes. Knowledge and information skills included student development theory, legal parameters, standards of professional practice, ethical standards, institutional rules, services, and other institutional resources. Work-related skills included interpersonal communication, goal setting, public relations, leadership, confrontation, conflict resolution, computer usage, bookkeeping, and clerical skills. In the personal and professional skill area, staff needed to be versed in time management, personal management (such as diet or exercise), retirement planning, anger control, career planning, and stress management. Because student affairs professionals usually work closely with others, attitude was also an important measure of success.

In Lovell and Kosten's (2000) meta-analysis of student affairs characteristics for success, they found that needed competencies included administration, management and human facilitation skills, in addition to knowledge of student development theory and higher education. Regarding skill gaps and needs for the future, the authors found need for proficiency in technology, assessment, politics, and post-secondary public policy.

While student affairs preparation programs teach theory, student affairs professionals apply that theory to practice after graduation. In terms of theory-based practice, professionals should be competent in student development theories, program design, organization development, assessment and evaluation, interpersonal

communication and facilitation, group dynamics, staffing practices, budget development and resource allocation, and understanding how demographic characteristics affect students and their environments (Creamer, Winston, & Miller, 2001).

When looking at future skills needed, Kruger (2000) indicated that technology, the emphasis on student learning, and collaboration between academic and student affairs would be the priorities. In that same year, Scott (2000) identified several areas in which student affairs professionals require continuing education: technology, student demographics, legal issues, crisis management, diversity, assessment and evaluation, and personnel and financial management.

Technology is an important issue in the future of student affairs: professionals must become literate and understand the impact on student affairs work (Mills, 1990). The author continued along that line, recognizing that the proper use of technology can improve staff development. More specifically, Elling and Brown (2001) discussed e-mail, the internet, service and information delivery, and software applications as areas of skills needed today. The successful student affairs practitioner needs to understand how those issues affect staff roles, how they impact socialization and communication with peers, how student affairs divisions participate in the institutional decisions regarding information technology, and how distance learning impacts student services.

While student affairs practitioners deal with people issues, the successful professional also needed to understand the budget process, part of the larger management cycle of planning, budgeting, operating and controlling, and evaluating. The budget, a projection of financial resources and expenditures, allows departments to

implement institutional priorities to support programs and services. The astute practitioner will understand the sources of revenue and the internal and external factors that influence expenditures and decisions (Woodard, 2001).

In summary, leadership, communication, budgeting, personnel management and staffing, diversity, technology, assessment, student development and counseling, planning, and legal and ethical issues have been identified as important. Some of those skills were identified early on in the development of the profession, while others have been more recently acknowledged. The level of mastery of the skills may depend on formal education, experience, and opportunity for continued learning. Because the field is open to many even without a degree in student affairs, it is of utmost importance that people gain and maintain certain skills. The challenge is that the profession has not decided on what continuing education is needed, nor have they decided whether or how that education would be required and monitored (Carpenter, in press). The diversity of the profession and those entering the field contrast with the consistent set of necessary skills that have been identified by experts in the field.

## Graduate Program Skills

People enter the field in a variety of ways. Kruger (2000) cited Creamer (1997), saying that entry into student affairs comes through professional preparations programs, related degree programs, unrelated degree programs, and no formal academic training. Bryan and Schwartz (1998b) posited that the early career experiences, graduate

education and extensive training lead to a basic understanding of the culture of student affairs including the language, history, traditions, symbols, and artifacts.

In student affairs, the master's degree is the most common level of educational attainment of mid-managers, according to Benke and Disque (1990). In research conducted by Blimling and Wachs (1994), 62% of professionals with master's degrees do not intend to seek a doctorate. They further found that those professionals who intend to enter a doctoral program do so as a way to advance and gain greater knowledge.

In 1979, Baier identified several competencies that graduates should obtain including administrative, managerial, and organizational skills; assessment, evaluation, and research skills; knowledge of legal issues; consultation, goal setting, and strategizing skills; and leadership skills. Several years later, Garland (1985) described several aims of preparation programs that included setting professional standards, understanding current and future changes in the profession, selecting and managing staff, and establishing academic legitimacy. Barr (1990) proposed that graduate programs should include human development theory, history and philosophy of student affairs and higher education, knowledge of the specific institution, and the ability to apply theory to practice.

When examining the curriculum of graduate programs, Garland (1985) indicated that the lack of attention to management and organizational skills inhibits the ability of the student affairs professional to have impact on institutional goals and practice. According to Carpenter (1983), master's programs will not meet professional

development needs in such areas as budgeting, personnel management, and ethical practices.

In Keim's (1991) longitudinal study of preparation programs between 1973 and 1987, she found that programs have moderately changed: full-time faculty and students had decreased, the number of women had increased, and courses and practica have expanded. Student affairs work experience had become less important in admissions criteria for the doctoral programs. Respondents stated that the future held changes in the curricula, the addition of courses and assistantships, an increase in the hours required, and the addition of faculty.

Young and Coldwell (1993) highlighted a NASPA/ACPA task force that identified eight areas to be addressed in preparation programs: organizational, human development, and management theory; the history and philosophy of higher education; understanding of and competence in addressing cultural diversity; student development theory and practice; research, assessment, and evaluation skills; fiscal management and budgeting processes; applications of computers and technology; and teaching methodology. In their survey, Young and Coldwell (1993) found that practitioners rated cultural diversity and values/ethics/philosophy highest in usefulness, while they rated computers and technology; organization, human development, and management theory; research, assessment, and evaluation skills; student development theory and practice; counseling; and fiscal management and budgeting slightly lower in usefulness. Teaching methodology and history and philosophy of higher education rated only slightly useful.

They found that professionals did not agree which skills were relevant for their education now or in the future.

Several masters programs have specific skills they want to instill in their graduates. In terms of technology, Bowman and Cuyjet's (1999) study of Chief Student Affairs Officers stated that graduates needed skill in e-mail, the web, word processing, databases, and spreadsheets. They also found that technology was incorporated into master's programs, although not all of them had the same level of commitment. Program respondents specified that their students would be able to use library resources, e-mail, listservs, and the internet. Statistical and word processing programs were mentioned as common software. Interestingly, practitioners did not seem to use statistical packages in their work environment—they used word processing and e-mail much more frequently.

Bowling Green State University recognized 12 professional skills including conflict mediation, group dynamics, instruction/programming, advising/counseling, understanding of diversity, management, problem solving, self-knowledge, supervision, utilizing resources, verbal communication, and written communication (Schreiber, Dunkel, & Jahr, 1994). The University of South Carolina also identified knowledge areas including learning theory, ethics, human development theory, communication skills, research and evaluation, career development, organizational behavior, higher education history and philosophy, counseling, and an understanding of diversity (Schreiber, Dunkel, & Jahr, 1994).

In McEwen and Talbot's (2001) chapter on designing the student affairs curriculum, they supported the idea that professionals hold at least a master's degree in

student affairs or a closely related field. Further, they promoted the recommendations of the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) that "prescribe a comprehensive set of professional knowledge and supervised practice essential for minimum competency in student affairs" (p. 129). Even so, there is currently no consensus that students should graduate from a program that follows the CAS Standards. Realistically, the number of entry-level positions is greater than the number of students who graduate from programs that follow the CAS Standards (Carpenter, in press).

Most recently, McEwen and Talbot (2001) suggested three essential components in the curriculum. The first was foundational studies, which included history and evolution of higher education, student affairs, and other disciplines. Professional studies encompassed student development theory; student characteristics and effects of college on students; individual, group, and organizational interventions; organization and administration of student affairs; and assessment, evaluation, and research. Supervised practice, the third component, included internships and practica in at least two functional areas of professional practice.

In order to excel and be marketable in student affairs today, Kruger (2000) asserted that professionals need to develop beyond the graduate preparation programs. Within student affairs, those skills and knowledge areas can be identified. While previous literature does not identify one comprehensive list of areas for graduate or continuing education, it does illuminate the scope and depth of skills needed to be competent as a practitioner. As people enter the field, they come with a variety of experiences and education. So, all professionals have the obligation to improve in areas

in which they need development. Some authors have determined needed skills when looking at administrative level, not just identifying general skills. Generally, full-time student affairs professionals are divided into three categories: new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers, each with their expected skill areas.

## New Professional Skills

New professionals, those practitioners in the field for with up to five years of full-time experience, have particular needs including understanding student development theory; learning to apply theory to practice; career development; learning how to network, developing a sense of professionalism; learning how to work with student leaders and groups, skill development; using technology; developing professional ethics; professional association involvement; relating to peers, colleagues, and supervisors; and balancing work and personal life (Scott, 2000).

In 1984, Kirby proposed that as new professionals become educators, they will also still be learning a tremendous amount. Outstanding staff members understand broader issues, assist students, can promote student needs while enforcing and influence policies, and maintain a balanced perspective. In order to meet these needs, Kirby (1984) proposed that new professionals get involved in professional associations to gain a broader perspective of the profession.

Garland (1985) asked two questions about entry-level competencies in relation to organizations skills, in particular. One, if all student affairs professionals interact with others on campus, should they not possess some organizational skills? Two, assuming

that most entry-level practitioners would like to advance in the field, at what point do they learn organizational skills to be more effective?

Ostroth (1981) reviewed thirty-six skills identified by student affairs supervisors that entry level professionals should possess. The four competencies found to be absolutely essential were working cooperatively with others, interpersonal and communications skills, working effectively with a wide range of individuals, and leadership skills. Other skills included assessing student needs, mediating conflicts between individuals and groups, advising groups and recognizing group dynamics, and programming. This same group said that the least important skills were familiarity of professional literature, the ability to articulate and interpret the goals of student affairs, understanding the financing of higher education, formulating and monitoring budgets, understanding statistical analysis, conducting research, and analyzing the political process.

In 1988, Hyman found some differences between graduate faculty, directors of housing, and Chief Student Affairs Officers (CSAOs) in their opinions of new professionals' attainment of 33 competencies in five categories (goal-setting, consultation, communication, assessment and evaluation, and environmental and organizational management), although they all shared a similar perceptions of importance. The faculty group rated the possession of skills higher than did directors or CSAOs in the areas of goal setting, consultation, and communication. All groups agreed that new professionals possessed competency in the consultation category, and the competencies in that category were considered the most important. The author

concluded that faculty and practitioners should collaborate in setting expectations and measuring learning outcomes, a study of new professionals should be completed to understand their perceptions of their own performance, and the profession should consider accreditation.

In order for professionals to progress beyond entry-level, they need to develop task competencies and an understanding of institutional issues (Dunkel & Schreiber, 1992). Further, Young, in 1988, stated that "continuing education is as important as pre-service education in a professionalizing field" (p. 264), and individual education moves an occupation towards being recognized as a profession.

More experienced student affairs professionals can provide insight into career development of entry level professionals. Cooper, Miller, Saunders, Chernow, and Kulic (1999) asked professional association past presidents to give advice to young professionals. Those words of wisdom included: pursue opportunities for professional development, understand the environment of higher education and the employing institution, and develop strong leadership traits.

New professionals enter student affairs needing specific skills to be successful and advance within the profession. Many of the skills relate to learning their environment and developing relationships with others. At this point, if they have do not have a degree in student affairs or a related field, practitioners need to develop an understanding the profession as it relates to student development and student learning. It is a time of applying theory to practice and determining realistic career goals.

## Mid-manager Skills

Young (1990a) indicated that it is not easy to define mid-management. In his research, he found that some see it as a place in the hierarchy, while others are more specific, citing that mid-managers supervise staff instead of students or other managers. Others say they serve as an administrator, provide general leadership rather than specific program direction, or oversee the operations of more than one department or program. Young (1990a) concluded that the mid-level administrator manages professional staff and/or one or more student affairs functional areas. Belch and Strange (1995) described the middle manager functions as "executing functions that affect the daily lives of students and contribute significantly to the overall coordination of institutional resources and activities" (p. 208). They concluded that middle managers have the responsibility of implementing programs and services, but only have limited authority to institute change in policies and procedures.

Mid-managers hold a variety of positions and titles. To give examples of mid-manager titles, Young (1990b) created a matrix of program supervision and staff supervision. Those low in both factors are assistant/associate program directors. Those low in program supervision and high in staff supervision may be program directors at large colleges, while those high in program supervision and low in staff supervision may be program directors at small colleges. Assistant/associate vice presidents and dean are high in both program and staff supervision.

Forbes (1984) stated that middle managers "have executive responsibility, they are conduits for information flow, and they have special professional expertise" (p. 37).

Because they are in a unique position to move between a specialty area and broader divisional concerns, middle managers occupy a role in transition. To be successful, middle managers need writing skills, the ability to gather and organize data, the talent to motivate staff, and the knack to organize, set and follow up on goals, and delegate duties. Truly outstanding middle managers will reach out beyond their area, can shift gears quickly, get involved in professional associations, and keep up with current higher education literature (Forbes, 1984).

Penn (1990), from the idea that student affairs professionals serve as counselors, administrators, and student development educators, said that mid-managers have a wide variety of role expectations and constituencies (students, faculty, administrators and external stakeholders, or a combination) that provide unique challenges. They help develop policies and possibly implement those policies, and deliver services and promote institutional stability. While they may be involved in some meetings to address specific issues, they may be ignored when the time comes to develop broad-based policies, inhibiting their contribution to the institution (Penn, 1990). Mid-managers face particular issues including "limited upward mobility, changing role responsibilities, and transferability of skills to diverse settings" (Carpenter, 1990, p. 89). Carpenter continued to say that mid-managers have new responsibilities in terms of budget, personnel supervision, planning, internal and external communication, and policy making.

Middle managers, those in the field five to eight years with budget and personnel responsibilities, have particular skill needs: fiscal responsibilities, such as budgeting and financial planning; personnel management, such as supervision and performance

evaluation; conflict resolution and mediation skills; mentoring; consultation; advising student leaders and student groups; professionalism; broad-based competency; career issues including mobility and assessment of goals; balance; contributions to the profession; technology management; developing broader perspectives; networking; and skill development in chairing committees, writing reports, and problem solving (Scott, 2000).

Benke and Disque (1990) surveyed CSAOs about essential and outstanding skills for directors in student service and educational/developmental units. The top ten skills for competent performance in student services are to establish priorities; promote effective teamwork; evaluate staff performance; write clear, concise memoranda and reports; display leadership skills; select, train, and supervise staff; make effective decisions; establish rapport with administrative staff; formulate and manage a budget, and performance appraisal. Outstanding performance includes being able to gain commitment from top decision makers, maintain student confidentiality, make effective decisions, make realistic conclusions and recommendations, tolerate conflict, know principles of decision making, communicate effectively on a one-on-one basis, engage in systematic planning within the department or unit, and recognize and use expertise of others.

In addition, Benke and Disque (1990) had Chief Student Affairs Officers identify the skills for competent performance in educational/developmental units as knowing group dynamics, empathizing with students, engaging in collaborative efforts with other faculty and staff, interpreting the special needs of racial and ethnic minorities, providing

feedback to students regarding progress to accomplishing their goals, setting goals, knowing college student development needs, knowing how to appraise individuals, knowing intervention/change strategies, and accepting personal differences. Similarly, the skills for outstanding performance include empathizing with students, displaying leadership skills, knowing intervention/change strategies, creativity, accepting personal difference, maintaining student confidentiality, promoting effective teamwork, teaching students to take responsibility for their decisions, communicating effectively on a one-on-one basis, and mediating conflicts between individuals and groups.

In one study, White, Webb, and Young (1990) found that developing or influencing policy was rated as the top extrinsic source of satisfaction, yet an earlier study indicated that mid-mangers do not usually have this opportunity. In the 1990 study, the respondents indicated that they had experience in developing department policy, area policy (student organizations), and broad institutional decision-making.

As professionals transition from one level to another, they need to be sure they have mastered essential skills. Piper and Fullerton (1985) studied the transition from entry-level to post-entry level. Factors suggested post-entry level professionals were competent in decision-making, problem solving, task knowledge, and individual professional philosophies, which were learned through academic and entry-level experience. In addition, those staff members had a mentor relationship where they could discuss institutional politics, philosophical foundations, and different perspectives.

At the conclusion of *The Invisible Leaders: Student Affairs Mid-managers*, Young (1990b) summarized some implications for mid-managers. Mid-managers are in

a position to mentor new professionals about values and applying theory to practice. Further, senior student affairs officers are essential in mentoring mid-mangers in order to further develop skills. In addition, Young (1990b) stressed that local professional development be enhanced to complement professional association activities. If institutional support for development and advancement is lacking, mid-managers may lose institutional loyalty.

In several studies of mid-managers using Kane's (1983) research, Fey (1991) and Fey and Carpenter (1996) found that these professionals rated the following skills from most important to least important: personnel management, leadership, communication, student contact, fiscal management, professional development, and research and evaluation. When asked which areas needed improvement, only fiscal management skills were selected. One conclusion was that administrators thought that people-related skills were more important than research or fiscal management. In addition, if university leaders think that particular skills are important, then student affairs professionals will place more emphasis on learning those skills (Fey & Carpenter, 1996).

In another study, Gordon, Strode, and Mann (1993) used Kane's (1983) research to ask senior student affairs officers (SSAOs) their preferred characteristics of mid-managers. From most to least important, SSAOs surveyed ranked leadership highest, then student contact, communication, personnel management, fiscal management, professional development, and research and evaluation. Interviewed SSAOs had consistent answers as those who responded to the survey.

Dunkel and Schreiber (1992) surveyed chief housing officers to identify competencies needed to become an effective housing professional. The forty-nine (later fifty) skills were arranged into three broad categories: administrative (personnel management, planning and projection, and research skills), developmental (communication skills, diversity awareness, leadership, and counseling skills), and foundational knowledge (institutional, students, and current trends). To decrease the chance for personal interpretation, each competency was specifically defined. The results of the survey were used to create the National Housing Training Institute, which helps individuals develop a professional development plan with the aid of an experienced housing professional.

Saunders and Cooper (1999) in their article regarding the doctorate for mid-managers, found the CSAOs wanted mid-managers to have skills in personnel management, leadership, student contact, communication, fiscal management, professional development, and research and evaluation. They also found that scholarly endeavors rated lower than interpersonal skills. To help mid-managers be prepared for future leadership positions, they suggested that professional association involvement and the doctoral degree add to their skill level. In a recent survey of new doctoral recipients, Cawthon, McClellan, Dunn, and Grandpre (2001) found that respondents ranked the knowledge gained as most important, rather than credentialing which was expected. In addition, they found that the dissertation created the most stress, although department politics was also high.

In a qualitative study, Belch and Strange (1995) concluded that middle managers have a variety of ways to measure success through a plethora of career paths. Supervisors play a key role in assisting middle managers explore alternative career opportunities. Since middle managers are responsible for their own development, they need to be aware of opportunities for broadening an understanding of higher education, develop a network of colleagues, and find mentors who can offer resources and support.

One of the challenges of this level is being in the middle—a supervisor and an employee, a leader and a follower, not new yet not seasoned. Although this level includes a great number of professionals in the field, their experience and career aspirations make it difficult to determine one set of skills necessary to be successful. While the skills described in this section are similar to the ones described for new professionals, mid-managers need to gain a higher level of mastery. Middle managers need to ensure that they have conquered the basic administrative skills and concentrate on the organizational skills. In order to do that, they need to find the appropriate method in which to meet their needs. Some staff will continue in student affairs as middle managers. Others will leave the field for other career opportunities, while a few will seek the next career level—the senior student affairs officer.

## Senior Student Affairs Officer Skills

The senior student affairs leader, defined by Scott (2000), is a practitioner with ten or more years of experience and divisionwide responsibility (including assistant and associate vice presidents, deans and directors). They have specific developmental needs

such as leadership development, personnel management, fiscal accountability and financial planning, crisis management, public relations, marketing, conflict resolution, legal issues, team building, strategic planning, managing technology, fund raising, campus politics (understanding power and influence), assessment strategies, external affairs (working with alumni, trustees, and legislators), working with the president, and media management (Scott, 2000).

Sandeen (1991) described the role of the senior student affairs officer in four words: leader, manager, mediator, and educator. While he did not focus on specific skills, he did emphasize the need for continuing education about current issues. Sandeen further suggested that SSAOs needed to teach, read, research, write, and get involved in professional associations to enhance their professional education and improve their performance.

