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Factors Contributing to the Attrition of New Student Affairs Professionals

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FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE ATTRITION OF NEW STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS

by

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DEDICATION

To my beautiful family, for amazing me each and every day with how wonderful you can be. While I am so proud to have finished this journey, I am even more honored to be your wife and mommy each and every day. Thank you so very much for the endless love and support each time I had to be away to "write my book." I was told before applying to a Ph.D. program that talking to your partner about the decision was incredibly important because that person takes on a whole new workload as well. That has been so true for us and I cannot thank you enough for all you have done.

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FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE ATTRITION OF NEW STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS

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Alumni who graduated within the previous five years from student affairs master's degree programs across the nation were surveyed to examine issues related to attrition. In total, 697 alumni responded, of which 588 (84.36%) were still in the field of student affairs and 109 (15.64%) had departed. Participants were surveyed regarding their levels of occupational commitment to student affairs and their satisfaction and burnout in their first postgraduate professional role in order to understand how these factors influenced their retention in the profession. These measures were assessed for all alumni as well as for both comparison groups and a logistic regression model was created to predict the odds of one staying or leaving student affairs within the first five years.

Overall, recent alumni reported being satisfied with their first postgraduate professional roles. However, a closer look at the data revealed varied levels of satisfaction regarding multifarious elements of their experiences as new professionals. As a group, respondents were most satisfied with the nature of their work, the benefits they received, and their coworkers; they were most dissatisfied with their pay and promotion opportunities in those roles.

When comparing those who had left the field and those retained, there were significant differences ($p<0.05$) on nearly every factor studied. Those who stayed in student affairs rated their satisfaction in their first postgraduate professional role higher than their counterparts on a

number of factors: their overall satisfaction, their supervision, the contingent rewards available in the role, the operating procedures in their workplace, their benefits, their promotion opportunities, their pay, their coworkers, the communication in the workplace, and the nature of the work. They also reported lower burnout levels as new professionals and higher occupational commitment to the field of student affairs.

Starting salary was the only factor studied that did not show a significant difference between those retained in and withdrawn from the field, even though the groups' satisfaction with their pay was found to be markedly different.

The best-fit logistic regression model using these factors to determine the odds of remaining in the field had a Nagelkerke R^2 value of 0.216. Significant predictors included overall satisfaction (a summation of a respondent's satisfaction with the nature of their work, their benefits, their coworkers, the supervision they received, the operating procedures in their workplace, the contingent rewards available in their role, the communication in their workplace, their pay, and their opportunity for promotion) as well as occupational commitment to student affairs. Further, communication satisfaction was significant in the model as its own factor in addition to its use in the overall satisfaction construct.

This research found lower attrition rates than had been reported in the past, though this could be at least partially attributed to the possibility of response bias. It additionally revealed new differences between those who were still in the field and those who have departed within their first five years. It also provided new insight into the most and least satisfying elements of entry level roles for new student affairs professionals.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

For nearly as long as student affairs has been a profession, the issue of attrition within the field has been worthy of attention. Researchers over the course of more than 30 years have estimated more than half of those entering student affairs profession depart from the field within their first five years (Burns, 1982; Lorden, 1998; Tull, 2006), and a recent study shows that of those who choose to leave the profession, more than 60% depart student affairs work before they have reached 10 years of service in the field (Marshall, Gardner, Hughes, & Lowery, 2016). As the student affairs field works to understand its problem with attrition of talented and educated staff, it is important to understand the factors that influence and may contribute to the issue.

Background

The field of student affairs was formally defined in a document published in 1937 by a sub-committee of the American Council on Education (ACE); and yet, less than 50 years after its inception in 1988, there was enough information and concern regarding the loss of student affairs practitioners from the field that Evans (1988) was able to publish a literature review on that topic. At that time, she found that the most cited reason for leaving the field was the lack of opportunity for advancement and noted several contributing factors, including few levels on the metaphorical ladder of a student affairs career and unclear routes to the rare senior positions. Evans further found that burnout and supervisors were additional sources of dissatisfaction for student affairs professionals in the field.

Ten years later, Lorden (1998) completed another literature review around attrition in the field and also included the factors that contributed to this loss of talent from student affairs. Similarly, limited opportunities for advancement and burnout were cited as reasons for leaving.

Lorden also discussed the factors of low salary for hard work and unmet expectations. She posited that the field would need to focus on increasing intrinsic rewards that originally drew people to the field when salary increases were not as feasible.

Today, attrition from the field continues to be a topic of interest in student affairs as professionals continue to exit the field (Marshall et al., 2016; Rosser & Javinar, 2003; Silver & Jakeman, 2014). It is imperative that those in the field commit to learning more about this ongoing problem.

Problem Statement

Years ago, Burns (1982) found that more than half of those who had completed their degree more than five years previously were no longer working in student affairs. Over 25 years later, Tull, Hirt, and Saunders (2008) noted that the estimates of those leaving the student affairs field within the first six years ranged from 20% to 40%, whereas recent research indicates that nearly 64% of those who had left the field had made the choice to leave within the first 10 years of their work (Marshall et al., 2016). Further, previous research has given insight as to why people are leaving. Morale and burnout, poor salary and other career alternatives, work-life balance, supervision issues, and limited advancement opportunities were themes reflected in those with intent to depart the field or those who had already done so (Marshall et al., 2016; Rosser & Javinar, 2003; Silver & Jakeman, 2014).

Indeed, salary and satisfaction with pay are often discussed as factors when working in the student affairs field, as it is nearly universally communicated that a student affairs practitioner does not enter the field for the money. Mellander (2013) reported that annual average salary for those in the United States with a bachelor's degree was $55,692, and $71,708 for those with an advanced graduate degree. However, the College and University Professional

Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR) reported that in 2015-2016 the median salary for a residence hall manager, a very common entry-level student affairs position often requiring an advanced degree, was $31,940 (CUPA-HR, 2016).

Previous research on student affairs attrition issues has either focused on those working in student affairs and their *intent* to depart the field (Johnsrud, Heck, & Rosser, 2000; Rosser & Javinar, 2003; Silver & Jakeman, 2014; Tull, 2006; Valadez & Anthony, 2001) or worked directly with *only* those who have already left (Buchanan, 2012; Marshall et al., 2016). However, knowing that those who work in the field frequently leave, and understanding professionals' intent to depart along with their motivations for doing so, are simply not enough; it is important to understand if there are differences between those who earn student affairs degrees and continue to work in student affairs and those who earn such a degree and subsequently leave the profession. No current research could be found on all those appropriately credentialed to serve in student affairs functions and to what extent these oft-cited elements of job satisfaction impact their decisions on whether or not to depart the field. It is important to understand to what extent satisfaction with elements of one's student affairs role impacts a person's decision to depart, and to be able to compare these elements between those who leave and those who stay.

Further, almost no research on occupational commitment in student affairs could be found, which is defined as the "psychological link between a person and his or her occupation that is based on an affective reaction to that occupation" according to Lee, Carswell, and Allen (2000, p. 800); this definition continues to be used by those researching the concept (Blau, 2003). One exception is Fried's (2014) doctoral dissertation in which he conducted a survey of American College Personnel Association (ACPA) members regarding their organizational and

occupational commitment in an attempt to build a model describing the socialization of student affairs professionals. While Fried struggled to find a fit for the socialization model, he was able to show relationships between future prospects and affective and continuing occupational commitment. Further, the respondents' intent to quit was significantly related to affective occupational commitment. Given these findings, it is important to further explore how occupational commitment plays a role in the student affairs practitioner's career development and retention.