Randall and Globetti (1992) surveyed college presidents about the importance of twenty-four competencies identified by a university-wide SSAO search committee. Those skills fell into the following four categories: managerial skills, personal and interpersonal skills, professional involvement/scholarly pursuits, and institutional experiences. In order of importance the skills are integrity, commitment to institutional mission, conflict resolution, decisiveness, motivation, support of academic affairs, staff supervision, planning skills, flexibility, verbal communication skills, multicultural awareness commitment, vision, loyalty to the president's vision, policy enforcement, written communication skills, student development philosophy, budget planning, time management, student advising, understanding institutional history, five or more years of

experience at a comparable institution, facility management, research capabilities, and scholarly publications. In a comparison between public and private institutions, Randall and Globetti (1992) found that private institutions placed more emphasis on commitment to the organization mission, while placing less emphasis on research. In contrast, public institutions perceive written communication skills and multicultural awareness to be more important.

From the university president's perspective, the SSAO should understand the university mission, be a team player, and know that he/she serves both line and staff functions. In terms of particular skills, vice presidents should understand policy in determining priorities, educate their staff about the overall mission of the university, manage resources effectively, think strategically, understand and promote diversity, represent the university to outside constituents, and provide leadership in case of institutional emergency (Mahoney, 2000). Mahoney (2000) emphasized the need for continuous education and taking on broader assignments, participating in the accreditation process, collaborating, and solving problems.

Experienced student affairs professionals are in a position to provide guidance to those wishing to progress in the profession. When professional organization past presidents were asked to give advice for those seeking an upper level position, they recommended thinking about personal and family concerns, continuing to develop leadership skills, gaining relevant experience, seeking a good fit with the president, maintaining a strong work ethic, and being dedicated to students (Cooper, Miller, Saunders, Chernow, & Kulic, 1999).

Over the past two decades, several authors have examined the experience of women in student affairs at the senior level. In 1985, Rickard found that female SSAOs differed from male SSAOs in several ways. Females are appointed at a younger age, have less education, and have less experience in student affairs. As a result, Rickard suggested that preparation programs should follow the career advancement of graduates, and professional associations should respond to the needs of younger, women, and minority SSAOs.

Earwood-Smith, Jordan-Cox, Hudson, and Smith (1990) made ten specific recommendations for women who are seeking a senior student affairs positions, some of which focus on particular skills, while others focus on personal characteristics. Some of their recommendations included get a terminal degree as soon as possible; become a generalist after mastering a specialty; move out when there is not possibility to move up; develop networks in professional associations; write, present, and conduct research; develop new management skills; understand the larger organizational context; develop outside interests; maintain good health and image; know yourself; have a sense of humor and minimize emotional responses; and when prepared, ask someone to recommend you for a high level position.

In a recent survey to describe women in the senior student affairs officer position, Randall, Daugherty, and Globetti (1995) found that although women were satisfied with their jobs, they were unprepared to deal with the games and politics of the position. They suggested that women seek a terminal degree, have a mentor, network,

and get budget experience. Job satisfaction affects the recruitment and retention of women at the top of the hierarchy. Preparation may alleviate some of the dissatisfaction.

In a study by Blackhurst, Brandt, and Kalinowski (1998), women in the associate and assistant Senior Student Affairs Officer (SSAO) positions with many years of experience were dissatisfied with their work settings. Since reaching the SSAO position can be difficult and women only account for about one-third of the SSAOs, women need encouragement and professional development opportunities to achieve gender equity in the SSAO position. The authors also proposed that women at this level have a need for mentors, supervisors, and professional associations to gain skills, experience, relationships, and rejuvenation. Supervisors and policy makers should be responsible for "identifying and removing barriers to women's success and advancement" (Blackhurst, Brandt, and Kalinowski, p. 32).

Senior student affairs officer, regardless of gender, are in a unique position of leading several functional areas within student affairs. Through their experience and education, they develop high-level administrative and decision making skills beyond the level of the middle manager. Their issues include spreading knowledge about the profession through writing and teaching, but they also have to be able to make decisions in a political environment. Their focus is on global issues while providing leadership to specific areas. Because they rely on new professionals and mid-managers to complete the day-to-day activities, SSAOs also have an important responsibility to ensure competent staff.

## Issues/Trends in Professional Development

Winston and Creamer (1997) made several recommendations for staff development programs that are overarching issues in student affairs. They suggest that divisions have written policies regarding staff development events, including expectations, involvement, relationship to rewards such as salary and promotions, and budget. Next, supervisors should be actively involved in identifying needs and appropriate learning activities. Third, development programs should enhance individual development goals, recognizing the benefit for both the individual and the institution. Last, programs should be presented using a variety of delivery methods to enhance learning.

Winston and Creamer (1997) identified several issues regarding staff development in student affairs. One issue is the lack of relationship with other staffing practices, including supervision and performance appraisal. In addition, although staff may participate in development activities, that does not always translate into future performance.

In general, development activities must take into account variations in maturity and growth of staff members and the organization (Winston & Creamer, 1997). For example, Daley (2000) asserted that continuing education programs are more effective with new professionals than with experts. Although it is very important that senior student affairs officer implement, support, and sponsor developmental programs, individuals also have the responsibility to develop their skills in order to provide effective student development programs (Grace-Odeleye, 1998). The complexity of the

issue does not lend itself to one professional development program for all people and organizations.

Bryan and Schwartz (1998b) wrestled with several questions regarding professional development that illustrate the complexity of the issue. Who is responsible for the creation and execution of professional development? How does graduate education advance the knowledge? How much are individuals responsible for their own education and development? By grappling with these questions in the near future, the field will be able to serve practitioners better.

Cervero (2000) identified four trends in continuing professional education (CPE) that are particularly relevant to student affairs today. First, more continuing education is offered more frequently at the workplace than through any other type of provider, and the employer surpasses that of all other providers combined. Second, universities and professional associations are active and important providers, with an increasing number of programs being offered in distance education formats. Third, universities and workplaces, in particular, are developing collaborative relationships. Fourth, "continuing education is being used more frequently to regulate professional practice" (p. 7). Student affairs professionals are in a unique environment to take advantage of the opportunities on and off campus. Collaboration with other institutions, associations, and faculty are important issues to develop in the future, particularly if resources are scarce. In the future, professional associations will need to "rethink their assumptions about levels and types of continuing professional education" (p. 77), in addition to campus

responsibilities, accessibility, budget issues, and constituencies served (Moore & Neuberger, 2001).

Schön (1974) identified issues related to many professions (including educational administration) that have led to discontent. The five questions are (1) who does the profession serve, (2) are professionals competent, (3) does cumulative learning influence practitioners, (4) is reform possible, and (5) can self-actualization occur. Schön (1974) related these issues to the history of the professions but also noted that these will continue to be issues in the future.

Cervero (2000) identified three critical issues for the future. The first issue addressed the conflict between updating knowledge and improving professional practice. If the goal is to solve problems, then the content and format of continuing education has to improve. The second issue addressed the tension between the learning agenda and the political and economic environment. The final issue looked at the struggle between the ownership and collaboration in who will provide the continuing education.

In a recent *NASPA Forum* (2001) newsletter, the president of NASPA, Theresa Powell, defined her curriculum to benefit the future of the organization and its membership. The objectives include managing and using knowledge in tangible ways, expanding the knowledge base and creating innovation, and providing comprehensive resources. The initial areas to be addressed are "leadership training and development, community building, diversity, conflict resolution, citizenship, and creating and fostering an engaging learning environment" (p.2). Through Knowledge Communities, Powell

hoped to develop a curriculum of action-learning material that will provide a coordinated approach to the broad educational mission of student affairs.

Professional development is part of the larger staffing cycle, which begins with recruiting qualified staff. To address that issue, Phelps Tobin (2001) suggested that three current challenges face the profession. Faculty, staff, institutions, and associations must collaborate in the responsibility for the recruiting underrepresented, qualified graduate students. In addition, the profession as a whole must improve recruitment and training of those graduates to increase the retention of staff. Finally, as graduates are applying for entry-level positions, they should have appropriate education and training to assume and succeed in those positions.

With increased emphasis on accountability, practice standards, such as those disseminated by the Council for the Advancement of Standards, should be followed to demonstrate professional competence and professional preparation (Carpenter, in press). Now and in the future, student affairs divisions face challenges such as budget limitations, technology, distance learning, and proprietary higher education that affect student enrollment patterns. To meet the new demands, student affairs professionals need to step away from doing and contributing and start learning and reflecting (Carpenter, in press).

The discussion about professional development in the future will include who is responsible for the continuing education, how collaboration can occur in times of budget constraints, and what skills are expected or required of for successful job performance. Institutions and professional associations have a major role in professional education in

determining both content and process of continuing education. Professional development is part of the larger staffing process, so needs to be intentionally addressed by organizations and individuals in order to better serve college students and university staff.

In summary, the literature surrounding staff development indicates that it is an important and complex issue in student affairs. Professional development is part of the larger human resources and organizational development practices. Career development, adult learning, and human development theories indicate that there are recognizable stages of growth that have unique characteristics. Individuals must master and address challenges of each stage in order to progress to the next level.

Both individuals and organizations are intricately involved in the learning process. Organizations and their leadership need to value and support planned professional development and continuing education efforts to enhance the learning and performance of employees. There are a variety of models and methods that have been developed that meet the needs of institutions and individuals.

Within student affairs, there are recognizable administrative levels each with their own needs and competency areas. Graduate students are learning the theory and culture behind the student affairs profession. New professionals apply theory to practice, gaining experience in supervision and administration. Those who reach the middle management position take on increasing leadership and accountability. Senior student affairs officers have experience in and responsibility for human, physical, and financial resources in a student affairs division. Each of these levels provides challenges and

learning opportunities. By taking advantage of planned and continual learning experiences, student affairs professionals are more likely to be successful, remain in the profession, and meet the needs of students they serve.

Determining the specific skills needed to be successful in student affairs and how to learn those skills becomes important for individuals, supervisors, organizations, and the profession. The purpose of this study was to assess student affairs professionals' perception of mastery of skills previously identified in the literature and to determine suitable methods to help develop those skills.

# CHAPTER III

# METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the development of the instrument, the sample and data collection, and statistical analysis procedures utilized. In addition, a description of respondents and their demographic characteristics is presented.

## Population

The population included student affairs professionals in the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) Region III. Region III includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. According to the NASPA database, approximately 876 professional affiliates were members at the time the survey was distributed. NASPA does not keep statistics on how many new professionals, mid-managers, or senior student affairs officers are members in the organization, making it difficult to determine the appropriate sample size for each of those sub-populations.

To get mailing labels from the NASPA National Office, the researcher had to submit the research proposal, the exact content of each correspondence, and the firm time line for contacting. After approving the research study, the NASPA National Office supplied mailing labels for all professional affiliate members as of June 5, 2002. The Region III Vice President also approved the study. For the purposes of this study, the international members, faculty members, duplicate addresses, and those no longer in the

region or who did not fit the criteria were deleted, leaving 803 professional affiliates who were sent surveys.

## Instrumentation

Based on examples from Kane (1982), Windle (1998), and Carpenter (1979), a survey was developed to gather data from student affairs professionals about their performance on various skills and how they gained competence in those areas. Several additional questions were created based on recent focus areas in student affairs including legal issues, technology and diversity. Questions asked respondents to describe:
their perceived level of mastery of identified skills on a five point scale; and
the most important methods they used to master the skill. (See Appendix A for survey.)

The first step in developing the instrument was examining the literature concerning important skills needed to perform student affairs functions and the methods that professionals used to develop those skills. In addition to the literature, the researcher found similar instruments that have been used before. To develop the survey design, *Educational Research: An Introduction* (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996) was used as a guide. The survey instrument was developed to answer the research questions, but also to provide guidance in designing professional development opportunities for student affairs professionals at various administrative levels in their careers.

The instrument was developed using the response scale from Carpenter (1979). The content was influenced by Fey (1991), Gordon, Strode, and Mann (1993), Tillotson (1995), and Windle (1998), all of whom adapted the work of Kane (1982) and addressed

the middle manager position. The previous instruments divided skills into seven categories: leadership, fiscal management, personnel management, communication, professional development, research and evaluation, and student contact. Kane's (1982) earlier instrument yielded a Cronbach's alpha (reliability coefficient) of .72 to .88. For this research study, three more areas were created (legal issues, diversity, and technology) based on current literature about student affairs issues.

Three senior student affairs professionals reviewed this instrument for content and format. The reviewers, all white males with doctorates, were employed at medium to large public institutions. They all had experience in a variety of student affairs functions and currently supervise several areas. In terms of geographic area, two work in the southeast and one in the Midwest. The researcher's doctoral committee (composed of educational administration faculty, student affairs practitioners, and management faculty) also reviewed the survey.

Based on their feedback, changes were made to the content and format of the survey. The content included slight wording changes to two questions and clarification of the administrative level definitions. Several more options were included in the section that asked about methods of development. The actual survey was designed using Cardiff Tele*form*®, a software program that creates scannable and web based surveys and databases.

The final version of the survey (Appendix A) contained three sections—demographics, skills, and methods of development—with a total of 90 questions. The demographics section contained eight questions about personal and institutional

characteristics. In the skills section, based on the work of Carpenter (1979), the scale was as follows:

1. I have not begun working on this yet.
2. I have begun working on this.
3. I am actively working on and concerned with this.
4. I am still working on this, but I am less concerned with it than I once was.
5. I feel that I have essentially mastered or accomplished this.

The third section listed fifteen professional development activities, which are used in the student affairs profession. For each skill category, respondents were asked to pick the top three most important methods they have used to develop in that area. They also had the option to write in a response that was not listed.

The previous studies, expert feedback, and literature base that supported the three additional categories (legal issues, technology, and diversity) provide evidence of validity; that is, this research indicates that the results accurately symbolize the important and representative skills in student affairs.

## Data Collection

Data were collected from June 2002 through September 2002. Each person was mailed a cover letter/information sheet and a survey (Appendix A), and a postage paid return envelope. The letter, mailed on June 27, 2002, identified participants as members of NASPA Region III. Further, the letter explained the purpose of the study, the

importance of their involvement, the due date, assurance of confidentiality, an explanation of how the data would be used, and information about the Texas A&M University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects.

The actual survey contained a code to aid in non-respondent follow up and an invitation to receive the summary of results. In addition, the first page of the survey contained the title of the survey, the purpose of the survey, an overview of the contents and the directions for completing it. The last item in the mailing contained a postage paid, pre-addressed envelope to the researcher's home address in which to return the completed survey.

To begin the research, 803 Region III members were mailed a cover letter, survey, and return envelope on June 27, 2002 with a due date of July 19, 2002. NASPA Region III members at the researcher's institution were asked to return the completed survey through campus mail. Each instrument was coded to facilitate communication with non-respondents.

As each instrument was returned, it was scanned into the database, and the individual code was checked with the respondent list. By July 19, 318 usable surveys were returned. On July 22, 2002, a reminder postcard was mailed to non-respondents (Appendix B). The note requested that the non-respondent contact the researcher by e-mail or phone if he/she had not received or had misplaced the survey. Those who needed another copy were sent a duplicate. The postcard gave a new deadline of August 1, 2002. As a result of the postcard, an additional 60 surveys were returned.

A follow up letter, shown in Appendix C, another copy of the survey, and a postage paid returned envelope were mailed to non-respondents on August 15, 2002, asking for their participation by September 6, 2002. The respondents were also given the opportunity to take the survey on-line at a web site created through Teleform® software. After the follow up letter, 101 were received, 88 through the mail and 13 through the internet. Responses came in as late as October 1, 2002.

These efforts resulted in a cumulative response rate of 61.6%. The agreement with the NASPA National Office indicated that respondents would not be contacted after September 6, 2002. To determine whether there was no difference in respondents and non-respondents, frequencies were compared by the three response date deadlines (through July 19, July 20 through August 15, and August 15 through the last survey received). In terms of the level of mastery for the ten categories, each group responded virtually the same, making the case that there are no statistical differences between early responders, late responders, and non-respondents.

In addition, the demographics of the respondents were compared to the recorded demographics of the members National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) Region III as of October 1, 2002. Respondents' demographics were roughly similar to population demographics, although there were 914 professional affiliates in October, 38 more than in June. NASPA does not collect information on age, functional area, or institutional enrollment, although they do collect information about institutional type. According to NASPA, Females (59%) outnumbered males (41%), and Caucasians (74%) outnumbered all other reported ethnicities, followed by African American (14%),

Hispanic/Latino/Latina (5%), Multiracial (2%), Asian/Pacific Islander (1%), and American Indian (<1%). Approximately 3% did not specify an ethnicity. In this survey, 62% of the respondents were female, and 81% were Caucasians, 11% African Americans, 4% Hispanic/Latino, 1% Bi/multiracial, .8% Native Americans, and .2% Asian Americans. Of the people who reported the number of years in the profession (not necessarily the years of full time experience) on their NASPA membership form, 3.4% had over thirty years, 17% had 20-29 years, 32.2% had 10-19 years, 17% has six to ten years, and 30.4% had five or fewer years in the profession. This provides supporting evidence that the practitioners that responded to the survey are similar to the population as a whole. Since evidence exists that the respondent group is similar to the population and that early and late responders had similar characteristics, a case can be made that the respondent results are representative of the population.

In summary, of the 803 surveys mailed out, 20 were returned for incorrect addresses, and five people were omitted who did not feel they fit the criteria or who had received the survey in error. By the original due date, 318 usable surveys were returned (40.9% response rate). After the reminder postcard, 60 (7.7%) more were returned, bringing the intermediate response rate to 48.6%. Following the final letter mailed with another copy of the survey, 101 (12.5%) were returned, bringing the total response rate to 61.6%. Table 1, on the following page, illustrates the summary of response rates.

**Table 1**

**Summary of Response Rates from Mailings and Telephone/E-mail Contacts**

| | n | % |
|---|---|---|
| First Mailing | 318 | 40.9 |
| Reminder postcard | 60 | 7.7 |
| Second reminder with survey and internet option | 101 | 13.0 |
| Total | 479 | 61.6 |
| | | |
| Original Population | 876 | |
| Number deleted before mailing for not meeting criteria | 73 | |
| Number removed for bad addresses or self removal | 25 | |
| Adjusted Sample Size | 778 | |
| Non-respondents | 299 | |
| Respondents | 479 | |
| Percentage of Responses (using adjusted sample size) | | 61.6 |

## Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the SPSS Statistical Data Analysis package, Version 11.0 (SPSS, 2001). Results from this study include descriptive statistics, using numerical and graphical techniques. To analyze the data, the researcher used descriptive statistics such as means, frequencies, and standard deviations. Inferential statistics included Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

## Research Questions

### Research Question One

What are the perceptions of new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in NASPA Region III regarding their attainment of various skills?

This question was addressed using descriptive statistics. For each sub-population, the mean and standard deviation were calculated for each of the skill statements relative to perception of mastery level. The mean and standard deviation were then calculated for each of the ten categories (leadership, student contact, professional development, communication, personnel management, fiscal management, research and evaluation, legal issues, diversity, and technology). Frequency tabulations on the distribution of responses (i.e., I have not begun to work on this yet to I feel that I essentially have mastered or accomplished this) for each individual statement were calculated and reported as percentage distributions.

Research Question Two

What methods do new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in NASPA Region III prefer to gain competence in 10 skill categories?

This question was addressed using descriptive statistics, specifically frequencies within each administrative level and skill category. For each skill category, respondents could choose up to three responses.

Research Question Three

Are there differences between new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in their skill attainment perceptions?

This question was analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (Analysis of Variance) to determine differences between groups.

Research Question Four

Are there differences in methods used by new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers to gain competence?

This question was analyzed using descriptive and non-parametric statistics (Kruskal-Wallis) because the population was surveyed, but the population parameters were unknown.

# CHAPTER IV

# RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to assess (1) the perceptions of student affairs professionals (new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers) regarding their attainment of various skills and (2) the methods that professionals use to gain competence in ten skill categories. Chapter IV presents the results of the study. This chapter is divided into two major sections: the demographic characteristics and the research questions.

## Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Basic demographic data were collected. Respondents self selected, based on a description provided, whether they were new professionals, mid-managers, or senior student affairs officers. Mid-managers were the largest group of responders, 69%, followed by new professionals (20%), and senior student affairs officers (12%). Three people did not answer that question, so they are not included in the data analysis regarding the administrative levels. The mean age range was 36-40 (with a standard deviation of 1.9), but the modal age range was 26-30. Five people did not answer the age question. Of all of the surveys returned, 62% selected female and 38% selected male, and two people did not answer the gender question. In terms of ethnicity Caucasians were the largest group at 81%, followed by African Americans (11%), Hispanic/Latino (4%), Bi/multiracial (1%), Native American (.8%), and Asian American (.2%). Of the five people who responded “other”, two people wrote descriptions: black and Native

American/Jew/Caucasian. Two people did not answer the ethnicity question. Most respondents (61.6%) came from institutions with more than 10,000 students. About 35% came from institutions with more than 20,000 students. Three people did not answer the institution enrollment question. For all respondents, the mean number of years of full-time experience in the profession was 12.29 (with a standard deviation of 8.7 and median of 11), ranging from 0 to 39. The mean number of employees supervised was 8.76 (with a standard deviation of 26.7 and median of 3), with a range from 0 to 450. Respondents came from a variety of functional areas including Residence Life and/or Housing, Student Activities/Student Union, and Administration.

Table 2 displays the demographic characteristics of the student affairs new professionals. In the age category, 26-30 was the largest group (55.8%), followed by 20-25 (25.6%). By gender, females significantly outnumbered males. For ethnicity, Caucasian represented the largest category (75.6%). The one person who checked "other" for ethnicity did not write in a description. In terms of institutional enrollment, 20,001+ was the most frequent response. The mean number of years of full-time experience in student affairs was 2.47 (standard deviation=1.54), with a range of 0-7. The median was 2.00. The number of full-time professional staff supervised averaged 1.27 (standard deviation=7.93), with a range of 0 to 72 and median of 0.00.

**Table 2**

**Demographic Characteristics of Student Affairs New Professionals**

| Characteristic | Total Sample (n=86) n | % |
|---|---|---|
| Age: | | |
| 20-25 | 22 | 25.6 |
| 26-30 | 48 | 55.8 |
| 31-35 | 9 | 10.5 |
| 36-40 | 4 | 4.7 |
| 41-45 | 1 | 1.2 |
| 46-50 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 50+ | 2 | 2.4 |
| Gender: | | |
| Male | 24 | 28.2 |
| Female | 61 | 71.8 |
| Ethnicity: | | |
| African American | 10 | 11.6 |
| Asian American | 0 | 0.0 |
| Bi/multiracial | 2 | 2.3 |
| Caucasian | 65 | 75.6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 6 | 7.0 |
| Native American | 2 | 2.3 |
| Other | 1 | 1.2 |
| Institutional Enrollment: | | |
| 1,500 or fewer | 7 | 8.1 |
| 1,501-5000 | 13 | 15.1 |
| 5,001-10,000 | 13 | 15.1 |
| 10,001-20,000 | 21 | 24.4 |
| 20,001+ | 32 | 37.2 |

The final demographic question asked for respondents to write-in the functional area in which they worked. New professionals were represented in a wide variety of

functional areas including housing/residence life, student activities/student union, and orientation/new student programs.

**Table 3**

**Demographic Characteristics of Student Affairs Mid-Managers**

| Characteristic | Total Sample (n=332) n | % |
|---|---|---|
| Age: | | |
| 20-25 | 2 | 0.6 |
| 26-30 | 44 | 13.4 |
| 31-35 | 70 | 21.3 |
| 36-40 | 66 | 20.1 |
| 41-45 | 39 | 11.9 |
| 46-50 | 49 | 14.9 |
| 50+ | 59 | 17.9 |
| Gender: | | |
| Male | 128 | 38.6 |
| Female | 204 | 61.4 |
| Ethnicity: | | |
| African American | 37 | 11.2 |
| Asian American | 1 | .3 |
| Bi/multiracial | 4 | 1.2 |
| Caucasian | 270 | 81.6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 13 | 3.9 |
| Native American | 2 | 0.6 |
| Other | 4 | 1.2 |
| Institutional Enrollment: | | |
| 1,500 or fewer | 24 | 7.3 |
| 1,501-5000 | 52 | 15.7 |
| 5,001-10,000 | 48 | 14.5 |
| 10,001-20,000 | 85 | 25.7 |
| 20,001+ | 122 | 36.9 |

Table 3 displays the demographic characteristics of the student affairs mid-managers. In the age category, 31-35 was the largest group, closely followed by 36-40. By gender, females outnumbered males. For ethnicity, Caucasian represented the largest category. The other responses included black and Native American/Jew/Caucasian. In terms of institutional enrollment, 20,001+ was the most frequent response. The mean number of years of full-time experience in student affairs was 13.26 (standard deviation=7.53), which had a range of 1-33 and median of 12.00. The number of full-time professional staff supervised averaged 7.34, with a range of 0-200 and standard deviation of 16.17 and median of 4.00.

Similarly to new professionals, mid-managers indicated a variety of functional areas. The most commonly specified areas included administration/dean of students, housing/residence life, and student activities/student union.

Table 4 displays the demographic characteristics of the senior student affairs officers. In the age category, 50+ was the largest group (42.1%) followed by 46-50 (33.3%). By gender, females and males were about even. For ethnicity, Caucasian represented the largest category. In terms of institutional enrollment, 10,001-20,000 was the most frequent response followed closely by 20,001+. The mean number of years of full-time experience in student affairs was 20.82 (median of 22.00), with a range of 0.5-39 and standard deviation of 8.81. The number of full-time professional staff supervised averaged 28.53, with a range of 0-450 (standard deviation=63.23) and median of 10.50. Senior student affairs officers specified their functional areas as administration or several areas within student affairs.

**Table 4**

**Demographic Characteristics of Senior Student Affairs Officers**

| Characteristic | Total Sample (n=58) n | % |
|---|---|---|
| Age: | | |
| 20-25 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 26-30 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 31-35 | 3 | 5.2 |
| 36-40 | 3 | 5.2 |
| 41-45 | 8 | 14.0 |
| 46-50 | 19 | 33.3 |
| 50+ | 24 | 42.1 |
| Gender: | | |
| Male | 28 | 49.1 |
| Female | 29 | 50.9 |
| Ethnicity: | | |
| African American | 7 | 12.3 |
| Asian American | 0 | 0.0 |
| Bi/multiracial | 0 | 0.0 |
| Caucasian | 49 | 86.0 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 1 | 1.8 |
| Native American | 0 | 0.0 |
| Other | 0 | 0.0 |
| Institutional Enrollment: | | |
| 1,500 or fewer | 8 | 14.3 |
| 1,501-5000 | 7 | 12.5 |
| 5,001-10,000 | 8 | 14.3 |
| 10,001-20,000 | 19 | 33.9 |
| 20,000+ | 14 | 25.0 |

Skill Performance and Methods of Development of Student Affairs Professionals

Presented below are the data corresponding to the four research questions of the study. The results come from sections two and three of the Student Affairs Skill Development Survey.

Research question one addressed the perceptions of student affairs professionals regarding their attainment of 72 skills in ten categories. Research question two asked professionals to specify methods that they use to gain competence in the ten categories. Research questions three and four addressed the differences between new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in their perception of skill attainment and methods used to gain competence.

On the survey instrument, respondents were asked to indicate on a five-point scale their level of mastery of 72 skills. The following scale, based on Carpenter's (1979) work, was used:

1=I have not begun working on this

2=I have begun working on this

3=I am actively working on and concerned with this

4=I am still working on this, but I am less concerned with it than I once was

5=I feel that I have essentially mastered or accomplished this

The 72 individual skills were grouped into ten skill categories. The first seven categories have been used in previous studies, such as Windle (1998) and Fey (1990). This author, based on reading current literature regarding needed student affairs skills, created the last three categories. The ten categories are as follows:

Leadership

Student Contact

Communication

Personnel Management

Fiscal Management

Professional Development

Research, Evaluation, and Assessment

Legal Issues

Technology

Diversity

A few respondents did not answer individual questions or an entire section, sometimes writing “not applicable” next to the question(s). Because that happened in just a few cases, those surveys were still included in the analysis. The analysis for each question is based on the number of people who answered the question.

To verify the accuracy of the groupings, reliability coefficients were calculated for each category. A coefficient of 1.0 would verify that all items in each category were answered by respondents in a perfect pattern. Good coefficients provide evidence of the reliability of the scales. The calculated coefficients shown in Table 5 indicated that items in each category are adequate of a similar attribute.

**Table 5**

**Cronbach's Alpha for Skill Categories**

| Skill Category | Number of items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|---|---|---|
| Leadership | 13 | 0.90 |
| Student Contact | 7 | 0.86 |
| Communication | 5 | 0.79 |
| Personnel/Management | 9 | 0.93 |
| Fiscal Management | 7 | 0.92 |
| Professional Development | 6 | 0.80 |
| Research, Evaluation, and Assessment | 8 | 0.92 |
| Legal Issues | 5 | 0.92 |
| Technology | 6 | 0.85 |
| Diversity | 6 | 0.92 |

In addition, respondents were asked to indicate up to three most important methods, out of fifteen options, they used to gain competence in the ten skill categories. The methods were as follows:

Association sponsored institute

On campus workshop

On-line course

Discussion with colleagues

Mentor

Professional journals

Books

*The Chronicle of Higher Education*

Professional conference program

Professional conference pre-conference workshop

Professional conference major speaker

Academic course in preparation program

Academic course outside of preparation program

Sabbatical

Other

The choices were created in conjunction with the author's doctoral committee. For the "other" option, respondents could write in their own responses.

## Research Question One

What are the perceptions of new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in NASPA Region III regarding their attainment of various skills?

Eighty-six new professionals responded to this survey. Table 6 illustrates the new professional frequency percentage tabulations for the distribution of responses based on the following scale: 1=I have not begun working on this, 2=I have begun working on this, 3=I am actively working on and concerned with this, 4=I am still working on this, but I am less concerned with it than I once was, and 5=I feel that I have essentially mastered or accomplished this.

**Table 6**

**Frequency Percentage Tabulations of New Professionals for Performance of Skills**

| Skill by Category | n | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| LEADERSHIP | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Promoting the academic mission of the institution | 84 | 10.6 | 31.8 | 43.5 | 9.4 | 4.7 | 2.63 | 0.98 |
| 2. Working in the institution's political environment | 84 | 24.7 | 22.4 | 36.5 | 12.9 | 3.5 | 2.52 | 1.09 |
| 3. Developing the mission and vision of the department/division | 84 | 0.0 | 16.5 | 58.8 | 15.3 | 9.4 | 3.17 | 0.82 |
| 4. Communicating the mission and vision of the department/division | 84 | 3.5 | 9.4 | 64.7 | 14.1 | 8.2 | 3.11 | 0.84 |
| 5. Developing a strategic plan with realistic goals | 84 | 5.9 | 24.7 | 50.6 | 12.9 | 5.9 | 2.85 | 0.91 |
| 6. Following the profession's ethical principles | 84 | 0.0 | 7.1 | 52.9 | 11.8 | 28.2 | 3.58 | 0.96 |
| 7. Role modeling behavior to other professionals | 84 | 2.4 | 12.9 | 43.5 | 12.9 | 28.2 | 3.54 | 1.10 |
| 8. Implementing appropriate decisions under uncertain conditions | 84 | 0.0 | 15.3 | 54.1 | 14.1 | 16.5 | 3.29 | 0.90 |
| 9. Utilizing the expertise of others | 84 | 0.0 | 14.1 | 50.6 | 11.8 | 23.5 | 3.49 | 1.00 |
| 10. Gaining commitment from top leadership | 83 | 4.8 | 25.0 | 44.0 | 17.9 | 8.3 | 3.00 | 0.99 |
| 11. Utilizing effective techniques to motivate staff | 84 | 16.5 | 10.6 | 50.6 | 14.1 | 8.2 | 2.89 | 1.10 |
| 12. Delegating when appropriate | 84 | 4.7 | 23.5 | 47.1 | 14.1 | 10.6 | 3.04 | 1.00 |
| 13. Developing collaborative relationships with another division | 83 | 4.7 | 23.5 | 43.5 | 10.6 | 17.6 | 3.16 | 1.12 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| STUDENT CONTACT | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Applying student development theories in decision making | 85 | 9.3 | 18.6 | 47.7 | 15.1 | 9.3 | 2.99 | 1.01 |
| 2. Assessing student needs | 85 | 3.5 | 10.5 | 62.8 | 14.0 | 9.3 | 3.16 | 0.86 |
| 3. Including students in policy-making decisions | 84 | 12.8 | 19.8 | 54.7 | 8.1 | 4.7 | 2.69 | 0.97 |
| 4. Advising student groups | 85 | 5.8 | 16.3 | 51.2 | 14.0 | 12.8 | 3.12 | 1.01 |
| 5. Providing assistance and services to students | 84 | 1.2 | 5.8 | 51.2 | 17.4 | 24.4 | 3.61 | 0.93 |
| 6. Responding to student crises | 85 | 8.1 | 7.0 | 50.0 | 17.4 | 17.4 | 3.27 | 1.08 |
| 7. Training students to perform paraprofessional duties | 85 | 9.3 | 22.1 | 33.7 | 18.6 | 16.3 | 3.09 | 1.17 |

**Table 6 Continued**

| Skill by Category | n | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| COMMUNICATION | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Writing effective correspondence and reports | 84 | 0.0 | 7.0 | 45.3 | 18.6 | 29.1 | 3.73 | 0.96 |
| 2. Making oral presentations/public speaking | 84 | 1.2 | 7.0 | 44.2 | 22.1 | 25.6 | 3.65 | 0.93 |
| 3. Accurately interpreting attitudes and needs of others | 85 | 0.0 | 8.1 | 59.3 | 20.9 | 11.6 | 3.40 | 0.81 |
| 4. Effectively communicating with the media | 85 | 47.7 | 19.8 | 16.3 | 11.6 | 4.7 | 2.09 | 1.23 |
| 5. Maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality | 85 | 0.0 | 3.5 | 33.7 | 16.3 | 46.5 | 4.08 | 0.95 |
| PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Applying successful professional staff recruiting needs | 84 | 35.3 | 21.2 | 24.7 | 10.6 | 8.2 | 2.30 | 1.29 |
| 2. Using appropriate staff selection techniques | 84 | 21.2 | 18.8 | 35.3 | 14.1 | 10.6 | 2.71 | 1.25 |
| 3. Training staff using appropriate instructional techniques | 85 | 24.7 | 12.9 | 38.8 | 14.1 | 9.4 | 2.67 | 1.26 |
| 4. Developing staff through continuing education programs | 85 | 34.1 | 20.0 | 24.7 | 11.8 | 9.4 | 2.41 | 1.30 |
| 5. Supervising professional staff | 84 | 76.2 | 7.1 | 11.9 | 1.2 | 3.6 | 1.44 | 0.92 |
| 6. Evaluating professional staff | 85 | 70.6 | 9.4 | 14.1 | 1.2 | 4.7 | 1.55 | 1.02 |
| 7. Terminating professional staff after following due process | 84 | 89.3 | 3.6 | 2.4 | 2.4 | 2.4 | 1.21 | 0.76 |
| 8. Mediating conflict among staff | 84 | 41.2 | 21.2 | 25.9 | 7.1 | 4.7 | 2.11 | 1.14 |
| 9. Recognizing accomplishments of others | 85 | 9.3 | 17.4 | 43.0 | 10.5 | 19.8 | 3.12 | 1.20 |
| FISCAL MANAGEMENT | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Analyzing financial reports | 84 | 40.0 | 25.9 | 21.2 | 8.2 | 4.7 | 2.11 | 1.13 |
| 2. Utilizing available resources | 84 | 9.4 | 29.4 | 41.2 | 12.9 | 7.1 | 2.80 | 1.03 |
| 3. Applying budget development techniques | 84 | 43.5 | 29.4 | 12.9 | 7.1 | 7.1 | 2.01 | 1.19 |
| 4. Projecting future priorities and needs | 84 | 29.4 | 30.6 | 23.5 | 10.7 | 5.9 | 2.29 | 1.15 |
| 5. Writing grants and contracts to garner additional resources | 84 | 74.1 | 14.1 | 7.1 | 3.5 | 1.2 | 1.40 | 0.82 |
| 6. Understanding the financing of higher education | 84 | 32.9 | 37.6 | 18.8 | 4.7 | 5.9 | 2.13 | 1.12 |
| 7. Responding to budget cuts | 83 | 43.5 | 21.2 | 18.8 | 11.8 | 4.7 | 2.08 | 1.20 |

**Table 6 Continued**

| Skill by Category | n | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Assessing your own professional development needs | 84 | 0.0 | 18.8 | 61.2 | 15.3 | 4.7 | 3.06 | 0.68 |
| 2. Maintaining a scholarly background in your discipline | 83 | 10.7 | 20.2 | 46.4 | 15.5 | 7.1 | 2.87 | 1.05 |
| 3. Attending professional development activities | 83 | 0.0 | 13.1 | 50.0 | 20.2 | 16.7 | 3.42 | 0.90 |
| 4. Keeping abreast of current issues in the profession | 83 | 2.4 | 17.9 | 53.6 | 9.5 | 16.7 | 3.22 | 1.00 |
| 5. Writing an article for professional publication | 83 | 67.9 | 13.1 | 11.9 | 3.6 | 3.6 | 1.61 | 1.06 |
| 6. Being involved in professional association leadership | 83 | 34.5 | 28.6 | 21.4 | 6.0 | 9.5 | 2.30 | 1.26 |
| RESEARCH, EVALUATION, AND ASSESSMENT | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Interpret research as reported in professional literature | 82 | 28.6 | 33.3 | 21.4 | 7.1 | 9.5 | 2.34 | 1.25 |
| 2. Initiating or developing surveys or studies | 83 | 36.9 | 29.8 | 19.0 | 7.1 | 7.1 | 2.13 | 1.19 |
| 3. Interpreting/analyzing statistical methods and results | 83 | 44.0 | 23.8 | 19.0 | 8.3 | 4.8 | 2.08 | 1.20 |
| 4. Utilizing results of studies | 83 | 20.2 | 47.6 | 20.2 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 2.30 | 1.06 |
| 5. Evaluating programs for effectiveness | 83 | 9.5 | 34.5 | 38.1 | 8.3 | 9.5 | 2.70 | 1.09 |
| 6. Describing students at the institution to external constituents | 81 | 30.1 | 30.1 | 20.5 | 12.0 | 7.2 | 2.33 | 1.25 |
| 7. Performing self studies for accreditation reviews | 82 | 66.3 | 16.9 | 7.2 | 6.0 | 3.6 | 1.62 | 1.10 |
| 8. Developing a comprehensive assessment plan | 82 | 56.0 | 21.4 | 13.1 | 7.1 | 2.4 | 1.76 | 1.07 |
| LEGAL ISSUES | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Keeping abreast of current legislative issues | 85 | 20.9 | 43.0 | 23.3 | 7.0 | 5.8 | 2.29 | 1.03 |
| 2. Keeping abreast of current court cases | 83 | 33.3 | 35.7 | 22.6 | 4.8 | 3.6 | 2.07 | 1.06 |
| 3. Using proactive risk management techniques | 85 | 20.9 | 36.0 | 31.4 | 5.8 | 5.8 | 2.39 | 1.09 |

**Table 6 Continued**

| Skill by Category | n | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4. Implementing due process concepts | 84 | 40.7 | 19.8 | 25.6 | 5.8 | 8.1 | 2.26 | 1.29 |
| 5. Understanding personal and professional liability issues | 84 | 9.3 | 45.3 | 31.4 | 5.8 | 8.1 | 2.61 | 0.99 |
| TECHNOLOGY | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Using technology to find information | 85 | 0.0 | 3.5 | 32.6 | 23.3 | 40.7 | 4.00 | 0.94 |
| 2. Using technology to develop a professional presentation | 85 | 3.5 | 11.6 | 29.1 | 18.6 | 37.2 | 3.74 | 1.16 |
| 3. Understanding the use of technology in the marketing and delivery of services | 84 | 2.3 | 17.4 | 31.4 | 15.1 | 33.7 | 3.54 | 1.19 |
| 4. Using technology to communicate with staff | 84 | 0.0 | 7.0 | 27.9 | 19.8 | 45.3 | 4.02 | 1.02 |
| 5. Utilizing computer software to perform job functions | 84 | 0.0 | 4.7 | 29.1 | 26.7 | 39.5 | 4.02 | 0.94 |
| 6. Developing services for distant learners | 84 | 75.3 | 5.9 | 9.4 | 3.5 | 5.9 | 1.56 | 1.11 |
| DIVERSITY | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Providing services for underrepresented students | 84 | 11.6 | 24.4 | 38.4 | 10.5 | 15.1 | 2.95 | 1.17 |
| 2. Understanding the needs of underrepresented students | 85 | 7.0 | 24.4 | 37.2 | 11.6 | 19.8 | 3.19 | 1.17 |
| 3. Applying minority development theories to understand underrepresented students | 85 | 18.6 | 26.7 | 33.7 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 2.74 | 1.20 |
| 4. Considering needs of diverse students when making decisions | 84 | 0.0 | 18.6 | 51.2 | 8.1 | 22.1 | 3.39 | 1.03 |
| 5. Participating in educational events to understand people different than you | 84 | 1.2 | 18.6 | 41.9 | 11.8 | 26.7 | 3.52 | 1.07 |
| 6. Working effectively with someone with a different background than you | 85 | 0.0 | 9.3 | 45.3 | 12.8 | 32.6 | 3.76 | 1.00 |

M=Mean SD=Standard Deviation

For new professionals, the highest individual mean was for "maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality" (4.06 on a 5 point scale) in the Communications category. Several of the technology skills also averaged 4.0 or above: "utilizing technology to communicate with staff" (4.03), "using technology to find information"(4.01), and "utilizing computer software to perform job functions"(4.01). The lowest rated skills included "terminating professional staff after following due process" (1.25), "writing grants and contracts to garner additional resources" (1.44), and "supervising professional staff" (1.49). Twelve questions did not receive any "I have not begun working on this" responses.