It is additionally significant to understand why practitioners, after dedicating time and effort to earn degrees in preparation for the work, are not just changing roles within the student affairs profession when experiencing these elements of dissatisfaction. Instead, these professionals are leaving the entire occupation of student affairs. Occupational commitment could be influential in understanding this difference.

Further research on these issues has strong implications for current and future student affairs professionals, those involved in the preparation of student affairs practitioners, as well as those who look to hire and retain new student affairs staff. With the information from previous research about the aspects of student affairs work that were factors for those who left the field, it is important for current and aspiring student affairs professionals to understand the extent these factors could impact their ability to pursue and stay on their chosen career paths. Evans (1988) noted the importance of understanding the factors that contribute to this attrition in the field regarding preparation: "given the time, resources, and energy being invested by students, faculty, and student affairs staff in the preparation of new professionals, the revolving door syndrome evident in the profession is a major concern" (p. 19). More recently, Marshall et al. (2016) shared that organizations lose time, money, and productivity when turnover takes place. Further,

for colleges and universities seeking to retain their staff to cut down on the resources needed to manage frequent turnover, understanding the degree to which each of these factors impact their new professionals' retention would assist them in knowing where to devote their limited time and resources to maximize their staff retention efforts and minimize attrition from their institutions.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this non-experimental study was to examine the effects of various aspects of job satisfaction during one's first post-graduate professional role, the salary earned in that role, and an individual's occupational commitment on whether recent student affairs master's program graduates remain in the student affairs field. My overarching research question examined potential connections between salary and job satisfaction in one's first postgraduate professional role, occupational commitment, and the probability that one will leave the student affairs profession. This study contributes to more fully understanding the characteristics that influence those who remain in the profession. This research attempts to answer the following specific questions:

1) For recent graduates of student affairs master's degree programs, what are their perceptions of job satisfaction and burnout with their first post-graduate professional role?

2) For such graduates, what is their level of occupational commitment to the student affairs field?

3) For such graduates, what was the starting annual salary for their first postgraduate professional role?

4) To what extent are there differences in the aforementioned variables between those recent alumni who have remained in a student affairs function and those who have left student affairs to work in other disciplines?

5) To what extent can such variables explain the departure of recent student affairs master's program alumni from the student affairs profession?

Conceptual Framework and Narrative

A postpositivist worldview is adapted for the purposes of this study. The postpositivist approach, according to Creswell (2014), asks the researcher to "identify and assess the causes that influence outcomes" (p. 7). Additionally, Creswell explains that postpositivists attempt to reduce phenomenon into measurable variables in order to understand the world.

The conceptual framework for this study also makes use of Locke's (1976) understanding of job satisfaction. Locke explains that job satisfaction is simply positive emotions that come from the aspects of one's job. These emotions may differ as people understand and feel differently about different aspects of their jobs, according to Locke's Range of Affect Theory. For example, one may be satisfied with and experience positive emotions stemming from the nature of their work, but report lacking these positive emotions when talking about their supervisor. Both of these would contribute to the person's level of overall satisfaction, or the overall positive emotions associated with the role.

The Range of Affect Theory (Locke, 1976) was used by Spector (1985) to develop the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS). The JSS was developed for use in the human services fields, as previous measures were deemed insufficient for this line of work. While its inception was quite some time ago by research standards, it is still widely used in several types of work settings and in many languages (Plantiveau, Dounavi, & Virues-Ortega, 2018; Tsounis, Niakas, & Sarafis,

2017). Further, it has consistently been shown to be valid and reliable (Fields, 2002). The JSS has nine subscales which together form the overall construct of job satisfaction: (a) satisfaction with pay, (b) satisfaction with promotion, (c) satisfaction with supervision, (d) satisfaction with benefits, (e) satisfaction with contingent rewards, (f) satisfaction with operating procedures, (g) satisfaction with coworkers, (h) satisfaction with communication, and (i) satisfaction with the nature of the work (Spector, 1985).

The conceptual model shown in Figure 1 incorporates the elements of job satisfaction as operationalized by the JSS, along with salary, burnout and occupational commitment variables, in order to understand why student affairs graduate program alumni may leave or stay with the student affairs profession.

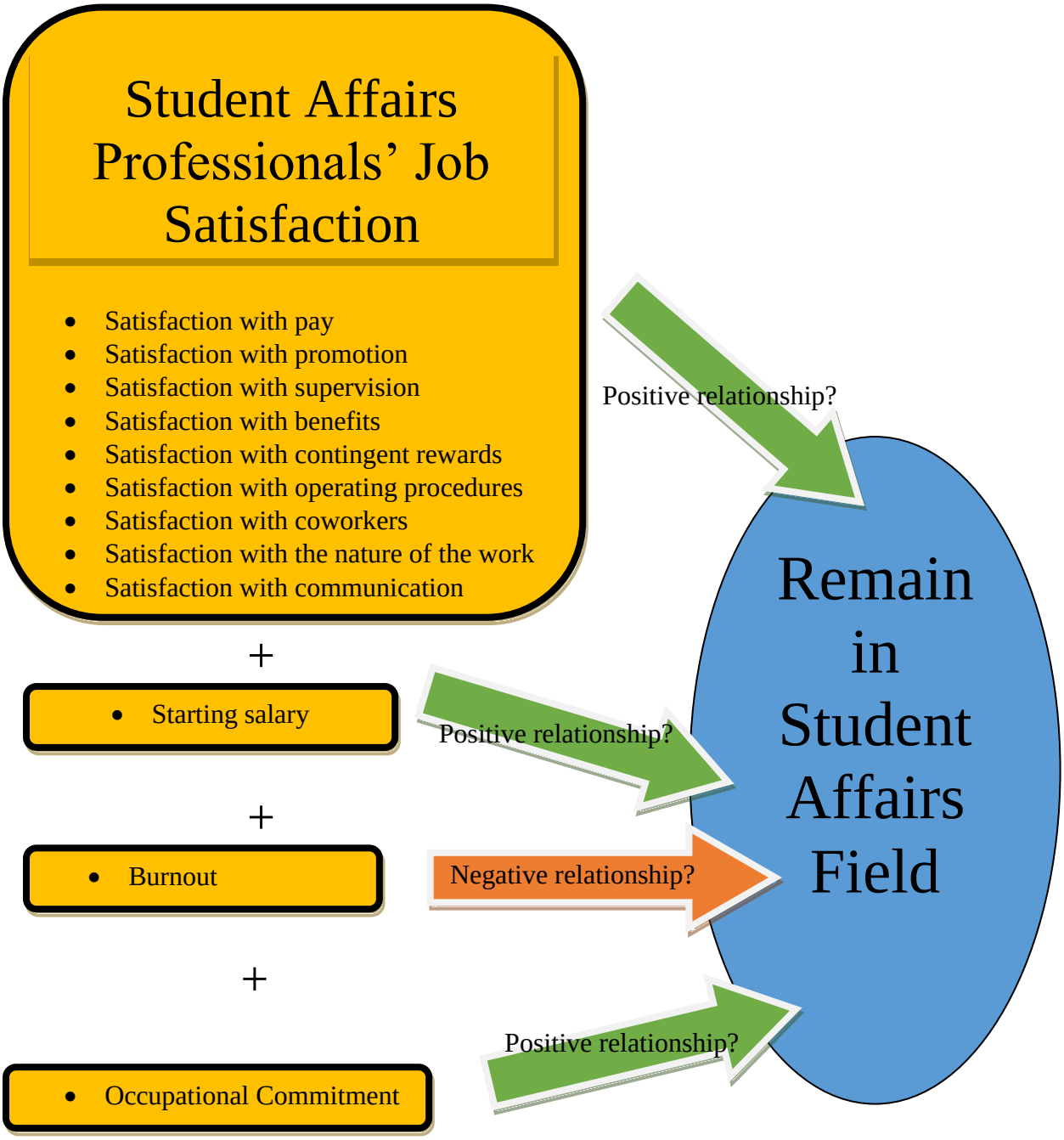

Figure 1. Conceptual framework (Allbee, 2019).

The first box in Figure 1 shows the nine aspects of job satisfaction as operationalized by the JSS (Spector, 1985); 1) Satisfaction with pay clearly speaks to a respondent's satisfaction with their earned wages; 2) Satisfaction with promotion indicates a respondent's feelings about

their opportunities for advancement; 3) Satisfaction with supervision provides insight to the participant's feelings about their supervisor; 4) The satisfaction with benefits scale gathers information about the respondent's feelings about the benefits package offered to them by their employer; 5) Satisfaction with contingent rewards consists of feeling appreciated and being satisfied with the recognition that is received at a workplace; 6) Satisfaction with operating procedures helps to understand feelings about the policies and bureaucracy at an institution; 7) Satisfaction with coworkers speaks to the feelings about those surrounding the employee; 8) Satisfaction with communication consists of being satisfied with the communication within the organization, feeling that the goals of the organization are clear, feeling as though one is informed of what is going on within the organization, and that work assignments are clear; and 9) Satisfaction with the nature of the work reflects the respondent liking and taking pride in the actual work being done on the day to day basis (Spector, 1985).

As listed in the second box, salary is also included in the model, as the salaries for student affairs practitioners are often less than half of the average salary for those with graduate degrees (CUPA-HR, 2016; Mellander, 2013). Card, Mas, Moretti, and Saez's (2012) work on comparative salary, job satisfaction, and turnover intent helps to explain this predicted relationship. Whereas all of the salaries are expected to be lower if they were to be compared to the averages for those with graduate degrees, it is predicted that those with lower salaries in this population will have a lower retention rate, a positive relationship.

Burnout, depicted in the third box, is a vital factor when considering this attrition model. Four items, modeled in the fashion of the subscale items of the JSS, were created for the purpose of this research to gather information about respondents' feelings of burnout in their roles.

Burnout is predicted to have a negative relationship with retention in the field as found by Marshall et al. (2016).

As shown in the fourth box, occupational commitment is another important consideration for this conceptual model, as my research examined whether a person had left the entire *field*, not just changed roles within it. One may falsely equate job satisfaction and occupational commitment. Glisson and Durick (1988) studied both of these ideas with those who work in human services. The authors found that although satisfaction and commitment were correlated, they were distinct constructs. As such, it is important to take a separate look at commitment. My research made use of Blau's (1989) Career Commitment Inventory, later termed occupational commitment, to understand how one's commitment to student affairs as a field connects to their attrition.

Blau's research (1985, 1988, 1989) found that occupational commitment could be reliably measured and was different from organizational commitment. His Career Commitment Inventory has been used in countless studies and is the scale that was used in this research.

As noted in Figure 1, green arrows indicate a relationship that was predicted to be positive. The red arrow indicates a relationship that was predicted to be negative. The bulleted items are the factors that were expected to contribute to the odds of someone staying in the field, based on the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Overall job satisfaction is made up of smaller subscales of satisfaction, as captured through the JSS (Spector, 1985). I also believed that at least one factor, satisfaction with the nature of the work, would be associated with occupational commitment, as Lee et al. (2000) found the strongest correlation between occupational commitment and satisfaction with the nature of the work of any work-related attitudinal variable when reviewing the relevant literature on occupational commitment.

Methods Overview

My study employed an electronic survey to seek information from all recent alumni of over 230 student affairs master's degree programs in the United States. For the purpose of this study, recent alumni referred to those who earned their degree up to five years prior to the survey's administration. Those who held a student affairs master's degree were defined as graduates from any master's level program recognized by ACPA or the National Association for Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) and included in their databases as a program which prepares student affairs practitioners (ACPA, 2018b; NASPA, 2018). The survey consisted of two established validated instruments measuring elements of job satisfaction and occupational commitment in addition to questions created to sort through eligible participants, determine whether they had departed the field of student affairs, and measure their feelings of burnout and reported salary. The survey was distributed via email referrals and social media in order to allow for the broad distribution of the materials and a uniform method to collect the data. The information about respondents' occupational commitment as well as the measures of of salary, job satisfaction, and burnout within their first postgraduate professional role was coupled with data on whether the respondents have chosen to stay in the student affairs field. A logistic regression model was then created to determine if these variables have a significant impact on the decision to stay or leave student affairs work.

Chapter 1 Closure

Given the frequency with which people leave the student affairs field and the efforts undertaken to prepare these master's level professionals, it is of considerable importance to understand the factors that may contribute to the attrition from the field. The use of a survey available to all alumni of student affairs graduate programs measuring occupational commitment,

early job satisfaction, and salary as well as the logistic regression analysis provided valuable insight in understanding the reasons behind people's decisions regarding their career paths within or outside of student affairs.

Chapter 2 of this study will outline the literature foundation for this research, including information on student affairs, new professionals, occupational commitment, job satisfaction, and attrition from the field. Chapter 3 will explicitly explain the methods that were used to understand these variables. Chapter 4 will review the data collected through the survey method while Chapter 5 will provide analyses and connections to the existing literature on the topic.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

A large body of work exists to support this research. From information about new student affairs practitioners to human resources literature regarding different elements of satisfaction and occupational commitment, this study builds upon more than 30 years of research to understand the factors that contribute to the departure of student affairs professionals in their early years.

New Professionals

With researchers estimating that more than half of entering student affairs profession leave the field within their first five years (Burns, 1982; Lorden, 1998; Tull, 2006), and that of those who choose to leave, more than 60% leave before they have reached 10 years in the profession (Marshall et al., 2016), it is of particular importance to examine the new student affairs professional. Many researchers have worked to understand this population, and through their research one finds information relevant to this study. This section highlights some of these studies.

Renn and Hodges (2007) used a longitudinal study to monitor 10 recent alumni from the same graduate preparation program throughout their first year in a professional position. The authors found patterns in the participants' experiences as well as the phases of the first year. The authors noted that relationships, institutional fit, and competence were of considerable importance to new professionals. These findings point to the relevance of many elements of satisfaction in the new professional's success.

Furthering the importance of competence for the new professional, through a survey of 803 student affairs professionals in a specific geographical region, Roberts (2007) found that

new student affairs professionals often depend on the information gained in their master's degree programs for professional competency. This is in contrast to other student affairs professionals with more experience. This study highlights the importance of the nature of the work and occupational commitment for the new professional; the graduate student gains insight into these important facets before entering the field and then continues on to obtain their first role. This is especially important considering the finding by Silver and Jakeman (2014), who researched master's level students and their career plans. They found that while all 20 of the study's participants began their degree programs with the intent to work in the student affairs field, half of them had plans to consider careers in other fields before they finished their graduate programs due to things they had learned throughout their time as a student affairs graduate student. As they considered the student affairs field, they reported concerns related to several aspects of job satisfaction including satisfaction with operating procedures, satisfaction with communication, satisfaction with contingent rewards, satisfaction with the nature of the work, satisfaction with salary, and satisfaction with opportunities for advancement.