Table 7 shows the overall means and standard deviations for each skill category for new professionals. All of the categories were above "I have begun working on this", but not reaching "I am still working on this, but I am less concerned with it than I once was."

**Table 7**

**New Professionals Means and Standard Deviations for Skill Categories**

| Skill Category | M | SD | n |
|---|---|---|---|
| Leadership | 3.10 | 0.61 | 85 |
| Student Contact | 3.13 | 0.68 | 86 |
| Communication | 3.36 | 0.68 | 86 |
| Personnel Management | 2.22 | 0.83 | 86 |
| Fiscal Management | 2.14 | 0.83 | 85 |
| Professional Development | 2.74 | 0.73 | 85 |
| Research, Evaluation, and Assessment | 2.18 | 0.88 | 84 |
| Legal Issues | 2.32 | 0.84 | 86 |
| Technology | 3.50 | 0.82 | 86 |
| Diversity | 3.20 | 0.96 | 86 |

M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation

Overall, the use of technology seemed to be the area in which new professionals perceived the most amount of mastery. New professionals seemed to have the least amount of experience in the fiscal management area. While the diversity category rated fairly high, it also had the largest standard deviation.

Table 8 illustrates the mid-managers frequency tabulations for the distribution of responses reported as percentages. Table 9 illustrates the means and standard deviations of the categories for mid-managers.

**Table 8**

**Frequency Percentage Tabulations of Mid-managers for Performance of Skills**

| Skill by Category | n | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| LEADERSHIP | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Promoting the academic mission of the institution | 329 | 3.3 | 9.1 | 43.9 | 17.9 | 25.8 | 3.54 | 1.07 |
| 2. Working in the institution's political environment | 328 | 7.6 | 11.2 | 39.5 | 30.4 | 11.2 | 3.27 | 1.05 |
| 3. Developing the mission and vision of the department/division | 327 | 0.6 | 6.4 | 43.3 | 23.8 | 25.9 | 3.68 | 1.05 |
| 4. Communicating the mission and vision of the department/division | 328 | 1.2 | 5.8 | 45.6 | 21.6 | 25.8 | 3.65 | 0.97 |
| 5. Developing a strategic plan with realistic goals | 328 | 4.3 | 8.5 | 43.8 | 21.6 | 21.9 | 3.48 | 1.06 |
| 6. Following the profession's ethical principles | 326 | 0.6 | 3.1 | 22.0 | 19.0 | 55.4 | 4.26 | 0.94 |
| 7. Role modeling behavior to other professionals | 329 | 0.3 | 1.2 | 30.0 | 25.2 | 43.3 | 4.10 | 0.90 |
| 8. Implementing appropriate decisions under uncertain conditions | 328 | 0.0 | 3.3 | 33.1 | 31.9 | 31.6 | 3.92 | 0.88 |
| 9. Utilizing the expertise of others | 328 | 0.3 | 2.1 | 28.9 | 25.2 | 43.5 | 4.09 | 0.91 |
| 10. Gaining commitment from top leadership | 328 | 0.9 | 4.9 | 41.3 | 34.7 | 18.2 | 3.64 | 0.87 |

**Table 8 Continued**

| Skill by Category | n | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11. Utilizing effective techniques to motivate staff | 329 | 0.6 | 6.1 | 42.1 | 34.2 | 17.0 | 3.61 | 0.86 |
| 12. Delegating when appropriate | 328 | 0.0 | 5.2 | 31.9 | 33.7 | 29.2 | 3.87 | 0.90 |
| 13. Developing collaborative relationships with another division | 329 | 0.9 | 4.5 | 31.8 | 30.6 | 32.1 | 3.88 | 0.95 |
| STUDENT CONTACT | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Applying student development theories in decision making | 329 | 2.1 | 4.8 | 24.8 | 43.9 | 24.2 | 3.83 | 0.92 |
| 2. Assessing student needs | 328 | 0.3 | 7.0 | 45.0 | 27.1 | 20.7 | 3.61 | 0.90 |
| 3. Including students in policy-making decisions | 326 | 1.8 | 4.9 | 34.9 | 25.1 | 33.3 | 3.83 | 1.01 |
| 4. Advising student groups | 328 | 3.6 | 3.0 | 19.5 | 25.2 | 48.6 | 4.12 | 1.06 |
| 5. Providing assistance and services to students | 328 | 0.0 | 0.6 | 29.5 | 17.6 | 52.3 | 4.22 | 0.89 |
| 6. Responding to student crises | 326 | 0.9 | 0.9 | 30.3 | 25.1 | 42.8 | 4.08 | 0.92 |
| 7. Training students to perform paraprofessional duties | 325 | 5.2 | 3.1 | 29.4 | 23.9 | 38.3 | 3.87 | 1.12 |
| COMMUNICATION | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Writing effective correspondence and reports | 327 | 0.0 | 3.4 | 19.8 | 24.1 | 52.7 | 4.26 | 0.89 |
| 2. Making oral presentations/public speaking | 328 | 1.2 | 2.4 | 21.0 | 29.8 | 45.6 | 4.16 | 0.92 |
| 3. Accurately interpreting attitudes and needs of others | 327 | 0.0 | 1.8 | 35.1 | 36.6 | 26.5 | 3.87 | 0.82 |
| 4. Effectively communicating with the media | 327 | 12.5 | 12.2 | 26.5 | 30.2 | 18.6 | 3.30 | 1.26 |
| 5. Maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality | 325 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 16.0 | 12.9 | 71.2 | 4.55 | 0.75 |
| PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Applying successful professional staff recruiting needs | 326 | 5.5 | 5.8 | 30.3 | 29.7 | 28.7 | 3.70 | 1.11 |
| 2. Using appropriate staff selection techniques | 325 | 3.1 | 5.2 | 25.2 | 34.7 | 31.9 | 3.87 | 1.02 |
| 3. Training staff using appropriate instructional techniques | 325 | 2.8 | 7.7 | 28.8 | 37.1 | 23.6 | 3.71 | 1.00 |
| 4. Developing staff through continuing education programs | 328 | 7.3 | 7.0 | 31.0 | 29.5 | 25.2 | 3.58 | 1.15 |
| 5. Supervising professional staff | 326 | 6.7 | 2.4 | 33.6 | 32.7 | 24.5 | 3.65 | 1.08 |

**Table 8 Continued**

| Skill by Category | n | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. Evaluating professional staff | 325 | 6.1 | 3.7 | 36.2 | 31.0 | 23.0 | 3.61 | 1.07 |
| 7. Terminating professional staff after following due process | 325 | 22.4 | 3.4 | 24.5 | 28.2 | 21.5 | 3.23 | 1.42 |
| 8. Mediating conflict among staff | 328 | 6.1 | 5.8 | 35. | 36.8 | 16.4 | 3.52 | 1.03 |
| 9. Recognizing accomplishments of others | 326 | 0.9 | 4.0 | 28.7 | 24.8 | 41.6 | 4.02 | 0.97 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| FISCAL MANAGEMENT | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Analyzing financial reports | 327 | 7.3 | 11.3 | 32.0 | 25.9 | 23.5 | 3.46 | 1.17 |
| 2. Utilizing available resources | 326 | 0.9 | 8.3 | 30.6 | 28.7 | 31.5 | 3.81 | 1.00 |
| 3. Applying budget development techniques | 322 | 10.8 | 11.1 | 31.3 | 22.6 | 24.1 | 3.38 | 1.26 |
| 4. Projecting future priorities and needs | 324 | 4.6 | 10.2 | 37.2 | 25.5 | 22.5 | 3.51 | 1.09 |
| 5. Writing grants and contracts to garner additional resources | 325 | 43.9 | 17.8 | 19.0 | 15.6 | 3.7 | 2.18 | 1.25 |
| 6. Understanding the financing of higher education | 326 | 5.8 | 15.9 | 27.8 | 28.7 | 21.7 | 3.45 | 1.16 |
| 7. Responding to budget cuts | 326 | 9.8 | 11.3 | 31.5 | 26.6 | 20.8 | 3.38 | 1.21 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Assessing your own professional development needs | 328 | 0.9 | 6.7 | 27.1 | 34.0 | 31.3 | 3.88 | 0.96 |
| 2. Maintaining a scholarly background in your discipline | 328 | 6.1 | 11.2 | 33.7 | 27.4 | 21.6 | 3.47 | 1.13 |
| 3. Attending professional development activities | 327 | 0.3 | 5.5 | 28.4 | 23.2 | 42.7 | 4.02 | 0.98 |
| 4. Keeping abreast of current issues in the profession | 329 | 1.5 | 5.8 | 34.2 | 27.3 | 31.2 | 3.81 | 0.99 |
| 5. Writing an article for professional publication | 326 | 40.1 | 17.4 | 16.2 | 16.2 | 10.1 | 2.38 | 1.40 |
| 6. Being involved in professional association leadership | 325 | 18.7 | 11.0 | 17.5 | 23.9 | 28.8 | 3.33 | 1.47 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| RESEARCH, EVALUATION, AND ASSESSMENT | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Interpret research as reported in professional literature | 328 | 8.8 | 13.7 | 24.3 | 30.1 | 23.1 | 3.45 | 1.23 |
| 2. Initiating or developing surveys or studies | 325 | 15.3 | 15.0 | 32.2 | 23.0 | 14.4 | 3.06 | 1.26 |

**Table 8 Continued**

| Skill by Category | n | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. Interpreting/analyzing statistical methods and results | 328 | 17.9 | 17.9 | 30.1 | 21.3 | 12.8 | 2.93 | 1.28 |
| 4. Utilizing results of studies | 327 | 6.7 | 14.9 | 35.1 | 26.5 | 16.8 | 3.32 | 1.12 |
| 5. Evaluating programs for effectiveness | 327 | 2.7 | 9.5 | 41.2 | 25.9 | 20.7 | 3.53 | 1.01 |
| 6. Describing students at the institution to external constituents | 326 | 7.6 | 8.9 | 24.8 | 30.0 | 28.7 | 3.63 | 1.20 |
| 7. Performing self studies for accreditation reviews | 327 | 23.8 | 12.8 | 22.6 | 23.2 | 17.7 | 2.99 | 1.42 |
| 8. Developing a comprehensive assessment plan | 326 | 17.1 | 18.0 | 34.9 | 16.2 | 13.8 | 2.91 | 1.26 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| LEGAL ISSUES | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Keeping abreast of current legislative issues | 328 | 7.3 | 14.0 | 35.6 | 27.7 | 15.5 | 3.31 | 1.11 |
| 2. Keeping abreast of current court cases | 325 | 10.7 | 19.3 | 29.4 | 24.5 | 16.0 | 3.16 | 1.22 |
| 3. Using proactive risk management techniques | 328 | 7.6 | 11.9 | 31.9 | 27.7 | 21.0 | 3.43 | 1.17 |
| 4. Implementing due process concepts | 325 | 8.3 | 9.2 | 25.5 | 25.5 | 31.6 | 3.63 | 1.25 |
| 5. Understanding personal and professional liability issues | 324 | 4.0 | 10.2 | 28.9 | 28.0 | 28.9 | 3.68 | 1.12 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| TECHNOLOGY | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Using technology to find information | 325 | 0.6 | 6.7 | 31.9 | 31.0 | 29.8 | 3.83 | 0.96 |
| 2. Using technology to develop a professional presentation | 325 | 4.9 | 9.2 | 31.6 | 24.2 | 30.1 | 3.65 | 1.14 |
| 3. Understanding the use of technology in the marketing and delivery of services | 326 | 3.4 | 9.8 | 35.8 | 27.2 | 23.9 | 3.58 | 1.06 |
| 4. Using technology to communicate with staff | 326 | 0.6 | 4.9 | 27.8 | 24.5 | 42.2 | 4.03 | 0.98 |
| 5. Utilizing computer software to perform job functions | 327 | 3.0 | 7.6 | 30.5 | 26.2 | 32.6 | 3.78 | 1.08 |
| 6. Developing services for distant learners | 319 | 58.8 | 11.6 | 17.2 | 7.5 | 5.0 | 1.89 | 1.23 |

**Table 8 Continued**

| Skill by Category | n | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DIVERSITY | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Providing services for underrepresented students | 325 | 4.3 | 8.6 | 41.4 | 24.8 | 20.9 | 3.50 | 1.05 |
| 2. Understanding the needs of underrepresented students | 326 | 1.2 | 8.0 | 38.8 | 30.0 | 22.0 | 3.64 | 0.95 |
| 3. Applying minority development theories to understand underrepresented students | 326 | 13.8 | 15.0 | 33.6 | 22.3 | 15.3 | 3.11 | 1.23 |
| 4. Considering needs of diverse students when making decisions | 327 | 0.6 | 4.9 | 38.7 | 26.8 | 29.0 | 3.79 | 0.94 |
| 5. Participating in educational events to understand people different than you | 328 | 2.4 | 4.9 | 35.6 | 26.7 | 30.4 | 3.78 | 1.01 |
| 6. Working effectively with someone with a different background than you | 327 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 28.0 | 25.9 | 43.6 | 4.10 | 0.93 |

M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation

The highest mean was for "maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality" (4.55), followed by "writing effective correspondence and reports" (4.26) and "providing assistance and services to students" (4.22). The lowest rated individual skills were "developing services for distant learners" (1.89), "Writing grants and contracts to garner additional resources" (2.18), and "writing an article for professional publication" (2.38). Five of the questions did not receive any "I have not begun working on this" responses.

Table 9 indicates the means and standard deviations for each category. Mid-managers feel fairly confident in their abilities in most areas, with their responses falling into the "I am actively working on and concerned with this" category. Communication seemed to be the category in which mid-managers felt the most mastery. Research,

evaluation, and assessment appeared to be the category in which mid-managers have the least experience, although legal issues had the highest standard deviation.

**Table 9**

**Mid-managers Means and Standard Deviations for Skill Categories**

| Skill Category | M | SD | n |
|---|---|---|---|
| Leadership | 3.78 | 0.62 | 332 |
| Student Contact | 3.93 | 0.70 | 332 |
| Communication | 4.03 | 0.68 | 332 |
| Personnel Management | 3.66 | 0.84 | 331 |
| Fiscal Management | 3.32 | 0.92 | 331 |
| Professional Development | 3.50 | 0.93 | 332 |
| Research, Evaluation, and Assessment | 3.23 | 0.95 | 332 |
| Legal Issues | 3.43 | 1.01 | 331 |
| Technology | 3.46 | 0.82 | 331 |
| Diversity | 3.65 | 0.85 | 331 |

M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation

Fifty-eight senior student affairs officers responded to the survey. Table 10 illustrates the responses of the SSAOs for the 72 skill questions. Table 11 shows the means and standard deviations for the ten skill categories.

**Table 10**

**Frequency Percentage Tabulations of Senior Student Affairs Officers for Performance of Skills**

| Skill by Category | n | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| LEADERSHIP | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Promoting the academic mission of the institution | 58 | 5.2 | 3.4 | 37.9 | 24.1 | 29.3 | 3.69 | 1.10 |
| 2. Working in the institution's political environment | 58 | 5.2 | 3.4 | 43.1 | 32.8 | 15.5 | 3.50 | 0.98 |
| 3. Developing the mission and vision of the department/division | 58 | 1.7 | 6.9 | 29.3 | 29.3 | 32.8 | 3.84 | 1.02 |
| 4. Communicating the mission and vision of the department/division | 58 | 0.0 | 6.9 | 41.4 | 27.6 | 24.1 | 3.69 | 0.92 |
| 5. Developing a strategic plan with realistic goals | 58 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 41.4 | 31.0 | 24.1 | 3.74 | 0.91 |
| 6. Following the profession's ethical principles | 58 | 0.0 | 1.7 | 10.3 | 24.1 | 63.8 | 45.0 | 0.76 |
| 7. Role modeling behavior to other professionals | 58 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 24.1 | 20.7 | 63.8 | 4.31 | 0.84 |
| 8. Implementing appropriate decisions under uncertain conditions | 58 | 0.0 | 1.7 | 27.6 | 31.0 | 39.7 | 4.09 | 0.86 |
| 9. Utilizing the expertise of others | 58 | 0.0 | 1.7 | 24.1 | 34.5 | 39.7 | 4.12 | 0.84 |
| 10. Gaining commitment from top leadership | 58 | 0.0 | 1.7 | 29.3 | 41.4 | 27.6 | 3.95 | 0.80 |
| 11. Utilizing effective techniques to motivate staff | 57 | 0.0 | 3.5 | 47.4 | 33.3 | 15.8 | 3.61 | 0.80 |
| 12. Delegating when appropriate | 58 | 0.0 | 5.2 | 25.9 | 29.3 | 39.7 | 4.03 | 0.94 |
| 13. Developing collaborative relationships with another division | 58 | 0.0 | 3.4 | 25.9 | 37.9 | 32.8 | 4.00 | 0.86 |
| STUDENT CONTACT | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Applying student development theories in decision making | 57 | 3.5 | 3.5 | 21.1 | 50.9 | 21.1 | 3.82 | 0.93 |
| 2. Assessing student needs | 58 | 0.0 | 3.4 | 34.5 | 39.7 | 22.4 | 3.81 | 0.83 |
| 3. Including students in policy-making decisions | 58 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 37.9 | 29.3 | 29.3 | 3.83 | 0.94 |
| 4. Advising student groups | 58 | 5.2 | 1.7 | 20.7 | 27.6 | 44.8 | 4.05 | 1.10 |
| 5. Providing assistance and services to students | 57 | 0.0 | 3.5 | 22.8 | 15.8 | 57.9 | 4.28 | 0.94 |
| 6. Responding to student crises | 57 | 0.0 | 3.5 | 26.3 | 21.1 | 49.1 | 4.16 | 0.94 |