Further, Lee and Helm (2013) studied 30 new professionals at four large public institutions via phenomenological interviewing and found that there was a reported disconnect between the professionals' reported information and values learned through their student affairs master's degree programs and the actual responsibilities in their first roles after earning said student affairs degrees. Given the findings of Silver and Jakeman (2014) and Roberts (2007), the disconnect reported by Lee and Helm is of greater concern and could potentially impact the recent alumni's satisfaction in their first postgraduate role.

Similarly, through a survey of 31 graduate students at six institutions and 42 supervisors of housing entry level positions at 21 institutions, Hancock (1988) found that there were large

differences between the needs expressed by graduate students and the reinforcers that would be found in the positions they would soon seek. This gap between expectation and reality was present with respect to opportunities for advancement, among other factors, which has implications for the students' future rates of satisfaction after graduating and entering the student affairs field in their desired roles.

Also of note when reviewing Hancock's (1998) study is Ward's (1995) work with new professionals on their role stress and attrition. After surveying 158 new professionals employed full time at four-year institutions on several items, the author argued that graduate students must be given accurate information about the work they will soon encounter. Further, he shared the possibility that those involved in the preparation of graduate students may be experts in theory but know less about the administrative environment for which they are preparing their students, setting the new professionals up to experience conflict.

Examining this idea of the new professionals' preparation in more depth, Burkard, Cole, Ott, and Stoflet (2005) worked to understand the preparation and skills that were important for a new professional by asking the mid and senior level student affairs practitioners who supervise entry level roles. The authors used multiple surveys to gain information from 104 of these mid and upper level administrators. The authors similarly found that the skill labeled as interpersonal relations was rated as the second highest expected competency for entry-level student affairs positions. Further, oral and written communication were fifth and sixth, and collaboration and teamwork were ranked as ninth and tenth. These skills being so highly rated again speaks to the importance of the people around the new professional in their post graduate roles; because interpersonal relations, collaboration, teamwork, and communication skills are vital, so are the

new professionals' satisfaction with supervision, coworkers, and communication within the first postgraduate role.

Furthering work on the new professional, Renn and Jessup-Anger (2008) conducted a longitudinal study of 90 first time full time student affairs professionals and also found the importance of a professional identity, the workplace, and the relationships with and advice from more experienced colleagues as important to this group. These important factors translate into elements of job satisfaction including satisfaction with supervision, satisfaction with operating procedures, satisfaction with communication, and satisfaction with coworkers.

To more deeply understand the new professional, Belch, Wilson, and Dunkel (2009) used site visits, group and individual interviews, document analysis, and observations at 11 institutions perceived as having best practices with respect to the recruitment and retention of new student affairs personnel, specifically housing professionals. They found that specific workplace factors were important for retaining new residence life professionals: clear missions, engaged and valued staff, open communication, autonomy and responsibility, and frequent professional development opportunities. These findings explain the importance of many factors of job satisfaction in the retention of new residence life professionals.

More recently, Hirschy, Wilson, Liddell, Boyle, and Pasaquesi (2015) tested a model of professional identity development with 173 new student affairs professionals. They found that socialization of the new professional was of great importance for professional identity development. Thus, the importance of those people who surround the new professional such as their coworkers and supervisors gain even more importance as one thinks about their development and retention in the field.

With all such information about the new student affairs professional, it was important to further investigate each of these vital aspects of new professionals to understand how they may impact each other.

Job Satisfaction

Understanding satisfaction in the student affairs setting is of great importance, given that student affairs practitioners are reporting high levels of satisfaction, but are still leaving in large numbers (Bender, 1980; Burns, 1982). Some research exists on these issues, including some on student affairs professionals specifically and some on professionals in other fields.

Job Satisfaction and Attrition

Hellman (1997) explored the relationship between job satisfaction and intent to leave in several fields and organizations ranging from a federal agency to accountants, retail managers, and hospital workers by conducting a meta-analysis of 50 studies with a total sample size of 18,239 participants. It was found that irrespective of the type of work, job satisfaction was consistently significantly related to intent to leave such that the higher the satisfaction the lower the intent to leave. Further, the public employees who had been in their roles fewer than 10 years had a higher turnover intention than those who had more experience. This again points to the value of understanding job satisfaction of the new professional in understanding attrition.

Similarly, Egan, Yang, and Bartlett (2004) looked at the relationships between turnover intention, workplace aspects, and job satisfaction of 245 information technology employees via surveys. The authors found that those employees reporting high job satisfaction in their roles reported low levels of turnover intent.

Duffy, Bott, Allan, Torrey and Dik (2012) also looked at the job satisfaction of 201 adults across several fields and investigated the importance of a “calling” via a survey. They found that

career commitment was influential when examining job satisfaction. If respondents did not feel as though they "had a calling" to their work, work meaning did not help to increase their career commitment. This could help to explain the importance of one's satisfaction with the nature of the work in relation to their career commitment in student affairs. A student affairs practitioner who perceives and lives a calling is possibly more committed to their role and career than one who does not.

Job Satisfaction in Higher Education

Many researchers have looked at satisfaction within higher education environments, though these studies more often focus on faculty than the staff who work at the institutions. For example, Antony and Valadez (2002) evaluated satisfaction in the higher education realm with respect to part-time faculty. They surveyed 7,522 part-time faculty members and called them "fairly satisfied with their roles" (p. 54) on measures of personal autonomy, students, and role demands and rewards. The same two authors studied the job satisfaction and commitment of 6,811 part-time faculty specific to community colleges a year earlier. They reviewed previously collected data from the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF) and found that they were satisfied in spite of low pay, lack of benefits, and worries about job security (Valadez & Anthony, 2001). Further, many of the faculty studied indicated they would leave their current roles for positions that improved upon their current status in these three areas or allow them more opportunity to teach or use better instructional facilities.

Pearson and Seiler (1983) also examined the satisfaction of 336 faculty from 24 higher education institutions. The schools were selected to include small, large, private, and public institutions. The authors found that faculty were more satisfied than dissatisfied, but support and compensation were the most dissatisfying portions of their role. Interestingly, however, the

variables that described the largest amount of variance in work satisfaction were tenure and teaching load whereas salary appeared to have a lesser impact.

Looking at another variable, Fraser and Hodge (2000) studied the job satisfaction of 180 randomly selected faculty at a large urban higher education institution by using a survey to determine whether gender had an impact on the factors that influenced one's job satisfaction. While men and women did not differ on job satisfaction, the authors found that their sources of satisfaction were diverse. Men were more satisfied with their workplace's organizational fairness, as well as intrinsic rewards. While all variables the authors studied helped to predict job satisfaction with the exception of extrinsic rewards, the authors suggest experiences with coworkers and organizational commitment may be the reasons they saw no statistical difference on job satisfaction by gender even though the authors found that what is satisfying to men and what is satisfying to women in the workplace are different.

Digging deeper, Oshagbemi (1997) surveyed 566 instructors from 23 United Kingdom universities that were selected to include regional diversity using Herzberg's Two Factor Theory. The author noted that any factor presented, including the work itself, the workplace, others in the workplace, salary, opportunity for advancement, and supervision could all contribute to satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Notably, Oshagbemi struggled to find support for the Two Factor Theory in the study. Iiacqua, Schumacher, and Li (1995) studied all of the faculty at a private business college via a survey. They found some support for Herzberg's theory that satisfaction stems from intrinsic factors and dissatisfaction from extrinsic factors, but the authors' findings indicated that factors can be viewed as both intrinsic and extrinsic and thus contribute to both satisfaction and dissatisfaction, instead of the factors being distinctly satisfaction- or

dissatisfaction-inducing. The authors found that job satisfaction in their data was correlated with intrinsic factors such as the work itself as well as extrinsic factors such as salary.