**Table 10 Continued**

| Skill by Category | n | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7. Training students to perform paraprofessional duties | 58 | 5.2 | 1.7 | 29.3 | 37.9 | 25.9 | 3.78 | 1.03 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| COMMUNICATION | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Writing effective correspondence and reports | 58 | 0.0 | 3.4 | 17.2 | 19.0 | 60.3 | 4.36 | 0.89 |
| 2. Making oral presentations/public speaking | 58 | 0.0 | 1.7 | 15.5 | 29.3 | 53.4 | 4.34 | 0.81 |
| 3. Accurately interpreting attitudes and needs of others | 58 | 0.0 | 1.7 | 19.0 | 41.4 | 37.9 | 4.16 | 0.79 |
| 4. Effectively communicating with the media | 58 | 1.7 | 10.3 | 29.3 | 31.0 | 27.6 | 3.72 | 1.04 |
| 5. Maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality | 58 | 0.0 | 1.7 | 10.3 | 17.2 | 70.7 | 4.57 | 0.75 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Applying successful professional staff recruiting needs | 58 | 0.0 | 5.2 | 22.4 | 27.6 | 44.8 | 4.12 | 0.94 |
| 2. Using appropriate staff selection techniques | 58 | 0.0 | 3.4 | 19.0 | 25.9 | 51.7 | 4.26 | 0.89 |
| 3. Training staff using appropriate instructional techniques | 58 | 0.0 | 5.2 | 34.5 | 39.7 | 20.7 | 3.76 | 0.84 |
| 4. Developing staff through continuing education programs | 58 | 0.0 | 5.2 | 29.3 | 39.7 | 25.9 | 3.86 | 0.87 |
| 5. Supervising professional staff | 58 | 0.0 | 3.4 | 15.5 | 34.5 | 46.6 | 4.24 | 0.84 |
| 6. Evaluating professional staff | 58 | 0.0 | 5.2 | 17.2 | 36.2 | 41.4 | 4.14 | 0.89 |
| 7. Terminating professional staff after following due process | 58 | 8.6 | 5.2 | 13.8 | 31.0 | 41.4 | 3.91 | 1.25 |
| 8. Mediating conflict among staff | 58 | 3.4 | 3.4 | 25.9 | 41.4 | 25.9 | 3.83 | 0.98 |
| 9. Recognizing accomplishments of others | 58 | 0.0 | 1.7 | 19.0 | 34.5 | 44.8 | 4.22 | 0.82 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| FISCAL MANAGEMENT | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Analyzing financial reports | 58 | 0.0 | 3.4 | 22.4 | 32.8 | 41.4 | 4.12 | 0.88 |
| 2. Utilizing available resources | 58 | 0.0 | 1.7 | 13.8 | 29.3 | 55.2 | 4.38 | 0.79 |
| 3. Applying budget development techniques | 58 | 0.0 | 3.4 | 17.2 | 34.5 | 44.8 | 4.21 | 0.85 |
| 4. Projecting future priorities and needs | 58 | 0.0 | 3.4 | 22.4 | 25.9 | 48.3 | 4.19 | 0.91 |
| 5. Writing grants and contracts to garner additional resources | 58 | 20.7 | 12.1 | 20.7 | 34.5 | 12.1 | 3.05 | 1.34 |

**Table 10 Continued**

| Skill by Category | n | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. Understanding the financing of higher education | 57 | 1.8 | 3.5 | 14.0 | 36.8 | 43.9 | 4.18 | 0.93 |
| 7. Responding to budget cuts | 58 | 1.7 | 8.6 | 19.0 | 31.0 | 39.7 | 3.98 | 1.05 |
| PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Assessing your own professional development needs | 57 | 0.0 | 1.8 | 21.1 | 31.6 | 45.6 | 4.21 | 0.84 |
| 2. Maintaining a scholarly background in your discipline | 57 | 5.3 | 5.3 | 26.3 | 45.6 | 17.5 | 3.65 | 1.01 |
| 3. Attending professional development activities | 57 | 0.0 | 5.3 | 26.3 | 36.8 | 31.6 | 3.95 | 0.86 |
| 4. Keeping abreast of current issues in the profession | 57 | 0.0 | 3.5 | 33.3 | 29.8 | 33.3 | 3.93 | 0.90 |
| 5. Writing an article for professional publication | 57 | 21.1 | 14.0 | 24.6 | 26.3 | 14.0 | 2.98 | 1.36 |
| 6. Being involved in professional association leadership | 57 | 14.0 | 5.3 | 22.8 | 31.6 | 26.3 | 3.51 | 1.33 |
| RESEARCH, EVALUATION, AND ASSESSMENT | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Interpret research as reported in professional literature | 57 | 0.0 | 8.8 | 21.1 | 38.6 | 31.6 | 3.93 | 0.94 |
| 2. Initiating or developing surveys or studies | 57 | 1.8 | 5.3 | 24.6 | 47.4 | 21.1 | 3.81 | 0.86 |
| 3. Interpreting/analyzing statistical methods and results | 57 | 1.8 | 7.0 | 29.8 | 38.6 | 22.8 | 3.74 | 0.96 |
| 4. Utilizing results of studies | 57 | 0.0 | 5.3 | 29.8 | 35.1 | 29.8 | 3.89 | 0.90 |
| 5. Evaluating programs for effectiveness | 57 | 0.0 | 1.8 | 38.6 | 28.1 | 31.6 | 3.89 | 0.88 |
| 6. Describing students at the institution to external constituents | 57 | 1.8 | 3.5 | 21.1 | 28.1 | 45.6 | 4.12 | 0.8 |
| 7. Performing self studies for accreditation reviews | 57 | 5.3 | 5.3 | 28.1 | 22.8 | 38.6 | 3.84 | 1.16 |
| 8. Developing a comprehensive assessment plan | 57 | 1.8 | 10.5 | 33.3 | 33.3 | 21.1 | 3.61 | 1.00 |
| LEGAL ISSUES | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Keeping abreast of current legislative issues | 58 | 1.7 | 3.4 | 34.5 | 29.3 | 31.0 | 3.84 | 0.97 |

**Table 10 Continued**

| Skill by Category | n | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2. Keeping abreast of current court cases | 58 | 8.6 | 1.7 | 37.9 | 36.2 | 15.5 | 3.48 | 1.06 |
| 3. Using proactive risk management techniques | 58 | 0.0 | 3.4 | 41.4 | 29.3 | 25.9 | 3.78 | 0.88 |
| 4. Implementing due process concepts | 57 | 1.8 | 8.8 | 22.8 | 28.1 | 38.6 | 3.93 | 1.07 |
| 5. Understanding personal and professional liability issues | 58 | 0.0 | 5.2 | 27.6 | 27.6 | 39.7 | 4.02 | 0.95 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| TECHNOLOGY | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Using technology to find information | 58 | 0.0 | 5.2 | 29.3 | 32.8 | 32.8 | 3.93 | 0.92 |
| 2. Using technology to develop a professional presentation | 58 | 5.2 | 8.6 | 25.9 | 32.8 | 27.6 | 3.69 | 1.13 |
| 3. Understanding the use of technology in the marketing and delivery of services | 58 | 0.0 | 6.9 | 37.9 | 34.5 | 20.7 | 3.69 | 0.88 |
| 4. Using technology to communicate with staff | 58 | 0.0 | 3.4 | 29.3 | 22.4 | 44.8 | 4.09 | 0.94 |
| 5. Utilizing computer software to perform job functions | 58 | 3.4 | 8.6 | 29.3 | 20.7 | 37.9 | 3.81 | 1.15 |
| 6. Developing services for distant learners | 58 | 41.4 | 15.5 | 24.1 | 15.5 | 3.4 | 2.24 | 1.25 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| DIVERSITY | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Providing services for underrepresented students | 58 | 3.4 | 6.9 | 32.8 | 34.5 | 22.4 | 3.66 | 1.02 |
| 2. Understanding the needs of underrepresented students | 58 | 1.7 | 3.4 | 36.2 | 34.5 | 24.1 | 3.76 | 0.92 |
| 3. Applying minority development theories to understand underrepresented students | 58 | 6.9 | 6.9 | 43.1 | 24.1 | 19.0 | 3.41 | 1.09 |
| 4. Considering needs of diverse students when making decisions | 58 | 1.7 | 3.4 | 31.0 | 20.7 | 43.1 | 4.00 | 1.03 |
| 5. Participating in educational events to understand people different than you | 58 | 0.0 | 5.2 | 25.9 | 32.8 | 36.2 | 4.00 | 0.92 |
| 6. Working effectively with someone with a different background than you | 58 | 0.0 | 5.2 | 22.4 | 25.9 | 46.6 | 4.14 | 0.95 |

M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation

The highest means included “maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality”, (4.57), “Following the profession’s ethical principles” (4.50), and “utilizing available resources” (4.38). The lowest rated response was “developing services for distant learners” (2.24). The next lowest response, which averaged 2.98, was “writing an article for professional publication”. All of the other skills averaged at least 3.0. Over half of the skill statements did not have any “I have not begun working on this” responses. One statement, “Role modeling behavior to other professionals”, did not have any “I have begun working on this” responses, indicating that senior student affairs officers were at least actively working on this if not already mastering the skill.

Table 11 illustrates the means and standard deviations for the skill categories for the Senior Student Affairs Officers. In general, the standard deviation of the senior student affairs officers is slightly smaller that the standard deviations for new professionals or mid-managers.

**Table 11**

**Senior Student Affairs Officer Means and Standard Deviations for Skill Categories**

| Skill Category | M | SD | n |
|---|---|---|---|
| Leadership | 3.93 | 0.54 | 58 |
| Student Contact | 3.96 | 0.67 | 58 |
| Communication | 4.23 | 0.67 | 58 |
| Personnel Management | 4.04 | 0.72 | 58 |
| Fiscal Management | 4.01 | 0.73 | 58 |
| Professional Development | 3.70 | 0.76 | 57 |
| Research, Evaluation, and Assessment | 3.86 | 0.72 | 57 |
| Legal Issues | 3.81 | 0.79 | 58 |
| Technology | 3.58 | 0.78 | 58 |
| Diversity | 3.83 | 0.83 | 58 |

M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation

Senior student affairs officers seemed to be closest to mastering all the skill categories. The highest rated category was communication. The area they rated lowest, technology, still rated between the "I am actively working on and concerned with this" category and the "I am still working on this, but I am less concerned with it than I once was". Diversity had the largest standard deviation.

In summary, all three groups chose "maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality" as highest rated individual skill. New professionals rated technology as the area in which they perceived the most mastery, while communication was rated the highest among mid-managers and senior student affairs officers. On the other hand, new professionals rated "terminating professional staff after following due process" lowest, while mid-mangers and senior student affairs officers selected "developing services for distant learners" as the least mastered skill. These results give support to the stage theory of professional development: as student affairs professionals gain more experience and attain higher positions, they also have an increased mastery level of skills.

## Research Question Two

What methods do new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in NASPA Region III prefer to gain competence in 10 skill categories?

Tables 12 through 21 illustrate the responses to the questions about methods that student affairs practitioners use to develop their skill and knowledge level in the particular categories. Respondents could check up to three areas, so the frequency percentages do not add up to 100%.

**Table 12**

**Frequency Percentages of Methods for Developing Leadership Skills**

| Leadership | New Professional | Mid-manager | Senior Student Affairs Officer |
|---|---|---|---|
| Association sponsored institute | 12.79 | 24.10 | 25.86 |
| On campus workshop | 9.30 | 8.43 | 5.17 |
| On-line course | 0.00 | 1.20 | 0.00 |
| Discussion with colleagues | 58.14 | 51.20 | 50.00 |
| Mentor | 58.14 | 48.80 | 34.48 |
| Professional journals | 18.60 | 24.40 | 34.48 |
| Books | 30.23 | 34.64 | 34.48 |
| *The Chronicle of Higher Education* | 12.79 | 10.84 | 17.24 |
| Professional conference program session | 37.21 | 42.77 | 46.55 |
| Professional conference pre-conference workshop | 4.65 | 7.53 | 6.90 |
| Professional conference major speaker | 9.30 | 4.52 | 8.62 |
| Academic course in preparation program | 26.74 | 20.18 | 13.79 |
| Academic course outside of preparation program | 4.65 | 6.02 | 0.00 |
| Sabbatical | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1.72 |
| Other | 6.98 | 11.14 | 12.07 |

As shown in Table 12, new professionals appeared to learn about leadership from mentors, discussion with colleagues, and professional conference program sessions, but none have taken a sabbatical or on-line course. The other responses included participation in specific organizations.

Similarly to new professionals, mid-managers' top three choices included discussion with colleagues, mentors, and conference program session. On the other hand, none have taken a sabbatical, and only a few have taken an on-line course. Mid-managers listed other learning methods such as on the job training, personal experience,

and structured learning activities (association involvement, leadership institutes, and doctoral program).

Senior student affairs officers (SSAOs) preferred discussion with colleagues, followed by professional conference program session. Mentors, books, and professional journals all received over 34% of the selections. No SSAOs chose an academic course outside of preparation course or an on-line course. In terms of other responses, SSAOs wrote in experience and participation in leadership programs.

**Table 13**

**Frequency Percentages of Methods for Developing Student Contact Skills**

| Student Contact | New Professional | Mid-manager | Senior Student Affairs Officer |
|---|---|---|---|
| Association sponsored institute | 3.49 | 8.43 | 6.90 |
| On campus workshop | 12.79 | 12.05 | 15.52 |
| On-line course | 0.00 | .30 | 0.00 |
| Discussion with colleagues | 74.42 | 63.86 | 75.86 |
| Mentor | 46.51 | 39.76 | 27.59 |
| Professional journals | 25.58 | 25.60 | 34.48 |
| Books | 19.77 | 18.67 | 24.14 |
| *The Chronicle of Higher Education* | 8.14 | 7.53 | 10.34 |
| Professional conference program session | 32.56 | 40.06 | 44.83 |
| Professional conference pre-conference workshop | 3.49 | 4.82 | 3.45 |
| Professional conference major speaker | 2.33 | 5.12 | 3.45 |
| Academic course in preparation program | 31.40 | 25.90 | 13.79 |
| Academic course outside of preparation program | 2.33 | 1.81 | 0.00 |
| Sabbatical | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1.72 |
| Other | 23.26 | 24.40 | 17.24 |

Table 13 shows that, overwhelmingly, new professionals learned about student contact skills through discussion with colleagues, followed by mentor and professional conference program session. Once again, no new professional has taken a sabbatical or an on-line course. The new professional other responses included their experience and discussions with students.

By far, mid-managers chose discussions with colleagues to learn about student contact. Their other preferred methods included conference program session and mentor. None have taken a sabbatical, and only one mid-manager has taken an on-line course to learn about student contact. Their other responses included such items as experience, advising students, and spending time with students.

Like new professionals and mid-managers, SSAOs overwhelmingly chose discussion with colleagues as the primary means of learning about student contact. The next most common responses were professional conference program session and professional journals. No SSAOs took and on-line course or an academic course outside of the preparation program to learn about student contact. Experience, professional organization involvement, and advising student groups were listed as the senior student affairs officers other responses.

**Table 14**

**Frequency Percentages of Methods for Developing Communication Skills**

| Communication | New Professional | Mid-manager | Senior Student Affairs Officer |
|---|---|---|---|
| Association sponsored institute | 8.14 | 6.33 | 10.34 |
| On campus workshop | 19.77 | 12.65 | 15.52 |
| On-line course | 0.00 | .60 | 0.00 |
| Discussion with colleagues | 65.12 | 58.13 | 55.17 |
| Mentor | 44.19 | 41.27 | 24.14 |
| Professional journals | 13.95 | 19.88 | 27.59 |
| Books | 15.12 | 26.51 | 32.76 |
| *The Chronicle of Higher Education* | 6.98 | 8.43 | 6.90 |
| Professional conference program session | 32.56 | 37.05 | 44.83 |
| Professional conference pre-conference workshop | 0.00 | 3.61 | 1.72 |
| Professional conference major speaker | 2.33 | 4.82 | 8.62 |
| Academic course in preparation program | 24.42 | 24.70 | 18.97 |
| Academic course outside of preparation program | 9.30 | 12.05 | 5.17 |
| Sabbatical | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1.72 |
| Other | 9.30 | 13.25 | 8.62 |

As seen in Table 14, new professionals have discussions with colleagues, consult with their mentors, and attend professional conference program sessions to learn about communication. New professionals did not use on-line courses, sabbaticals, or professional conference pre-conference workshops. New professional other responses were experience and practice. One person mentioned undergraduate classes.

Mid-managers answered similarly to new professionals. Over half chose discussion with colleagues as the preferred method, followed by mentor and conference program session. No mid-manager has taken a sabbatical to learn about communication, and only a few have taken an on-line course or attended a pre-conference workshop. Of

the mid-managers who wrote in responses, most mentioned experience and on the job training as learning methods.

Over half of the senior student affairs officers selected discussion with colleagues as the method they used to develop communication skills. The other two top responses were conference program session and books. None of the SSAOs have taken an on-line course and only one has taken a sabbatical or attended a pre-conference workshop. Only a few wrote in other methods that revolved around experiences at work.

**Table 15**

**Frequency Percentages of Methods for Developing Personnel Management Skills**

| Personnel Management | New Professional | Mid-manager | Senior Student Affairs Officer |
|---|---|---|---|
| Association Sponsored Institute | 3.49 | 4.52 | 8.62 |
| On campus workshop | 22.09 | 41.27 | 29.31 |
| On-line course | 0.00 | .90 | 0.00 |
| Discussion with colleagues | 65.12 | 55.12 | 65.52 |
| Mentor | 45.35 | 37.95 | 25.86 |
| Professional journals | 18.60 | 23.49 | 31.03 |
| Books | 19.77 | 23.80 | 31.03 |
| *The Chronicle of Higher Education* | 4.65 | 6.33 | 5.17 |
| Professional conference program session | 16.28 | 31.02 | 44.83 |
| Professional conference pre-conference workshop | 0.00 | 4.22 | 10.34 |
| Professional conference major speaker | 2.33 | 1.81 | 0.00 |
| Academic course in preparation program | 15.12 | 17.17 | 15.52 |
| Academic course outside of preparation program | 5.81 | 8.73 | 1.72 |
| Sabbatical | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Other | 10.47 | 12.35 | 13.79 |

Table 15 indicates that the most common responses from new professionals were discussion with colleagues, mentor, and on campus workshop. No new professionals have taken an on-line course, taken a sabbatical, or attended a professional conference pre-conference workshop. New professionals also wrote in experience and watching others.

Mid-managers appeared to be similar to new professionals in their personnel management learning methods. Over half chose discussion with colleagues, followed by on campus workshop and mentor. None have taken a sabbatical, and only a few have enrolled in an on-line course or listened to a professional conference major speaker. Most of the mid-managers who wrote in responses (forty-seven listed items) listed experience, on the job training, and training from the campus human resources department.

Over half of the senior student affairs officers learned about personnel management issues from discussions with colleagues. Next, SSAOs chose professional conference program session, books, and professional journals as the most important methods. None of them chose sabbatical, professional conference major speaker, and on-line course. Only a few SSAOs wrote in other responses that reflected experience and on campus workshops.

**Table 16**

**Frequency Percentage of Methods for Developing Fiscal Management Skills**

| Fiscal Management | New Professional | Mid-manager | Senior Student Affairs Officer |
|---|---|---|---|
| Association sponsored institute | 3.49 | 9.04 | 3.45 |
| On campus workshop | 17.44 | 32.83 | 39.66 |
| On-line course | 1.16 | .60 | 0.00 |
| Discussion with colleagues | 62.79 | 59.94 | 67.24 |
| Mentor | 40.70 | 44.88 | 32.76 |
| Professional journals | 10.47 | 6.93 | 17.24 |
| Books | 11.63 | 12.05 | 13.79 |
| *The Chronicle of Higher Education* | 4.65 | 3.92 | 3.45 |
| Professional conference program session | 18.60 | 14.46 | 22.41 |
| Professional conference pre-conference workshop | 0.00 | 3.01 | 6.90 |
| Professional conference major speaker | 0.00 | .60 | 0.00 |
| Academic course in preparation program | 31.40 | 29.82 | 22.41 |
| Academic course outside of preparation program | 3.49 | 7.83 | 6.90 |
| Sabbatical | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Other | 12.79 | 18.67 | 15.52 |

The most common method shown in Table 16 that new professionals used to gain competence in fiscal management skills are discussion with colleagues, mentor, and academic course in preparation program. No new professionals used a sabbatical, a professional conference major speaker, or a professional conference pre-conference session to learn about fiscal management skills. New professionals wrote in experience, watching others, and their supervisor.

To learn about fiscal management skills, mid-managers chose discussion with colleagues, and then mentors and on campus workshops. No mid-manager had taken a sabbatical, and only two mentioned a conference major speaker or on-line course. Of the

sixty-eight people who wrote in a response, most referred to experience, on the job training, and communication with the institution's fiscal office.

Over two-thirds of the senior student affairs officers learned about fiscal management through discussion with colleagues. The other popular methods included on campus workshop and mentor. None of the SSAOs took a sabbatical, learned from a conference major speaker, or took an on-line course. Experience was the most common answer for the other responses.

**Table 17**

**Frequency Percentages of Methods for Developing Professional Development Skills**

| Professional Development | New Professional | Mid-manager | Senior Student Affairs Officer |
|---|---|---|---|
| Association sponsored institute | 16.28 | 29.22 | 25.86 |
| On campus workshop | 12.79 | 11.75 | 10.34 |
| On-line course | 1.16 | 1.20 | 3.45 |
| Discussion with colleagues | 44.19 | 32.23 | 36.21 |
| Mentor | 51.16 | 40.36 | 24.14 |
| Professional journals | 33.72 | 34.34 | 48.28 |
| Books | 18.60 | 16.57 | 18.97 |
| *The Chronicle of Higher Education* | 10.47 | 9.94 | 10.34 |
| Professional conference program session | 67.44 | 64.46 | 62.07 |
| Professional conference pre-conference workshop | 6.98 | 13.25 | 20.69 |
| Professional conference major speaker | 11.63 | 10.84 | 12.07 |
| Academic course in preparation program | 15.12 | 12.95 | 12.07 |
| Academic course outside of preparation program | 3.49 | 4.86 | 0.00 |
| Sabbatical | 0.00 | 0.30 | 0.00 |
| Other | 3.49 | 6.33 | 12.07 |

Table 17 shows over two-thirds of the new professionals learned about professional development from a conference program session and over half learned from

a mentor. Just less than half had discussions with colleagues. Although no new professionals used a sabbatical, a few have taken an on-line course and an academic course outside of a preparation program. Only three new professionals wrote in other; they listed personal experience, the whole conference experience, and networking at professional conferences. Student affairs professionals, in general, appear to associate professional development with conference attendance.

Mid-managers, on the other hand, chose conference program session, mentor, and professional journals as their preferred methods to learn about professional development. The least important methods included sabbatical, on-line course, and academic course outside of a preparation program. Mid-managers appeared to get additional education through association involvement and leadership, institute or conference attendance, and even listservs.

More than half of the SSAOs preferred a conference program session to learn about professional development, followed by professional journals and discussion with colleagues. None of the SSAOs took a sabbatical or academic course outside of preparation program. Several people wrote in other responses including professional association involvement or leadership, personal motivation, and other professional development programs.

**Table 18**

**Frequency Percentages of Methods for Developing Research, Evaluation, and Assessment Skills**

| Research, Evaluation, and Assessment | New Professional | Mid-manager | Senior Student Affairs Officer |
|---|---|---|---|
| Association sponsored institute | 2.33 | 13.86 | 12.07 |
| On campus workshop | 12.79 | 16.87 | 24.14 |
| On-line course | 3.49 | 1.20 | 0.00 |
| Discussion with colleagues | 36.05 | 33.13 | 43.10 |
| Mentor | 20.93 | 19.58 | 12.07 |
| Professional journals | 40.70 | 42.77 | 55.17 |
| Books | 20.93 | 25.60 | 36.21 |
| *The Chronicle of Higher Education* | 18.60 | 9.04 | 5.17 |
| Professional conference program session | 25.58 | 38.25 | 46.55 |
| Professional conference pre-conference workshop | 1.16 | 10.84 | 12.07 |
| Professional conference major speaker | 0.00 | 1.20 | 0.00 |
| Academic course in preparation program | 43.02 | 43.07 | 25.86 |
| Academic course outside of preparation program | 6.98 | 8.13 | 5.17 |
| Sabbatical | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Other | 3.49 | 4.52 | 3.45 |

Table 18 shows the responses for the research, evaluation, and assessment learning methods. The most common methods that new professionals used were an academic course in preparation program and professional journals, followed by discussion with colleagues. No new professional used sabbatical or conference major speaker, and only one person mentioned a pre-conference workshop. Only a few new

professionals wrote in other responses that involved actually doing research or assessment.

The most popular methods for mid-managers to learn about research, evaluation, and assessment included academic course in preparation program, professional journals, and conference program session. No mid-managers have taken a sabbatical, while only a few have learned from a conference major speaker or taken an on-line course. Of the other responses, mid-managers listed experience, participation in accreditation, and the Association for Assessment in Higher Education.

Over half of the SSAOs preferred professional journals to learn about research, evaluation, and assessment. Just under half preferred conference program session and discussion with colleagues. None of the senior student affairs officers used sabbatical, conference major speaker, and on-line course. Only two senior student affairs officers listed other methods, which related to experience.

**Table 19**

**Frequency Percentages of Methods for Developing Legal Issues Skills**

| Legal Issues | New Professional | Mid-manager | Senior Student Affairs Officer |
|---|---|---|---|
| Association sponsored institute | 3.49 | 15.96 | 18.97 |
| On campus workshop | 9.30 | 11.14 | 12.07 |
| On-line course | 1.16 | 1.20 | 0.00 |
| Discussion with colleagues | 50.00 | 39.16 | 46.55 |
| Mentor | 20.93 | 20.18 | 10.34 |
| Professional journals | 41.86 | 50.60 | 55.17 |
| Books | 11.63 | 12.05 | 18.97 |
| *The Chronicle of Higher Education* | 36.05 | 31.63 | 22.41 |
| Professional conference program session | 33.72 | 45.18 | 56.90 |
| Professional conference pre-conference workshop | 0.00 | 7.83 | 13.79 |
| Professional conference major speaker | 10.47 | 4.52 | 6.90 |
| Academic course in preparation program | 32.56 | 31.33 | 15.52 |
| Academic course outside of preparation program | 1.16 | 3.31 | 3.45 |
| Sabbatical | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Other | 9.30 | 6.63 | 3.45 |

Table 19 indicates that half of the new professionals learned about legal issues through discussions with colleagues, followed by professional journals and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. None of the new professionals selected sabbatical or pre-conference workshop as a method to learn about legal issues, and only one person selected an academic course outside of a preparation program and an on-line course. Two people listed listservs, two listed offices on campus, and one listed newsletters.

Half of the mid-managers selected professional journals as their preferred method for learning about legal issues. The next most popular methods included conference program session and discussion with colleagues. No mid-manager has taken

a sabbatical, and a few have taken an on-line course or an academic course outside of a preparation program. The other mid-manager responses included listservs or web sites, associations, and experience.

Over half of the senior student affairs officers used conference program sessions and professional journals to learn about legal issues, followed by discussion with colleagues. None of the SSAOs used sabbaticals or on-line courses, and only two people took a course outside of their preparation program. The three senior student affairs officers who wrote in other responses included experience in judicial affairs, newsletters, and periodicals.

**Table 20**

**Frequency of Methods for Developing Technology Skills**

| Technology | New Professional | Mid-manager | Senior Student Affairs Officer |
|---|---|---|---|
| Association sponsored institute | 4.65 | 5.72 | 5.17 |
| On campus workshop | 40.70 | 59.94 | 58.62 |
| On-line course | 11.63 | 6.33 | 10.34 |
| Discussion with colleagues | 47.67 | 48.64 | 46.55 |
| Mentor | 17.44 | 12.65 | 6.90 |
| Professional journals | 10.47 | 10.24 | 31.03 |
| Books | 9.30 | 9.94 | 10.34 |
| *The Chronicle of Higher Education* | 8.14 | 10.24 | 8.62 |
| Professional conference program session | 24.42 | 28.92 | 41.38 |
| Professional conference pre-conference workshop | 0.00 | 3.61 | 3.45 |
| Professional conference major speaker | 0.00 | 0.60 | 0.00 |
| Academic course in preparation program | 20.93 | 9.64 | 10.34 |
| Academic course outside of preparation program | 12.79 | 5.42 | 3.45 |
| Sabbatical | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Other | 23.26 | 20.78 | 12.07 |

Table 20 indicates the response percentages for technology learning methods. While the most new professionals selected discussion with colleagues, on campus workshop, and professional conference program session, none chose sabbatical, professional conference major speaker or pre-conference workshop. Over 23% selected other, which included self-teaching/practice, learning from students, campus technology staff, and web sites.

Mid-managers responded like new professionals. They preferred on campus workshops, discussions with colleagues, and program session. On the other hand, none chose sabbatical, and only several chose conference major speaker and pre-conference workshop. Somewhat similar to new professionals, the write in responses for mid-managers included hands on experience and campus technology staff.

Similar to new professionals and mid-managers, SSAOs chose on campus workshop, discussion with colleagues, and conference program session as their preferred learning methods, while none chose sabbatical or conference major speaker. For those senior student affairs officers that wrote in responses, the comments related to personal experience. One person did mention the internet.

**Table 21**

**Frequency of Methods for Developing Diversity Skills**

| Diversity | New Professional | Mid-manager | Senior Student Affairs Officer |
|---|---|---|---|
| Association sponsored institute | 8.14 | 8.13 | 10.34 |
| On campus workshop | 18.60 | 35.54 | 32.76 |
| On-line course | 1.16 | 1.20 | 0.00 |
| Discussion with colleagues | 54.65 | 53.92 | 51.72 |
| Mentor | 36.05 | 27.11 | 20.69 |
| Professional journals | 23.26 | 27.41 | 50.00 |
| Books | 26.74 | 19.88 | 15.52 |
| *The Chronicle of Higher Education* | 6.98 | 8.13 | 10.34 |
| Professional conference program session | 44.19 | 49.40 | 50.00 |
| Professional conference pre-conference workshop | 0.00 | 6.33 | 8.62 |
| Professional conference major speaker | 5.81 | 8.73 | 12.07 |
| Academic course in preparation program | 38.37 | 17.47 | 5.17 |
| Academic course outside of preparation program | 3.49 | 4.52 | 1.72 |
| Sabbatical | 0.00 | 0.30 | 0.00 |
| Other | 12.79 | 9.34 | 10.34 |

In Table 21, the frequency percentages for the diversity learning methods are shown. The top three choices selected by new professionals include discussion with colleagues, professional conference program session, and academic course in preparation program. None of the new professionals selected sabbatical or pre-conference session, and only one new professional chose on-line course. The other responses included discussion with students or attending programs.

Over half of the mid-managers selected discussion with colleagues to learn about diversity. The next most popular methods included conference program session and on campus workshop. Only one mid-manager took a sabbatical, four took an on-line course,

and fifteen took an academic course outside of preparation program. The other mid-manager responses included discussions with students, personal and work experience, association involvement, and program attendance.

Discussion with colleagues, conference program session, and professional journals were chosen by at least half of the of the senior student affairs officers. None of the SSAOs used sabbatical or on-line course and only one person selected academic course outside of preparation program to learn about diversity.

Student affairs professionals, in general, use a variety of methods to gain and maintain competence in these areas. Staff members used interactive methods and learn from each other's experiences and knowledge, which supports adult learning theory. They also seemed to take advantage of opportunities commonly available to them (conferences, workshops, and interactions with other people) rather than specialized events such as sabbatical, on-line course, or academic course outside of preparation program.

## Research Question Three

Are there differences between new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in their skill attainment perceptions?

Table 22 indicates the means and standard deviations of the skill categories by administrative level—new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was computed to compare the means of the administrative levels for each of the skill categories.

As would be expected, the new professionals rated lower than mid-managers and senior student affairs officers, except for the technology category. For that category, new professionals and mid-managers appear to be very similar in their perception of mastery, with the SSAOs just slightly above that. Technology is also the lowest rated category for SSAOs. Several student affairs preparation programs explicitly teach technology skills, which may account for the outcome. To progress to the mid-manager level, new professionals need the most skill attainment in personnel management; fiscal management; research, evaluation, and assessment; and legal issues.

For all categories except technology, the mid-managers were closer in their scores to senior student affairs officers than they were to new professionals. For all categories except diversity, the mid-managers had a greater standard deviation than the new professionals or senior student affairs officers. The largest difference between new professionals and mid-managers was in the personnel management category. To progress in student affairs, practitioners need to master areas such as personnel management, fiscal management, legal issues, and research, evaluation, and assessment.

**Table 22**

**Differences Between Administrative Level and Skill Attainment Perceptions**

| Skill Category | New Professional (n=86) M (SD) | Mid-manager (n=332) M (SD) | Senior Student Affairs Officer (n=58) M (SD) | F | Eta$^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Leadership (n=475, df=2,472) | 3.10 (.61)[a] | 3.78 (.62)[b] | 3.93 (.54)[b] | 48.16* | 0.17 |
| Student Contact (n=476, df=2,473) | 3.13 (.68)[a] | 3.93 (.70)[b] | 3.96 (.67)[b] | 47.34* | 0.17 |
| Communication (n=476, df=2,473) | 3.36 (.68)[a] | 4.03 (.68)[b] | 4.23 (.67)[b] | 39.43* | 0.14 |
| Personnel Management (n=475, df=2,472) | 2.22 (.83)[a] | 3.66 (.84)[b] | 4.04 (.72)[c] | 120.85* | 0.34 |
| Fiscal Management (n=474, df=2,471) | 2.14 (.83)[a] | 3.32 (.92)[b] | 4.01 (.73)[c] | 89.05* | 0.27 |
| Professional Development (n=474, df=2,471) | 2.74 (.73)[a] | 3.50 (.93)[b] | 3.70 (.76)[b] | 29.37* | 0.11 |
| Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (n=473, df=2,470) | 2.18 (.88)[a] | 3.23 (.95)[b] | 3.86 (.72)[c] | 65.36* | 0.22 |
| Legal Issues (n=475, df=2, 472) | 2.32 (.84)[a] | 3.43 (1.01)[b] | 3.81 (.79)[c] | 55.87* | 0.19 |
| Technology (n=475, df=2,472) | 3.50 (.82)[a] | 3.46 (.82)[a] | 3.57 (.78)[a] | 0.51 | 0.00 |
| Diversity (n=475, df=2, 472) | 3.20 (.95)[a] | 3.65 (.85)[b] | 3.83 (.83)[b] | 11.58* | 0.05 |

*p<.001
M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation
Note: Across each row, different superscripts indicate statistically significant differences in the means between administrative level by skill category.

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was computed to compare the means of the administrative levels for each skill category. The *F* statistic indicated that the means are far apart relative to the variation within each group for all of the categories except for

technology. The Eta-squared statistic is the percentage of variance explained by group membership (administrative level). The Tukey HSD (Honestly Significant Difference) (alpha=.05) was used for post hoc analysis to determine significant differences between each administrative level in the ten skill categories, noted by the superscript after the standard deviations. The Scheffe and Bonferroni, post hoc tests also used for multiple comparisons, yielded the same results.

The Welch statistic and the Brown Forsythe statistic were calculated as robust tests of equality of means because of the very different response numbers in the three administrative levels and the unknown population variances. These statistics are valuable rather than the *F* statistic when the assumption of equal variances does not hold. The conclusion was the same as the previous tests—the technology category appeared to have similar results across administrative level, while the other categories exhibited differences by administrative level. The Kruskal-Wallis test, the non-parametric equivalent to the ANOVA, was used to compare administrative levels to determine if differences can be explained by sampling error. This statistic tests whether independent samples are from the same population and assumes a continuous distribution and ordinal measurement. The conclusions were the same as the original ANOVA.

There appears to be a difference in skill category mastery perception between the administrative levels. The mid-managers seemed to have the greatest range of perceptions of mastery, perhaps due to large number of people who described themselves as mid-managers.

## Research Question Four

Are there differences in methods used by new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers to gain competence?

To narrow the scope of the investigation, the learning methods in each skill category that received an average of 20% of the total responses were included in the analysis. Since each respondent could choose up to three learning methods out of the 15 offered in each of the ten categories, the 20% represented the most important methods. That allowed elimination of learning methods that were not chosen by any or many of the respondents. See Tables 12 through 21, in Research Question 2, for the frequency percentages of learning method in each skill category by administrative level.

The Kruskal-Wallis test, the non-parametric equivalent to the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), was used to determine differences in administrative levels for each category's learning methods. The non-parametric statistic was used because it makes no assumptions about parameters, such as the mean, variance, or distribution and is used for data that is not interval. Kruskal-Wallis determines whether independent samples are from the same population without assuming normality, and it yields a chi-square ($X^2$) statistic. Because the chi-square ($X^2$) did not indicate in what ways the three groups differed, the Mann-Whitney U test was run for each administrative level pair (new professional/mid-manager, mid-manager/senior student affairs officer, and new professional/senior student affairs officer). The Mann-Whitney U is the non-parametric equivalent to the t-test and determines whether two independent samples came from the same population without assuming normality. So, for each learning method that

received, on average, 20% of the responses the Kruskal-Wallis test was run. For those areas that yielded a significant chi-square ($X^2$) ($p<.05$), the Mann-Whitney U test was run for each administrative level pair to determine whether the groups differed from one another, also at a $p<.05$ level.

Within the leadership category, association sponsored institute, discussion with colleagues, mentor, professional journals, books, professional conference program session, and academic course in preparation program received 20% or more of the responses. Of those, only the mentor learning method showed a significant difference ($X^2=7.74$, $p=.021$). The Mann-Whitney U revealed a significant difference between new professionals and senior student affairs officers ($p=.006$) and mid-managers and senior student affairs officers ($p=.044$). New professionals and mid-managers were more likely to select mentor than were senior student affairs officers.

Looking at the student contact category, discussion with colleagues, mentor, professional journals, books, professional conference program session, academic course in preparation program, and other were the most important methods. None of the categories, though, revealed statistically significant differences between administrative levels at the $p<.05$ level based on the Kruskal-Wallis test.

In terms of communication, discussion with colleagues, mentor, professional journals, books, professional conference program session, and academic course in preparation received the most responses, and the methods of mentor ($X^2=6.92$, $p=.032$) and books ($X^2=6.68$, $p=.035$) showed statistically significant differences. In the mentor category, senior student affairs officers differed from new professionals ($p=.014$) and

mid-managers (p=.014) based on the Mann-Whitney U test. Senior student affairs officers were least likely to choose mentor. In terms of reading books, new professionals differed from both mid-managers (p=.028) and senior student affairs officers (p=.013).

Six methods in the personnel management category receive more than 20% of the responses: on campus workshop, discussion with colleagues, mentor, professional journals, books, and professional conference program session. Of those, on campus workshop ($X^2$=12.24, p=.002) and professional conference program session ($X^2$=13.9, p=.001) indicated statistically significant differences between administrative levels when the Kruskal-Wallis test was run. New professionals chose on campus workshop more than mid-managers (p=.001) according to the Mann-Whitney U test. For professional conference program session, senior student affairs officers were the most likely to choose that learning method while new professionals were least likely to choose it. Each pairwise comparison revealed statistically significant differences: new professionals and mid-managers differed at a significance level of p=.007, new professionals and senior student affairs officers differed at a significance level of p=.000, and mid-managers differed at a significance level of p=.040.

Within the fiscal management area, on campus workshop, discussion with colleagues, mentor, and academic course in preparation program were the highest rated learning method. Of those, only on campus workshop differed between administrative level ($X^2$=9.94, p=.007). New professionals were less likely to select on campus workshop than mid-managers (p=.005) and senior student affairs officers (p=.003), but mid-managers did not differ from senior student affairs officers.

Within the professional development category, only mentor showed statistical difference between administrative levels ($X^2$=10.49, p=.005) in the Kruskal-Wallis test, although discussion with colleagues, professional journals, and professional conference program session also received more than 20% of the overall responses. Within the mentor category, senior student affairs officers differed from new professionals (p=.001) and mid-managers (p=019) according to the Mann-Whitney U test. New professionals were the most likely group to choose a mentor as a means to develop skill in the professional development area.

The five most frequently selected methods in the research, evaluation, and assessment category are discussion with colleagues, professional journals, books, professional conference program session, and academic course in preparation program. Of those methods, professional conference program session ($X^2$=7.29, p=.026) and academic course in preparation program ($X^2$=6.22, p=.045) showed statistical significance differences in the Kruskal-Wallis test. Within professional conference program session, new professionals differed from mid-managers (p=.029) and senior student affairs officers (p=.009) according to the Mann-Whitney U test. New professionals were the least likely group to select that option as a learning method. For academic course in preparation program, senior student affairs officers differed from both new professionals (p=.036) and mid-managers (p=.014). Senior student affairs officers were least likely to choose an academic course as a learning method.