Both Oshagbemi (1997), and the team of Iiacqua et al. (1995) used Herzberg's Two Factor Theory to examine the job satisfaction in higher education instructors. The theory notes that separate factors influence satisfaction and dissatisfaction in a position (Oshagbemi, 1997). This is in contrast to Locke's (1976) Range of Affect Theory being used in my study, indicating that satisfaction is simply positive emotions coming from aspects of one's employment.

Acknowledging that these researchers struggled to find support for the Two Factor Theory and attempting to dig deeper than simply asking whether respondents were satisfied in their roles like Bender (1980), the Range of Affect Theory (Locke, 1976) was adopted for my research.

Job Satisfaction in Student Affairs

Some authors have looked specifically at student affairs practitioners' job satisfaction. Rosser (2004) used structural modeling and surveyed 2,000 randomly selected midlevel leaders both in student affairs and in other disciplines within higher education at a variety of institution types across the United States. She found that job satisfaction had a significant impact on their intent to leave their positions and/or careers (Rosser, 2004). These findings were similar to her results a year earlier in which she had used the same structural modeling (Rosser & Javinar, 2003).

In the aforementioned study from the previous year, Rosser and Javinar (2003) surveyed 1,166 midlevel student affairs leaders to test a structural equation model examining the effects of several factors in the workplace, job satisfaction, and morale on the participants' intent to leave their roles. They found that job satisfaction and intent to leave were related in student affairs

practitioners. Further, the respondents' salary was directly related to the practitioners' intent to leave. Salary was the only individual variable that directly influenced departure intention without being a part of the morale or satisfaction constructs, though it also was a part of the satisfaction construct. These results helped to create a portion of the conceptual model used in my study.

Elements of Job Satisfaction

Locke's (1976) Range of Affect Theory leads to job satisfaction being understood as an additive experience of positive emotions from several areas. While there are many factors that may contribute to satisfaction with a position, satisfaction with pay, promotion, supervision, contingent rewards, communication, operating procedures, benefits, coworkers, and the nature of the work itself are measured by the Job Satisfaction Survey and work to create a well-rounded picture of one's overall satisfaction with the role (Spector, 1985).

Salary and satisfaction with pay. Salaries for student affairs practitioners with master's degrees are traditionally lower than the salaries of many bachelor's level professionals (CUPA-HR, 2016; Mellander, 2013). The work of Card et al. (2012) can explain why lower salaries for student affairs professionals may matter. The authors sought to understand the effect of knowing peers' salaries on employees' job satisfaction and intent to leave their roles. The authors explain that people care both about their salary in dollars as well as their salary as it compares to the salaries of others whom are similarly situated. In their study of workers at a specific higher education system, they allowed employees to see the salaries of their peers and then examined their job satisfaction and intent to leave. Those who were below the median salary for similar roles reported lower satisfaction rates and higher intent to leave after seeing the information, but those who were above the median did not report any higher satisfaction or lower intent to leave

their current role. Thus, knowing one is making less than peers seems to be a deterrent, but knowing one is making more does not seem to be an incentive. Given this information it can be concluded that knowing statistics like those noted above and understanding that one's salary is less than half of the average salary for those with graduate degrees may have an impact on one's intent to leave the student affairs field as a whole.

As described previously while exploring the literature on new professionals, Silver and Jakeman (2014) studied 20 student affairs graduate students and found that although all of the participants entered their graduate program with the intent to work in a campus-based student affairs position, half of the participants discussed considerations of other career paths while still in the program. The reasons given by those already interested in leaving the field in the Silver and Jakeman study included financial concerns. Further, it is already known from the Rosser and Javinar (2003) study in the previous section that salary was directly related to student affairs professionals' intent to leave their roles.

Marshall et al. (2016) sought to further understand why student affairs professionals left their careers. Using open ended and Likert scale items, they surveyed 153 people who had left full time student affairs work in the 10 years before their study. Noncompetitive salary was the second most frequently cited reason for leaving the student affairs field, placing behind only the concept of stress and employees' burnout.

Satisfaction with promotion. Satisfaction with promotion is another portion of the overall satisfaction construct in the JSS (Spector, 1985). In the aforementioned literature review, Evans (1988) cited the lack of opportunity for advancement as one of the explanations for attrition from the student affairs field. Even earlier, Solomon and Tierney (1977) worked with 211 mid and upper level college administrators at 22 private liberal arts schools including

presidents, vice presidents, deans, directors of financial aid, directors of admissions, and registrars. They sought to examine participants' satisfaction with several aspects of their jobs and found that they were not satisfied with the opportunities they had to move within their organizations. This factor had one of the highest proportions of "not satisfied" ratings, topped only by the administrators' concern about the time they had outside of their work for scholarly pursuits, family, and leisure.

Hancock (1988) also pointed out this possible concern about lacking advancement opportunities when working with graduate students. The author sought to understand what graduate students expressed as their needs in an entry-level role and compared those to reinforcers that would be found in the entry-level jobs in the study reviewed above.

Just a bit later, Johnsrud (1996) created a guide for assessing the morale of midlevel student affairs practitioners. In the guide, the author spoke to the impact of lacking opportunity for advancement on leaving the profession and ways that employers may mitigate that widespread concern, further indicating its importance for retention.

Limited opportunity for advancement and attractive career alternatives were additionally two of the top seven reasons cited in the Marshall et al. (2016) study noted above. Attractive career alternatives were cited by 42% of respondents while limited advancement opportunities were cited by 32% of participants. This is of additional importance because this study focused not on professionals' *intent* to leave, but those who had already actually made the choice and taken the action to leave the field.

Satisfaction with supervision. Satisfaction with supervision is another factor in one's overall job satisfaction according to the JSS (Spector, 1985). In the Marshall et al. (2016) study, 27% of those who had left full time student affairs work indicated that their supervisor and the

institutional fit played a role in their departure. The supervision one receives in the role has been repeatedly demonstrated as an important part of the student affairs practitioner's experience (Barham & Winston, 2006; Shupp & Arminio, 2012; Tull, 2006; Winston & Creamer, 1997).

Cooper, Saunders, Howell, and Bates (2001) conducted a review of supervision-related literature in student affairs and found that there were not many new improvements to supervision in the field in the 30 years between 1969 and 1999. They also discovered that most of the supervision literature in student affairs did not use validated instruments or strong research methods, which is of great concern. The authors stressed the importance of using empirical research to understand supervision in student affairs in order to assist with attrition levels within the field.

The same year, Winston, Torres, Carpenter, McIntire, and Petersen (2001) sought to understand staffing practices in student affairs by surveying 263 chief student affairs officers. The authors asked the respondents about their institution's recruiting and selection, orientation, supervision practices, professional development, and performance appraisal, specific to student affairs. The authors discovered that the orientation practices were insufficient when working to bring in new practitioners, explaining an "apparent lack of attention" (p. 23) to this concept. Further, nearly half of the respondents (43%) said that their institution's student affairs division provided no training in supervision for staff members with supervisory responsibilities.

Since student affairs practitioners are not receiving this information on their campuses, one hopes that the national organizations which serve to educate the professionals might close this gap. Tull (2011) sought to investigate this when he conducted a review of the programs offered at the two national conferences— ACPA and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)—over 10 years to examine whether information about

staffing practices was being reviewed. In reviewing 19 conference program books with 6,891 programs, he found that there were very few programs which offered information about staffing practices including recruitment and selection, performance appraisal, orientation to position, and separation.

Perhaps the lack of training and programming on the topic of successful supervision in student affairs serves to explain the results discovered by Barham and Winston (2006). The authors specifically studied the supervision of new professionals in student affairs by interviewing both new professionals and their supervisors. They worked with five supervisor/supervisee pairs at two different institutions. New professionals reported a variety of supervisory experiences, but the need for a safe environment to express frustrations and the desire for a balanced personal and professional relationship with their supervisors were consistent and vital. The supervisors and new professionals alike had trouble articulating what was needed of supervisors by new professionals. While experienced supervisors were better able to predict the needs of their new professionals, all supervisors explained that they worked to fulfill the needs of their supervisees when the needs were made known. With employees' satisfaction with the supervision they receive playing an important role as its own dimension of overall job satisfaction according to the JSS, this struggle to understand, support, and supervise new professionals appropriately is of concern.

The studies by Shupp and Arminio (2012) and Tull (2006) both examined the use of synergistic supervision with new professionals in student affairs. Shupp and Arminio defined this phrase: "synergistic supervision is a model of supervision that highlights the collaboration between supervisee and supervisor to meet organizational goals" (p. 161). In their study, Shupp and Arminio looked to identify the areas from which new professionals desired more from their

supervisors. They interviewed and observed five new professionals to gain this insight. By their definition these subjects had recently earned master's degrees in student affairs or similar fields and had fewer than three years of experience in higher education after earning the degree. The areas included accessibility, meaningful interaction, formal evaluations, unique supervision, and professional development as a priority. According to the authors, these needs are consistent with synergistic supervision and as such this supervision model should be used in order to better retain new professionals in the student affairs field. This clearly points to the importance of supervision satisfaction in employee retention.

Tull (2006) studied synergistic supervision's relation to turnover intent and job satisfaction. He surveyed 435 new professionals who were members of ACPA in order to understand more about the employees' perception of their supervisor's use of synergistic supervision practices. The participants' perceived level of synergistic supervision was positively related to job satisfaction and negatively related to intention to turnover. Those supervised by midlevel or lower professionals were more likely to have intent to turnover, which the author attributes to the possibility of inexperienced supervisors. It seems possible that this phenomenon is either additionally or instead related to the position of the supervisee and desire for opportunity for advancement, a separate indicator of satisfaction discussed earlier in this chapter.

Satisfaction with contingent rewards. According to the JSS, satisfaction with contingent rewards consists of being satisfied with the recognition that is received at a workplace, feeling that one's work is appreciated, that there are rewards for those who work at the institution, and that one's efforts are rewarded the way they should be (Spector, 1985). This is one of the factors used in determining a person's overall satisfaction with their role.

Morrell's (1994) dissertation studied 139 midlevel student affairs managers in the 15 four-year public and private institutions within Colorado to learn more about their stress via a survey. In doing so, she found information about their satisfaction with contingent rewards. While she looked at many factors contributing to stress, one of the questions asked about whether respondents felt there were "insufficient rewards for level of responsibility and skills" (p. 64). The study's mid-manager respondents indicated significantly higher stress levels ($p=0.0031$) when compared to senior student affairs officers who had previously answered the same question in a different researcher's dataset.

In the aforementioned study wherein Rosser and Javinar (2003) surveyed 1,166 midlevel student affairs leaders to understand their job satisfaction and morale in relation to their intent to leave their roles, the authors found that recognition had the strongest correlation to one's job satisfaction out of any of their studied variables. Rosser's (2004) subsequent study also found information about the importance of what the author dubbed "recognition for competence," which seems to align both with portions of satisfaction with contingent rewards as well as satisfaction with supervision as measured by the JSS. This factor had the strongest significant correlation of any factor to the satisfaction construct built by the author, indicating a practitioner's satisfaction with this factor strongly influenced their satisfaction with their role and indirectly impacted their intent to leave their roles.

Satisfaction with communication. Satisfaction with communication, according to the JSS, consists of being satisfied with the communication within the organization, feeling that the goals of the organization are clear, feeling as though one is informed of what is going on within the organization, and that work assignments are clear (Spector, 1985).

The value of this factor in terms of attrition can be found in the work of Tsai, Chuang, and Hsieh (2009) wherein the authors studied a sample of 1,260 workers in service industries in Taiwan. They found that the workers' intention to leave their positions was directly correlated to their satisfaction with communication. With this large of a sample size of those in related fields, this study is of considerable value in understanding the importance of student affairs practitioners' communication satisfaction.

In the higher education realm specifically, Bucklin, Valley, Welch, Tran, and Lowenstein (2014) researched the attrition of faculty members at a particular medical school. The team surveyed 139 faculty members who had both remained and left their roles. One third of the faculty had left within three years of their hiring. The authors found that one of the largest factors associated with faculty departure was dissatisfaction with inclusiveness, respect, and open communication. From these data, communication surely plays a role in understanding employees' satisfaction with their roles and further investigation must be done to investigate the student affairs professional specifically.

Satisfaction with benefits. Hirt and Collins (2004) studied the differences between the nature of professional life for student affairs professionals by surveying 1,704 members of ACPA using the nature of professional life survey. They worked to understand the differences in the nature of the work whether someone was working for a comprehensive institution, a research institution, a liberal arts college, or a community college. Through this work they found information about the benefits available to student affairs professionals. Some of the major differences in rewards found at different institutional types included the insurance benefits and the availability of taking classes.

But before their work came the research by Tarver, Canada, and Lim (1999) wherein they studied student affairs administrators and suggested that a positive correlation existed between job satisfaction and those with an internal locus of control for those staff members working at universities, but such a relationship did not exist for those working at community colleges. The authors speculated a number of reasons for this, from differing roles to varying climates at the institution types, though they did acknowledge the difference in the number of sample participants from each institution type being a possible factor. Given the differences in the rewards found by Hirt and Collins (2004), benefits could be of considerable importance.

Further, the 2012 Aflac WorkForces Report (AWR) showed strong connections between benefits and employee satisfaction and attrition. The AWR is conducted annually to collect information surrounding topics of interest related to employee benefits. Aflac conducted the 2012 project with a national polling firm, Research Now, and surveyed both employees as well as those with the responsibility of making decisions about benefits for businesses. The Employee Survey portion of the AWR was conducted online and gathered data about 6,151 American employees. While it must be acknowledged that the AWR cannot necessarily be considered comparable to the studies found in peer reviewed journals, its results serve to highlight the importance of one's satisfaction with benefits. The survey found that employees who indicated they were extremely or very satisfied with their benefits were six times more likely to stay in their roles than those who indicated dissatisfaction with their benefits. Additionally, almost half of respondents indicated that improving their benefits package was something their employer could do to keep them in their current roles (Aflac, 2012).

Satisfaction with operating procedures. Spector's (1985) subscale of operating procedures was originally developed to incorporate physical working conditions and

environments as well as operational conditions "such as rules, procedures, and red tape" (p. 699). In developing the subscale, only the operational conditions were kept. As such, this portion of the JSS measures one's satisfaction with the policies and procedures that are at play in a workplace.

While not specific to the higher education realm, Egan, Yang, and Bartlett's (2004) work provides insight into the importance of employees' satisfaction with operating procedures with respect to their retention. The authors surveyed 245 employees in information technology departments within 13 large organizations, defined as having 500 or more employees in all areas of the firm. In this study, they worked to understand the impact of a learning culture on job satisfaction and turnover intention, ultimately building a model encompassing these factors. The authors used the construct of a learning culture as formed by Marsick and Watkins (2003). Marsick and Watkins speak specifically to what Spector (1985) would call operating procedures in developing a learning culture and Egan et al. found that a learning culture was important for job satisfaction.