Within the legal issues category, discussion with colleagues, professional journals, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, professional conference program session,

and academic course in preparation were the most preferred methods. The Kruskal-Wallis test revealed statistically significant differences in professional conference program session ($X^2$=7.70, p=.021) and academic course in preparation program ($X^2$=6.34, p=.042).Within the professional conference program session, new professionals differed from senior student affairs officers (p=.006) in that senior student affairs officers were more likely to attend a conference program session. In addition, within academic course in preparation program, senior student affairs officers differed from new professionals (p=.022) and mid-managers (p=014). Senior student affairs officers were least likely to prefer that method.

In the technology category, on campus workshop, discussion with colleagues, and professional conference program session received more than 20% of the total responses. Of those, the on campus workshop was the only learning that produced significantly significant results ($X^2$=10.40, p=.006) from the Kruskal-Wallis test. New professionals differed from both mid-managers (p=.001) and senior student affairs officers (p=.035) according to the Mann-Whitney U test. New professionals were least likely to choose on campus workshop as a learning method.

Within the diversity category, six learning methods received more than 20% of the responses. They were discussion with colleagues, mentor, professional journals, books, professional conference program session, and academic course in preparation program. Of those areas, on campus workshops ($X^2$=8.98, p=.011), professional journals ($X^2$=14.02, p=.001) and academic course in preparation program ($X^2$=27.63, p=.000) provided statistically significant differences in the Kruskal-Wallis test. Within the on

campus workshop area, new professionals differed from mid-managers (p=.003) in that new professionals did not choose that option to the same extent. For the professional journal category, senior student affairs officers were more likely to choose that method than new professionals (p=.001) and mid-managers (p=.001), although new professionals and mid-managers did not statistically differ. Within the academic course in preparation program learning method, all administrative levels differed from each other. Each pairwise comparison revealed statistically significant differences: new professionals and mid-managers differed at a significance level of p=.000, new professionals and senior student affairs officers differed at a significance level of p=.000, and mid-managers differed at a significance level of p=.018.

The most important methods overall appeared to be discussions with colleagues, mentors, and professional conference programs. New professionals were more likely to mention academic course in their preparation course and mentors, while mid-managers and senior student affairs officers were more likely to get involved in professional associations. On the other hand, senior student affairs officers are now in the mentor role themselves, and they are not likely to enroll in any more academic courses, so those methods are less popular than others. They also seem to be the group that takes advantage of professional journals. Mid-managers still find value in mentors and academic courses in preparation programs, but they also take advantage of professional conference program sessions and discussions with colleagues.

Overall, very few student affairs professionals have taken a sabbatical or on-line course for development. In addition, not very many have used professional conference

major speakers to gain competence in the skill categories. Of all administrative levels, senior student affairs officers may have the most opportunity to take a sabbatical but do not see that as a common option.

It appears that professionals prefer to use interactive methods to learn skills and a variety of methods depending on the skill, which supports adult learning theory. Professionals find professional and peer consultation important, and they also participate in formal and organized events such as conference programs, on campus workshops, and academic courses. The development of skills in this survey supports Carpenter's (in press) stage theory of professional development: as professionals move up administrative levels, they have a greater level of mastery of identified skills.

## Summary of the Findings

1. What are the perceptions of new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in NASPA Region III regarding their attainment of various skills?

New professionals had a wide range of perceptions regarding their attainment of various skills, although all categories rated above "I have begun working on this" and below "I am still working on this, but I am less concerned with it than I once was". The lowest rated individual skill, "terminating professional staff after following due process", had a mean of 1.25. That makes sense considering that many of them do not supervise any staff. On the other hand, "maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality" had a mean of 4.11. By skill category, new professionals felt the least amount of mastery in the fiscal management area and the most level of mastery in the

technology area. New professionals may not have much control over or experience with fiscal affairs. Alternatively, many new professionals have been able to develop their computer skills in their preparation programs or even prior.

On the other hand, mid-managers rated "developing services for distant learners" as their lowest skill (mean of 1.89). Similar to new professionals, mid-mangers were fairly confident in "maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality" (mean of 4.55). By skill category, mid-managers felt that they were most proficient in communication, but still needed to develop in research, assessment, and evaluation. Overall, all categories rated above "I am actively working on and concerned with this", with communication rating over "I am still working on this, but I am less concerned with it than I once was".

Senior student affairs officers (SSAOs) felt a fairly high level of mastery for most skills. Similar to mid-managers, SSAOs felt the least amount of mastery in "developing services for distant learners" (mean of 2.24). In addition, SSAOs rated "maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality" highest (mean of 4.57), just as new professionals and mid-managers did. Senior student affairs officers seemed to feel most confident in communication, personnel management, and fiscal management (which all rated above "I am still working on this, but I am less concerned with it than I once was"), although all of the other categories rated above "I am actively working on and concerned with this". Technology rated the lowest as a category.

2. What methods do new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in NASPA Region III prefer to gain competence in ten skill categories?

New professionals appeared to be getting their development predominantly from mentors, discussions with colleagues, and conference programs. As would be expected, new professionals reflect that their academic courses in the preparation programs have positively impacted their skill level. No new professionals listed sabbatical as an important developmental tool, and very few have used on-line courses, conference major speakers, or pre-conference sessions to hone their skills. For most skill categories, new professionals rely on informal methods of education. For more specialized skills, they rely on more formal methods such as academic class or campus workshop.

While mid-managers also use discussions with colleagues and mentors to develop their skills, they also mentioned professional conference program session fairly frequently. As with new professionals, mid-managers seemed to prefer interactive learning methods. Only two mid-managers have taken a sabbatical to develop knowledge in particular areas. As mid-managers obtain new and expanded responsibilities, they seek methods that help them gain competence.

Senior student affairs officers use discussions with colleagues for their development and read books and journals to stay current in their development. They also have the opportunity to attend conferences. At this level, it would seem that they have the most flexibility and resources in choosing their learning method. Only four senior administrators have taken a sabbatical and only a few have taken an on-line course. They may be more likely to be mentoring others at this point in their career, rather than learning from their mentors, and they are least likely to be learning in a formal classroom setting.

For respondents who wrote in responses, it seems that they learned skills through on the job training or trial and error. They may not actively participate in formal learning, but they rely on personal experiences to inform future decisions. What the data do not indicate is whether they value or have the opportunity for structured learning or continued professional education.

Overall, practitioners do not frequently use pre-conference sessions, conference major speakers, association sponsored institutes, academic course outside of a preparation program, or *The Chronicle of Higher Education* to further their knowledge and ability, although some staff do use those methods. The methods are just not the primary methods identified by professionals.

3. Are there differences between new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in their skill attainment perceptions?

To determine the differences, the author examined the means and standard deviations of the ten skill categories. Because the entire population was sampled, descriptive statistics were used. Any differences are real, rather than dependent on inferential statistics. Nevertheless, the analysis of variance and post hoc tests indicated that personnel management; fiscal management; research, evaluation, and assessment; and legal issues scored statistically differently by each administrative level. Mid-managers and senior student affairs officers statistically differed from new professionals in leadership, student contact, communication, professional development, and diversity. There was no statistical difference for each administrative level for the technology category.

Senior student affairs officers rated their mastery of all skill categories higher than new professionals and mid-managers. Mid-managers rated all skill categories, except for technology, higher than new professionals. For almost all categories, mid-managers were closer to senior student affairs officers than new professionals were to mid-managers. The one exception was the technology category, which new professionals rated slightly higher than mid-managers.

The skill categories were also examined in terms of ranking, based on the category means. Communication appeared to be similar across administrative level; new professionals rated it second, while mid-managers and senior student affairs officers rated it highest. Similarly, the legal issues category was also fairly consistent across administrative level; new professionals rated it seventh, while mid-managers and SSAOs rated it eighth. Technology was the highest rated category for new professionals, but the lowest rated skill category for senior student affairs officers. On the other hand, fiscal management rated tenth for new professionals, ninth for mid-managers, but third for senior student affairs officers. In addition, personnel management was eighth for new professionals, fourth for mid-managers, and second for senior student affairs officers. New professionals and mid-managers ranked professional development sixth, but it fell to ninth for senior student affairs officers.

In summary, there does seem to be some difference in the perception of mastery for ten skill categories. As expected, senior student affairs officers rated their mastery higher than mid-managers, and mid-managers rated their mastery higher than new professionals, except for technology. This finding supports the stage theory of

professional development—as student affairs practitioners progress along a career path they develop and hone particular skills that prepare them for the next administrative level.

4. Are there differences in methods used by new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers to gain competence?

To determine differences in administrative levels regarding the methods of professional development, each skill category was examined for the highest and lowest means and ranked. Overall, there were some similarities among administrative levels in each area. Student affairs professionals seem to gain knowledge from other people, such as having discussions with colleagues and mentors. They also attend professional conference program sessions. Younger professionals may rely on recent academic courses more so than other professionals. Senior student affairs officers are less likely to consult a mentor, perhaps because they are in the mentor position themselves.

As far as the least preferred methods, very few student affairs administrators use sabbaticals and on-line courses. Professional conference major speakers, pre-conference workshops, and academic course outside of preparation program were also not that popular.

# CHAPTER V

# SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The previous chapters included the introductory statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the literature review, the methodology and procedures used in the study as well as the presentation of the data in reference to the answer to each research question. This chapter is a summary of the results, conclusions drawn from the results, and a discussion of the implications of the results and conclusions. Recommendations for further research are also included in this chapter.

## Summary

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the self-perceived level of skill development of student affairs practitioners in Region III of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). The secondary purpose was to determine the avenues used to develop needed skills.

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in NASPA Region III regarding their attainment of various skills?

2. What methods do new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in NASPA Region III prefer to gain competence in ten skill categories?
3. Are there differences between new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in their skill attainment?
4. Are there differences in methods used by new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers to gain competence?

Review of the Procedures

Survey research procedures were used to gather and report data addressing the research questions. The researcher used mailing labels provided by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators. After removing faculty and those not student affairs practitioners, the original population consisted of 803 professional affiliate members in Region III. The population was chosen because of the unknown sub-population size of the new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs professionals.

The final instrument consisted of 72 skill questions in ten categories: leadership; student contact; communication; personnel management; fiscal management; professional development; research, evaluation, and assessment; legal issues; technology; and diversity. To determine the most important methods that professionals use to develop those categories, respondents were asked to choose up to three sources for each category from the following list: association sponsored institute, on campus workshop, on-line course, discussion with colleagues, mentor, professional journals,

books, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, professional conference program session, professional conference pre-conference workshop, professional conference major speaker, academic course in preparation program, academic course outside of preparation program, sabbatical, and other (which provided a space for respondents to describe). Eight demographic questions included administrative level, age, gender, ethnicity, institutional enrollment, years of full-time experience, number of professional staff supervised, and functional area.

A 61.6% response rate was obtained. Because the respondents' demographics mirrored the NASPA membership and the earlier responders answered the same as the late responders, the case was made that there was no non-response bias. The results of this study were reported using tables and descriptive narration.

## Conclusions

From this study, several conclusions can be drawn:

1. All professionals perceive themselves to have strong communication skills. The highest rated individual skill for all groups was "maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality" in the communications category, with means ranging from 4.08 to 4.62 on a 5-point scale.

2. The three administrative levels of student affairs professionals did not differ in their skill perception regarding technology based on their means, which ranged between "I am actively working on an concerned with this" and "I am still working on this, but I

am less concerned with it than I once was." All of the other categories exhibited differences between administrative levels.

3. When looking at the skill category rankings, technology was rated the highest among new professionals and lowest among senior student affairs officers. New professionals may have more confidence in their ability and more experience in using technology.

4. Professionals use a variety of methods to gain competence in the skill categories, some of which depends on the skill and the availability of the method. They also seem committed to their own professional development by participating in these learning methods. Some of the preferred methods, such as discussion with colleagues and mentors, involved interaction with others and little or no cost. Attending conference programs provides learning about specific topics while interacting with other professionals.

5. Some learning methods are not frequently used by professionals. They include taking sabbaticals, attending classes outside of preparation program, attending a pre-conference program, and taking an on-line course. These methods may be inconvenient, expensive, or not supported by the institution. Others may not have the opportunity or knowledge about the opportunities.

6. The results of this survey support the professional development stage theory in that staff should achieve a mastery level to successfully progress to the next level. Other than for the technology area, the administrative levels proceeded in a stair-step fashion. As professionals progress through their careers, they have more opportunities to apply

theory and knowledge, continue learning skills, and take responsibility for educating and developing others.

7. The level of skill achievement in this research does differ slightly from earlier research regarding the importance and perceived performance of these skills as indicated by Windle (1998) and Fey (1991) who surveyed mid-managers. When looking at the original seven categories, this research matched Windle's (1998) results in the Communication (rated highest) and Personnel Management (rated fourth) areas. But, the Fey (1991) study found that mid-managers rated Personnel Management as the most essential area, and Communication as the third most essential. This study differed from Windle's (1998) research in that his study found that Professional Development rated higher than Fiscal Management and Research, Assessment, and Evaluation. In Windle's (1998) study, the Research and Evaluation category rated lowest. Their research, though, did not include the areas of technology, diversity, and legal issues that may have some impact on the overall outcome.

8. Mid-managers were more similar to senior student affairs officers than new professionals in their perception of skill attainment. This may be a function of an inadequate definition of mid-manager within the student affairs field.

9. Based on their low means, new professionals need the most improvement in fiscal management; research, evaluation, and assessment; and personnel management. Their responses indicate that they have begun working on these areas, they probably have not had the opportunity to gain competence in these areas early on in their careers.

10. The greatest differences between new professionals and mid-managers are in the personnel management, fiscal management, and legal issues categories. That makes instinctive sense since new professionals may not have the opportunity to develop these skills until they obtain positions with greater responsibility. New professionals and mid-managers did differ statistically in all of the categories except technology.

11. Mid-managers and senior student affairs officers differed statistically in only four categories: personnel management, fiscal management, legal issues, and research, evaluation, and assessment. As a practitioner reaches the senior student affairs officer level, they face the complex issues in student affairs that require knowledge, expertise, and resources.

## Recommendations

This study was undertaken to define skills necessary for the student affairs profession and to determine methods of development. Assessing professional competencies and learning methods is important for the student affairs profession. The results of this study have led to several recommendations.

### Recommendations for Professional Preparation Programs

While professional preparation programs have focused on preparing students to be new professionals, there is a broader implication. Professional preparation programs can use this information to update curricula to better reflect the current skills practitioners expect for new professionals, as well as instruct on the skills needed to

progress in the profession. This survey can be a diagnostic instrument used throughout one's career to determine areas to improve.

In terms of continuing education, preparation programs can teach students how to be lifelong learners and expose them to the plethora of professional development opportunities, including mentors. Discussing the variety resources available and the importance of seeking mentors may help new professionals reduce the learning curve and increase the chance of success.

Recommendations for Professional Associations

Professional associations provide many opportunities for professional development regardless of administrative level. Because the terms new professional, mid-manager and senior student affairs officer are subjective, professional organizations may want to more clearly define the terms in order to develop programs to meet specific needs. Institutes, such as the New Professional's Institute or Mid-Manager's Institute, can use this information to achieve appropriate learning objectives and skill competence. Professional associations should provide tracks at conferences to meet the needs of each administrative level. For example, a new professional track could provide specific education in personnel management that focuses on training, supervision, and performance appraisal. The middle manager track could function on recruitment and selection, termination, and developing staff. The senior student affairs track could address legal issues in human resources, mentoring, and developing a comprehensive development program for a division. Functional associations must also develop specific

programs to assist staff in learning necessary skills to be competent in specialized student affairs areas. For example, housing associations could develop programs about building community, facility maintenance, programming for a diverse audience, and how living on campus affects student academic success.

In addition to administrative levels being difficult to absolutely define through length of service, practitioner preparedness also can depend on institution size, institution type, individual experience, academic background, individual and institutional financial resources, and continuing education programs. Professional associations could develop a regression model that would provide information about appropriate continuing education needs for administrative levels. The regression model could include independent variables such as age, years in the profession, number of professional presentations, highest degree earned, and number of people supervised to predict a dependent variable such as professional development. That may provide insight as to appropriate learning interventions for individuals throughout their careers.

Professional association benefits usually entail an annual conference, a journal, newsletters, and an opportunity for leadership experiences. According to this study, few attendees of professional conferences seem to benefit from the pre-conference programs or major speakers, although the conference sessions are important. Professional associations may want to determine the value of their events and determine if the current structure is the best to achieve the professional development goals. While the reality is that student affairs professionals must rely on the informal, inexpensive, and individual methods of development, those methods do not always ensure consistency of knowledge

and practice. In order to continually improve student affairs professionals, the professional associations should continue to provide continuing education in a structured format to meet the needs of the individual, the institution, and the profession.

The debate about a voluntary registry or certification program will continue. At the heart of the matter is what skills need to be imparted to professionals at different points in their careers, who should be responsible for that continuing education, and how practitioners should be held accountable for their own development. One of the benefits of student affairs is the diversity of functional areas and people who enter the profession, but that is also a challenge as associations try to meet the development needs of their members in a consistent, cost-effective manner. The complexity increases when considering variables such as preparation program, size and type of institution, years in the profession, functional area, administrative level, skill requirements, and current issues in student affairs. While this research just addressed two of these areas, there are many other lenses through which professional associations should look at the issue. The various professional associations should continue to discuss continuing professional education to resolve the issues identified, because they are in the best position to take the lead in large-scale changes in the profession.

Recommendations for Divisions of Student Affairs

Divisions of Student Affairs play an integral part in educating their staff members. Ideally, senior student affairs officers will express their philosophy, expectations, and values surrounding student affairs. In addition, Divisions should develop a planning committee that is empowered to develop programs, promote

education, and meet the overall needs of staff. Financial and human resources need to be provided to develop quality programs. Planning committees should also be familiar with adult learning concepts in order to meet the specific needs of their audience.

On a division or department level, particular skills should be identified by function and administrative level. Then, senior staff can make decisions about the structure and content of professional development opportunities. Staff development could take place by administrative level to meet individual and group needs.

In order to meet development needs on a tight budget, divisions should look for collaborative efforts as cost savings. Potentially, divisions could purchase books or journals that would be available to all staff. Setting up a mentoring program does not have to be an expensive undertaking, but practitioners appear to appreciate the interaction and learning opportunities. There are also campus opportunities for personal reflection or groups discussion about issues and events, talking with colleagues, and having staff members with expertise share with others. In addition, staff who attend conferences could share the knowledge gained when they return to campus.

Ideally, divisions should support staff who want to get involved in growth activities such as professional associations, doctoral programs, and other development opportunities. Unfortunately, there can be impediments such as time, money, lack of supervisor support, and lack of knowledge about opportunities. Staff are frequently expected to do more with less. The divisions are responsible for reducing those impediments and increasing the opportunities. Exemplary divisions will provide the time, space, and other resources so that staff can participate in continuing education

activities such as consultation and mentoring, in addition to more structured events such as workshops and conferences.

Overall, divisions need to value professional development for their employees in order to improve service to clients. Having high expectations of staff and accountability measures ensures that practitioners will continue to grow in their positions and prepare for their next career step. Professional development opportunities may decrease turnover and increase morale. Senior staff play a major impact in developing that learning culture in the organization.

Recommendations for Student Affairs Professionals

The results of this research add to Winston and Creamer's (1997) Integrated Model of Staff Practices that illustrates the relationship between recruitment and selection, orientation, supervision, staff development, and performance appraisal within the institutional culture and environment. It provides information about specific skills used at specific administrative levels, which affects supervision, staff development performance appraisal at the very least. Using the results of this survey or individual administration of the survey can assist staff in choosing the right position, institutions developing the desired skills, and determining areas of improvement

While professional preparation programs, professional associations, institutions, supervisors, and individuals are involved in the professional development process, individuals are primarily responsible for their own development. Individuals can use the instrument from this research as a self-assessment to develop a professional development plan that focuses on their own needs appropriate methods in which they can gain those

skills. Based on the responses about learning methods, professionals should find a mentor and seek opportunities to have intellectual discussions with colleagues to expedite their continuing education in student affairs.