More specifically, Winston and Creamer's (1997) study of 121 institutions wherein they sought to understand many aspects of staffing practices in student affairs by surveying the vice presidents for student affairs at each institution gives some insight into satisfaction with operating procedures in student affairs. Among the rich data they collected, the authors found that 87% of responding institutions had written institutional policies that governed recruitment and selection. When separated by institution type, 93% of research universities, 93% of comprehensive colleges, 92% of community colleges and 67% of liberal arts colleges had such written institutional policies about how one is able to enter the field as an employee at their school. This speaks to the regulatory nature of many educational institutions.

Connecting this information to satisfaction, Berwick (1992) surveyed 240 student affairs professionals from 29 institutions within the state of Minnesota to understand more about the relationships between organizational variables in the workplace and personal variables. The author found that one of the strongest correlations was between job satisfaction and strength of organizational culture, which one can conclude includes the operational conditions of the institution.

Interestingly, Volkwein, Malik, and Napierski-Prancl (1998) specifically studied satisfaction and regulatory climate at 122 public universities in all 50 states and found differing results. The authors sorted states by their administrative and academic flexibility and sought to understand how a state's regulatory climate would impact satisfaction at the institution. The authors found that state regulation had no direct influence on satisfaction in the workplace.

Additionally, in the above-referenced Lee and Helm (2013) study, the authors researched what they called "student affairs capitalism," or the student affairs policies and operating procedures related to the financial responsibilities of their institutions. They found that the student affairs professionals felt like the expectations around student affairs capitalism such as hiring creatively and raising revenue were in conflict with the ideals and values expressed as important to student affairs professionals.

Clearly, given these conflicting outcomes, more information is needed to better understand student affairs professionals' satisfaction with operating procedures.

Satisfaction with coworkers. As can be imagined, the role of other people in the workplace is a considerable factor in determining one's experience. While the JSS does not specifically define coworkers, the language used on the questions on this subscale asks respondents to reflect on "the people [they] work with" as well simply using the term coworkers.

Early work about coworker satisfaction in higher education can be found in Fraser and Hodge's (2000) examination of 180 faculty members at a large, urban, predominantly white institution. The original purpose of the study was comparing the job satisfaction of males and females. While the authors found similar levels of job satisfaction between male and female respondents, they additionally suggested that the strength of relationships with coworkers was important for both sexes' job satisfaction.

While Fraser and Hodge (2000) looked at faculty, Hirt, Schneiter, and Amelink (2005) conducted focus groups with 43 student affairs professionals from liberal arts institutions. The authors found that employees in this group spend nearly all of their time with students and other student affairs staff. Not being satisfied with one or both of these groups may have large implications for the student affairs professional's position and satisfaction for those professionals at liberal arts schools.

Even more specifically, the work of Calhoun, and Taub (2014) looked at the importance of mentor relationships for entry-level men in student affairs, and limited their definition of mentors to colleagues and supervisors. They interviewed 18 student affairs professionals about their experiences and were able to verify the importance of mentorship for men in the field. The authors acknowledged the professional support and guidance, but held that the important portion of the mentorship was the ability to have personal and professional relationships. They further added that all of the men in the study indicated that mentorship was the reason they were in the student affairs field, making this of particular importance when one thinks about retaining student affairs professionals.

However, Blackhurst (2000) surveyed 304 women from the National Association for Student Personnel Administration (NASPA) to understand the impact of mentoring for many

variables, including commitment and satisfaction and found differing results. Blackhurst found that there was no difference in career satisfaction and commitment between women student affairs practitioners with and without an identified mentor.

To gain a more developed and longitudinal picture than the research above, Renn and Hodges (2007) followed 10 new student affairs professionals from the same master's degree program during the first year of their first postgraduate professional role, a crucial time when thinking about this research. The researchers electronically checked in with the respondents monthly with a prompt to gain insight into their experiences. Among many findings, the authors noted the importance of relationships in the first year on the job for student affairs professionals as one of the three main themes that arise for the new practitioner

Most recently, Hirschy et al. (2015) surveyed 708 new student affairs professionals in ACPA with five or fewer years of experience an effort to understand the socialization of new student affairs professionals. They proposed a definition of professional identity which included a strong connection to the profession. They further found that among many studied factors, professional colleagues were an influence on the development of such a professional identity, thus making professional colleagues an important part of connecting to student affairs.

While the above-referenced Volkwein et al. (1998) study did not necessarily intend to study relationships in the higher education setting, their work with administrators revealed coworker relationships' importance. Instead of finding information about regulations' impact on workplace satisfaction, the authors found that "workplace relationships and an atmosphere of teamwork are the ingredients that have highly positive impacts on most measures of satisfaction" (p. 60). This further demonstrates the importance of others in the workplace.

Satisfaction with the nature of the work. It is frequently mentioned that student affairs practitioners "love the work" (Hirt et al., 2005; Johnsrud, et al., 2000; Marshall et al., 2016).

The above-referenced Hirt et al. (2005) study of student affairs professionals at liberal arts institutions sought to understand the nature of their rewards. Participants ranked "meaningful work" as the most important reward for job satisfaction out of 15 options presented to them as important rewards and ranked it well above the next several reward options given to them. This highlights the student affairs practitioner's necessary love of the work.

In a study of midlevel student affairs administrators, Johnsrud et al. (2000) found more evidence of this love of the work and information about the importance of satisfaction with the nature of the work when understanding professionals' intent to leave. They surveyed 869 administrators below the Dean level such as directors, advisors, and coordinators at 10 campuses within a higher education system. The authors found that the quality of the work was strongly positively correlated to morale, which in turn had a significant negative correlation with an administrator's intent to leave their professional position.

As early as 1977, Solomon and Tierney (1977) studied 211 administrators at 22 private liberal arts colleges and learned about student affairs professionals' satisfaction with the nature of their work. They asked their subjects about their level of satisfaction found that their subjects were most likely to indicate they were very satisfied with factors about their roles such as responsibilities and challenges, but were not satisfied with things like leisure and family time, with the extrinsic benefits lying in the middle. This points to student affairs practitioners' love of and satisfaction with the nature of the work they do, but the struggles they may find in balancing the work with personal commitments, possibly leading to burnout.

Burnout Within Student Affairs

Almost half a century ago, Freudenberger (1974) introduced the idea of burnout into the literature. His work focused on describing the symptoms of burnout, including the physical and behavioral signs that could be observed in those working in free clinics, as well as who is susceptible to burnout and what could be done to help them. He defined staff burnout through exhaustion, fatigue, stress, and frustration, among other qualities.

Fruedenberger (1974) further explained that the most dedicated workers are most prone to burnout due to their tendency to give their all to their roles. This is reflected in modern student affairs literature (Guthrie, Woods, Cusker, & Gregory, 2005; Marshall et al., 2016). As Guthrie et al. (2005) indicated, "student affairs work holds particular challenges for attaining balance, most particularly the '24/7' nature of the work, the involvement in the 'informal life of the college,' and the demands of a helping profession" (p. 125).

Professionals' level of stress and burnout was the most frequently cited reason for leaving the student affairs profession in the aforementioned Marshall et al. (2016) study, wherein 153 people who had left full time student affairs work in the 10 years before their study were surveyed. In the study, 53% of participants reported a high level of burnout when they were working in the field.

Morrell's (1994) aforementioned dissertation also found that respondents reported "too much work, too little time" (p. 55) as the leading work setting stressor of all the options studied for midlevel student affairs managers in Colorado.