In addition, supervisors can use this instrument as a developmental tool with employees. Winston and Creamer (1997) propose a synergistic supervision approach that accomplishes the institutional goals as well as the professional growth of employees. Together supervisors and employees can determine goals, expectations, and resources available to encourage the employee to be successful and plan for their future in student affairs. If supervisors do not take part in the professional development of their employees, both parties may be disappointed in the employee's performance. One way to look at the instrument in a slightly different way is having supervisors rate their expectation of mastery level of employees. Comparing expectations to actual performance could illuminate some issues of job success, retention, attrition, and development. Employees and supervisors could have a more realistic perception of expected mastery level, and it could initiate conversation about expectations, development, and priorities.

## Recommendations for Future Research

This study was undertaken to assess the perception of skill mastery and methods for development among National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) Region III. Further research is now needed to answer additional questions.

This survey should be used within different populations, such as other NASPA regions to see if it yields the same results to be more generalizable for the profession. In

addition, it could be used within one functional area or within one administrative level. Several of the similar previous studies focused on middle managers, but future research could focus on new professionals or senior student affairs officers. Because student affairs professionals practice all over the world, it may be interesting to survey people working outside of the United States or those people who were educated outside of the country.

The data collection took place during the summer months, which may have affected the response rate. Since many student affairs professional change jobs during the summer months, the addresses may have been outdated during the data collection period. More than likely, some of the surveys were not forwarded or the original institution did not contact the author. Surveying student affairs professionals during a different time of year may provide different responses.

With the advent of technology and the internet, implementing this survey completely on a website may yield a different response rate and reach a wider audience with little cost. Respondents may prefer that method, which tends to take less effort than a mailed paper survey. While the actual responses may not be different in content, the process could yield interesting results. In this study, few people responded to the survey after being mailed the second survey, perhaps because they could not click on a link in an e-mail message.

Some of the reliability and validity measures came from previous use of similar surveys. More applications of this survey will improve evidence of validity and reliability for the repeated questions and the new questions added to this one. In

addition, the skill-related questions could be factor analyzed to determine if those skills are in the correct categories and relevant to the student affairs practitioner. The three new categories added to this survey (legal issues, technology, and diversity) need additional research to determine if the skills described are comprehensive, meaningful, and appropriate.

It might be interesting to compare those with a student affairs preparation program degree and those without. Many of the skills so not seem unique to higher education or student affairs. This could give an indication of what, if any, additional training and continuing education that non-student affairs trained staff need to participate in to be on the same footing as those with a student affairs degree.

Student affairs mid-managers were the largest proportion of National Association of Student Personnel Administrators Region III answering this survey, which may be dependent on the definition used for this study. Defining mid-management is difficult. The definition of new professionals seems to be based on time in the profession, while senior student affairs officers are defined by the scope of their position. Further defining this group will help define their needs and what education is needed to meet those needs.

This study did not focus on comparing groups based on demographic categories. Future research could look at similarities and differences based on gender, ethnicity, functional area, age, or years of service in the profession to determine any patterns of skill attainment or preference for continuing education.

A qualitative methodology should be used to gain rich and deep information from professionals about what skills they see themselves needing to master, how they

prefer to learn, and what professional development means to them. This line of inquiry would provide more personal stories and inductive information to enhance the quantitative results. Looking at the topic from multiple perspectives could provide ideas about professional development plans, association activities, and institutional priorities.

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# APPENDIX A

## COVER LETTER AND SURVEY

**TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY**
Educational Administration and Human Resource Development

June 25, 2002

Dear NASPA colleague:

I need your help! I would like for you to participate in a doctoral research study to (a) assess the perception of mastery of various skills associated with student affairs professionals and (b) assess how these skills are learned in order to provide a context within which to establish professional development plans. The structure and content of the survey is based on instruments designed by Carpenter (1979), Kane (1982), Fey (1991), Tillotson (1995), and Windle (1998).

You have been identified as a professional affiliate in Region III of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), and *your* participation is vital to the success of this study.

Please complete the enclosed Student Affairs Skill Development Survey. It will take about 15-20 minutes of your time. Please return the completed instrument in the postage-paid return envelope by July 19, 2002.

The survey instrument is coded to facilitate follow-up efforts with non-respondents. Under no circumstances will information be reported on an individual basis. Your responses will be completely confidential and will further the knowledge of the student affairs profession. Returning the survey serves as your voluntary consent to participate.

The results of this study will be made available to NASPA. If you would like a personal summary of results, please check the box on the last page of the survey.

This research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board-Human Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, you can contact the Institutional Review Board through Dr. Michael W. Buckley, Director of Support Services, Office of the Vice President for Research at (979) 458-4067.

Please take a few minutes now to fill out and return the survey. I look forward to receiving your responses. Thanks!

Darby M. Roberts
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# *Student Affairs Skill Development Survey*

Thank you for participating in this survey about skill development in student affairs, which should take only 15-20 minutes of your time. Please return the survey in the enclosed envelope by July 19, 2002 to Darby Roberts, 1001 Water Locust Drive, Bryan TX 77803-5141.

Section I asks for demographic information.

Section II consists of statements outlining various skills in the following categories:

- Leadership
- Student Contact
- Communication
- Personnel Management
- Fiscal Management
- Professional Development
- Legal Issues
- Technology
- Diversity

Section III asks about the methods that student affairs professionals use to learn about the various skills.

***Please use a black or blue pen to fill in your responses.***
***For the comment sections, please print clearly in the box provided.***

***Section I--Demographics***

For the purpose of this study, administrative levels are defined as follows:

New professional--Person who has less than five years experience, is in the first full-time position, and does not supervise other professional staff.

Mid-manager--An individual who reports directly to a Senior Student Affairs Officer or who occupies a position which reports to the person who reports directly to a Senior Student Affairs Officer; and who is responsible for the direction, control, or supervision of one or more student affairs functions or one or more professional staff members.

Senior Student Affairs Officer--The lead position in student affairs in the college or university, usually reporting to the president or executive vice president. He/she supervises departmental directors or coordinators and has policy making authority. He/she often possesses a terminal degree in higher education, student personnel, or related field.

1. Based on the description above, which administrative level best describes your current position?
O New professional O Mid-manager O Senior Student Affairs Officer

2. Age: O 20-25 O 26-30 O 31-35 O 36-40 O 41-45 O 46-50 O 50+

3. Gender: O Male O Female

4. Ethnicity:
O African American O Asian American O Bi/multiracial
O Caucasian O Hispanic/Latino O Native American
O Other: _____

5. Institution enrollment:
O 1,500 or fewer O 1,501-5,000 O 5,001-10,000 O 10,001-20,000 O 20,001+

6. Number of years of full-time experience in student affairs: ☐

7. Number of full-time professional staff you supervise: ☐

8. Functional area in which you work (e.g., residence life, student activities, administration, etc.):

☐

***Section II--Skill Areas***

Please use the following scale to respond to the questions:

1. I have not begun working on this yet.
2. I have begun working on this.
3. I am actively working on and concerned with this.
4. I am still working on this, but I am less concerned with it than I once was.
5. I feel that I have essentially mastered or accomplished this.

| **Leadership** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Promoting the academic mission of the institution. | O | O | O | O | O |
| 2. Working in the institution's political environment. | O | O | O | O | O |
| 3. Developing the mission and vision of the department/division. | O | O | O | O | O |
| 4. Communicating the mission and vision of the department/division. | O | O | O | O | O |
| 5. Developing a strategic plan with realistic goals. | O | O | O | O | O |
| 6. Following the profession's ethical principles. | O | O | O | O | O |
| 7. Role modeling behavior to other professionals. | O | O | O | O | O |
| 8. Implementing appropriate decisions under uncertain conditions. | O | O | O | O | O |
| 9. Utilizing the expertise of others. | O | O | O | O | O |
| 10. Gaining commitment from top leadership. | O | O | O | O | O |
| 11. Utilizing effective techniques to motivate staff. | O | O | O | O | O |
| 12. Delegating when appropriate. | O | O | O | O | O |
| 13. Developing collaborative relationships with another division. | O | O | O | O | O |

Please use the following scale to respond to the questions:

1. I have not begun working on this yet.
2. I have begun working on this.
3. I am actively working on and concerned with this.
4. I am still working on this, but I am less concerned with it than I once was.
5. I feel that I have essentially mastered or accomplished this.

| **Student Contact** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Applying student development theories in decision making. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 2. Assessing student needs. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 3. Including students in policy-making decisions. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 4. Advising student groups. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 5. Providing assistance and services to students. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 6. Responding to student crises. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 7. Training students to perform paraprofessional duties. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| **Communication** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Writing effective correspondence and reports. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 2. Making oral presentations/public speaking. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 3. Accurately interpreting attitudes and needs of others. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 4. Effectively communicating with the media. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 5. Maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| **Human Resources Management** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Applying successful professional staff recruiting techniques. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 2. Using appropriate staff selection techniques. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 3. Training staff using appropriate instructional techniques. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 4. Developing staff through continuing education programs. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 5. Supervising professional staff. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 6. Evaluating professional staff. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 7. Terminating professional staff after following due process. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 8. Mediating conflict among staff. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 9. Recognizing accomplishments of others. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Please use the following scale to respond to the questions:

1. I have not begun working on this yet.
2. I have begun working on this.
3. I am actively working on and concerned with this.
4. I am still working on this, but I am less concerned with it than I once was.
5. I feel that I have essentially mastered or accomplished this.

| **Fiscal Management** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Analyzing financial reports. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 2. Utilizing available resources. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 3. Applying budget development techniques. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 4. Projecting future priorities and needs. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 5. Writing grants and contracts to garner additional resources. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 6. Understanding the financing of higher education. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 7. Responding to budget cuts. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| **Professional Development** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Assessing your own professional development needs. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 2. Maintaining a scholarly background in your discipline. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 3. Attending professional development activities. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 4. Keeping abreast of current issues in the profession. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 5. Writing an article for professional publication. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 6. Being involved in professional association leadership. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| **Research, Evaluation, and Assessment** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Interpret research as reported in professional literature. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 2. Initiating or developing surveys or studies. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 3. Interpreting/analyzing statistical methods and results. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 4. Utilizing results of studies. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 5. Evaluating programs for effectiveness. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 6. Describing students at the institution to external constituents. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 7. Performing self-studies for accreditation reviews. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 8. Developing a comprehensive assessment plan. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Please use the following scale to respond to the questions:

1. I have not begun working on this yet.
2. I have begun working on this.
3. I am actively working on and concerned with this.
4. I am still working on this, but I am less concerned with it than I once was.
5. I feel that I have essentially mastered or accomplished this.

| **Legal Issues** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Keeping abreast of current legislative issues. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 2. Keeping abreast of current court cases. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 3. Using proactive risk management techniques. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 4. Implementing due process concepts. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 5. Understanding personal and professional liability issues. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| **Technology** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Using technology to find information. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 2. Using technology to develop a professional presentation. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 3. Understanding the use of technology in the marketing and delivery of services. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 4. Using technology to communicate with staff. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 5. Utilizing computer software programs to perform job functions. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 6. Developing services for distant learners. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| **Diversity** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Providing services for underrepresented students. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 2. Understanding needs of underrepresented students. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 3. Applying minority development theories to understand underrepresented students. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 4. Considering needs of diverse students when making decisions. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 5. Participating in educational events to understand people different than you. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 6. Working effectively with someone with a different background than you. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

***Section III--Methods of Learning***

For the following skill categories, please indicate up to THREE most important methods you used to gain knowledge in that area.

**Leadership**

- ☐ Association sponsored institute
- ☐ On campus workshop
- ☐ On-line course
- ☐ Discussion with colleagues
- ☐ Mentor
- ☐ Professional journals
- ☐ Books
- ☐ *The Chronicle of Higher Education*
- ☐ Professional conference program session
- ☐ Professional conference pre-conference workshop
- ☐ Professional conference major speaker
- ☐ Academic course in preparation program
- ☐ Academic course outside of preparation program
- ☐ Sabbatical
- ☐ Other: ☐

**Student Contact**

- ☐ Association sponsored institute
- ☐ On campus workshop
- ☐ On-line course
- ☐ Discussion with colleagues
- ☐ Mentor
- ☐ Professional journals
- ☐ Books
- ☐ *The Chronicle of Higher Education*
- ☐ Professional conference program session
- ☐ Professional conference pre-conference workshop
- ☐ Professional conference major speaker
- ☐ Academic course in preparation program
- ☐ Academic course outside of preparation program
- ☐ Sabbatical
- ☐ Other: ☐

**Communication**

- ☐ Association sponsored institute
- ☐ On campus workshop
- ☐ On-line course
- ☐ Discussion with colleagues
- ☐ Mentor
- ☐ Professional journals
- ☐ Books
- ☐ *The Chronicle of Higher Education*
- ☐ Professional conference program session
- ☐ Professional conference pre-conference workshop
- ☐ Professional conference major speaker
- ☐ Academic course in preparation program
- ☐ Academic course outside of preparation program
- ☐ Sabbatical
- ☐ Other: ☐

**Human Resource Management**

- ☐ Association sponsored institute
- ☐ On campus workshop
- ☐ On-line course
- ☐ Discussion with colleagues
- ☐ Mentor
- ☐ Professional journals
- ☐ Books
- ☐ *The Chronicle of Higher Education*
- ☐ Professional conference program session
- ☐ Professional conference pre-conference workshop
- ☐ Professional conference major speaker
- ☐ Academic course in preparation program
- ☐ Academic course outside of preparation program
- ☐ Sabbatical
- ☐ Other: ☐

**Fiscal Management**

- ☐ Association sponsored institute
- ☐ On campus workshop
- ☐ On-line course
- ☐ Discussion with colleagues
- ☐ Mentor
- ☐ Professional journals
- ☐ Books
- ☐ *The Chronicle of Higher Education*
- ☐ Professional conference program session
- ☐ Professional conference pre-conference workshop
- ☐ Professional conference major speaker
- ☐ Academic course in preparation program
- ☐ Academic course outside of preparation program
- ☐ Sabbatical
- ☐ Other: [ ]

**Professional Development**

- ☐ Association sponsored institute
- ☐ On campus workshop
- ☐ On-line course
- ☐ Discussion with colleagues
- ☐ Mentor
- ☐ Professional journals
- ☐ Books
- ☐ *The Chronicle of Higher Education*
- ☐ Professional conference program session
- ☐ Professional conference pre-conference workshop
- ☐ Professional conference major speaker
- ☐ Academic course in preparation program
- ☐ Academic course outside of preparation program
- ☐ Sabbatical
- ☐ Other: [ ]

**Research, Evaluation, and Assessment**

- ☐ Association sponsored institute
- ☐ On campus workshop
- ☐ On-line course
- ☐ Discussion with colleagues
- ☐ Mentor
- ☐ Professional journals
- ☐ Books
- ☐ *The Chronicle of Higher Education*
- ☐ Professional conference program session
- ☐ Professional conference pre-conference workshop
- ☐ Professional conference major speaker
- ☐ Academic course in preparation program
- ☐ Academic course outside of preparation program
- ☐ Sabbatical
- ☐ Other: [ ]

**Legal Issues**

- ☐ Association sponsored institute
- ☐ On campus workshop
- ☐ On-line course
- ☐ Discussion with colleagues
- ☐ Mentor
- ☐ Professional journals
- ☐ Books
- ☐ *The Chronicle of Higher Education*
- ☐ Professional conference program session
- ☐ Professional conference pre-conference workshop
- ☐ Professional conference major speaker
- ☐ Academic course in preparation program
- ☐ Academic course outside of preparation program
- ☐ Sabbatical
- ☐ Other: [ ]

**Technology**

- ☐ Association sponsored institute
- ☐ On campus workshop
- ☐ On-line course
- ☐ Discussion with colleagues
- ☐ Mentor
- ☐ Professional journals
- ☐ Books
- ☐ *The Chronicle of Higher Education*
- ☐ Professional conference program session
- ☐ Professional conference pre-conference workshop
- ☐ Professional conference major speaker
- ☐ Academic course in preparation program
- ☐ Academic course outside of preparation program
- ☐ Sabbatical
- ☐ Other: _____

**Diversity**

- ☐ Association sponsored institute
- ☐ On campus workshop
- ☐ On-line course
- ☐ Discussion with colleagues
- ☐ Mentor
- ☐ Professional journals
- ☐ Books
- ☐ *The Chronicle of Higher Education*
- ☐ Professional conference program session
- ☐ Professional conference pre-conference workshop
- ☐ Professional conference major speaker
- ☐ Academic course in preparation program
- ☐ Academic course outside of preparation program
- ☐ Sabbatical
- ☐ Other: _____

☐ Check here if you would like a summary of the results of this study.

Thank you very much for participating in this survey. Please return this in the envelope provided by July 19, 2002 to Darby Roberts, 1001 Water Locust Drive, Bryan, TX 77803-5141.

## APPENDIX B

FOLLOW UP POSTCARD

July 12, 2002

Dear NASPA member:

On June 20, a survey assessing competency development among student affairs professionals was mailed to you as a member of NASPA Region III. If you have already returned the survey instrument, please accept sincere thanks for your cooperation and time.

If you have not yet returned the survey, I would greatly appreciate if you will take 15 minutes to complete the instrument and return it by July 31.

If by some chance that you have not received the survey, it has been misplaced, or you have questions, please call me at (979) 862-5624 or send an e-mail message to darby@tamu.edu, and I will immediately mail you another survey. Return your completed survey in the postage paid return envelope that was provided.

Remember to return the completed survey by July 31.

Darby M. Roberts
Doctoral Researcher

# APPENDIX C

FOLLOW UP LETTER

**TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY**
Educational Administration and Human Resource Development

August 14, 2002

Dear NASPA Colleague:

**I need your help!** On June 27, a survey assessing skill development among student affairs professionals was mailed to you. If you recently returned the survey instrument, please accept sincere thanks for your cooperation and time.

If you have not yet returned the survey, I would greatly appreciate if you will take 15 minutes to complete the instrument by **September 6.** *YOUR PARTICIPATION IS VITAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THIS STUDY and completion of my dissertation.* You have two convenient ways to participate:

You can return the paper survey in the postage paid envelope.

2. The survey has also been created on the internet. If you would like to take the survey on-line, please go to **http://STLS.tamu.edu/survey/15741/15741.asp**. If you choose that option, please include this number (_____) for the last question.

You have been assigned a code number so that I know you have returned the survey. Completing the survey will ensure that I will not contact you again. The code number will not be connected to your responses.

If you feel that you are not in a position to respond to this survey, please drop me a note at darby@tamu.edu, so that I know to take you out of the sample.

The summary of the results of this research will be made available to NASPA. I greatly appreciate and look forward to your participation in this very important study. Please call (979) 862-5624 or e-mail darby@tamu.edu if you have any questions. Remember to complete the survey by **September 6**. THANK YOU!

Sincerely,

Darby M. Roberts
Doctoral Researcher

xc: Stan Carpenter, Ph. D., Professor

511 Harrington Tower • College Station, Texas 77843-4226 • (979) 845-2716; FAX (979) 862-4347

# VITA

Darby Michelle Roberts
1001 Water Locust Drive
Bryan, TX 77803-5141

## EDUCATIONAL HISTORY

Texas A&M University, College Station, TX
Doctoral Study in Educational Administration, May, 2003

Texas A&M University, College Station, TX
M. S. in Human Resources Management, May, 1990

Texas A&M University, College Station, TX
B. B. A. in Business Analysis and Research, May, 1988

## EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

| | |
|---|---|
| 9/01-present | Assistant Director<br>Department of Student Life Studies<br>Texas A&M University<br>College Station, TX |
| 8/99-9/01 | Assessment Coordinator<br>Department of Student Life Studies<br>Texas A&M University<br>College Station, TX |
| 8/98-8/99 | Graduate Assistant<br>Department of Student Life Studies<br>Texas A&M University<br>College Station, TX |
| 7/94-7/98 | Area Coordinator<br>Department of Residence Life<br>Texas A&M University<br>College Station, TX |
| 7/90-6/94 | Hall Director<br>Department of Residence Halls<br>University of Tennessee, Knoxville<br>Knoxville, TN |