Further, the above-mentioned Berwick (1992) in which the author studied 240 student affairs professionals found that job satisfaction was the most significant predictor of work-related stress. She further explained the importance of being knowledgeable about burnout as a priority:

"*Above all*, [emphasis added] student affairs professionals need to remember that they are all affected by their work environment and that each one of them may be at risk for stress and burnout" (Berwick, 1992, p. 18).

Given the findings of the above studies, it was additionally important to examine occupational commitment to understand the experience of the new professional and how this distinct variable contributes to the understanding of attrition from the student affairs field instead of departure from one student affairs role to another.

Occupational Commitment

As one may assume, commitment is an important factor in understanding the attrition of student affairs professionals. However, one may falsely equate job satisfaction and commitment. Glisson and Durick (1988) studied both of these ideas with those who work in human services. The authors found that although satisfaction and commitment were correlated, they were distinct constructs. In looking at questionnaires from 510 teachers and nurses in Singapore, Aryee and Tan (1992) were able to draw a direct positive relationship between career (occupational) commitment and career satisfaction. Further, Boehman (2007) surveyed 1,450 student affairs practitioners from all levels and institution types in order to learn more about their organizational commitment. While it should be noted that organizational and occupational commitment are different, as one is focused on one's commitment to a particular employer, or *organization,* and one is focused on the occupation as a whole, this study is particularly important because of the results showing a connection between overall job satisfaction and commitment. Additionally, Lee et al. (2000) conducted a meta-analytic review of the literature on occupational commitment and found that occupational commitment unsurprisingly held the strongest relationship with occupational turnover. Further, occupational commitment was moderately related to some of the

satisfaction pieces described above including stress, supervisor support, and coworker support. Given these studies, it was important to take a separate look at commitment for the student affairs professional.

More than thirty years ago, Arnold (1982) spoke of the idea of commitment within student affairs as a profession: “In our profession, commitment is a given, a gospel preached in our preparation programs, our professional association meetings, and our literature. However, the concept of professional commitment runs contrary to an American cultural phenomenon in which change per se is venerated” (p. 6). Appropriately, commitment in the field of higher education has been studied by researchers over the past several years, though it is often in relation to other variables that are explained in further detail in other portions of this research. This expectation continues today as can be seen through the responses of participants in the Marshall et al. (2016) study.

A decade later, Hunter (1992) examined 93 people entering a student affairs master’s degree program to understand how they had chosen the student affairs field. Using an open essay question, the author gathered information about their career paths and reasons for pursuing the profession. This is important when thinking about whether one is committed to the profession, and unfortunately Hunter (1992) found that respondents were already unsure about their paths in the field and mentioned others’ misunderstanding of and reactions to their joining the profession as impactful in those feelings of uncertainty.

Silver and Jakeman’s (2014) study also worked with those who were in the graduate preparation phase of their student affairs career and learned about their commitment to the field. As described above, the authors interviewed 20 students who were in a student affairs master’s program and found that although none had yet served in a post-graduate professional role, half

were already considering working outside of the field. Those who were considering leaving student affairs to pursue other careers cited lack of personal and professional fulfillment and the devalued work of student affairs as two of the primary reasons for their considerations.

Focusing on current professionals, Yousaf, Sanders, and Abbas (2015) surveyed a random sample of 153 employees at a Dutch university, incorporating both academic and support staff to understand their organizational and occupational commitment as well as organizational and occupational turnover intent. Unsurprisingly, occupational commitment was inversely related to both types of turnover intention studied. This research highlights the connection between occupational commitment and departure in the higher education setting.

Considering departure, occupational commitment, and satisfaction together in the higher education realm leads to Valadez and Anthony's (2001) work. The authors analyzed an existing dataset of 6,811 part-time two-year college faculty who took the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF) to further understand information about the group's job satisfaction and commitment. They found that respondents would leave for opportunities that offered higher pay, benefits, and job security.

Further, the above-referenced Johnsrud et al. (2000) study of midlevel administrators in higher education and found that morale, which influenced intent to leave one's position, was constructed by multiple factors such as the quality of the work and worklife. Further, the studies reviewed above by Rosser and Javinar (2003) and Rosser (2004) noted the relationship between job satisfaction and intent to leave in student affairs professionals.

Chapter 2 Closure

As is clear through this chapter, there is a wealth of literature seeking to understand job satisfaction, burnout, and occupational commitment as well as the experiences of new student

affairs professionals. Further, previous research has helped inform this study regarding these variables with respect to the new student affairs practitioner specifically. Different elements of a professional role may yield differing levels of job satisfaction on those elements. Burnout is a consideration when it comes to the departure of student affairs professionals, and a knowledge of occupational commitment may serve to inform their departure from the field itself instead of moving from a particular position.

With this literature serving as the foundation, the next chapter will explain the details of the methodology for the research that was used to investigate the research questions.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this non-experimental study was to examine the effects of various aspects of job satisfaction during one's first post-graduate professional role, the salary earned in that role, and an individual's occupational commitment on whether recent student affairs master's program graduates remain in the student affairs field. My overarching research question examined potential connections between salary and job satisfaction in one's first postgraduate professional role, occupational commitment, and the probability that one will leave the student affairs profession. This study contributes to more fully understanding the characteristics that influence those who remain in the profession. This research attempted to answer the following specific questions:

1) For recent graduates of student affairs master's degree programs, what are their perceptions of job satisfaction and burnout with their first post-graduate professional role?

2) For such graduates, what is their level of occupational commitment to the student affairs field?

3) For such graduates, what was the starting annual salary for their first postgraduate professional role?

4) To what extent are there differences in the aforementioned variables between those recent alumni who have remained in a student affairs function and those who have left student affairs to work in other disciplines?

5) To what extent can such variables explain the departure of recent student affairs master's program alumni from the student affairs profession?

Research Design and Rationale

This quantitative study used a non-experimental design and logistic regression in order to better understand recent student affairs master's program alumni. It sought to understand whether they remain in or leave the student affairs field, as well as their job satisfaction, burnout, and salary variables about their first postgraduate employment. The independent variables were measures of job satisfaction, burnout, occupational commitment, and salary. The dependent variable was whether or not a respondent remained in the student affairs field. Surveys have been used as data collection tools many times in previous studies to understand more about those with student affairs degrees and their work (Bender, 1980; Burns, 1982; Hancock, 1988; Hunter, 1992; Rosser & Javinar, 2003; Tull, 2006).

This research adapted a postpositivist worldview for the purposes of this study. The postpositivist approach, according to Creswell (2014), is a framework in which researchers work to understand the reasons for certain outcomes. Additionally, Creswell explains that postpositivists attempt to reduce phenomenon into measurable variables in order to understand the world.

While my personal views may be in alignment with other approaches, postpositivism is the ideal framework for this research because of its definition of measuring influences on a particular outcome. In forming the idea for this study all the way back to its initial stages of development, my main goal has always been to quantify and measure the ideas that have often been repeated about why student affairs practitioners leave the field. With this as a starting place, the postpositivist perspective seemed to be the most appropriate framework for this research because I attempted to understand the influences of variables on outcomes (Creswell, 2014).

Reflections on My Identity

I would be remiss if I did not spend some time explaining my personal interest in this study. While I recognize this is a more common practice when conducting qualitative studies, I am very closely related to this population and felt it important to share the experience. Additionally, when beginning this dissertation work I was a member of the population being studied.

As most student affairs professionals do, I discovered this exciting and novel field as a college student. I was thrilled to be able to continue helping others grow and develop through their collegiate years in the same way student affairs professionals had impacted me. This path is similar to what Blimling (2002) found when studying the career trajectories of those working in the student affairs field.

After my undergraduate experience, I worked for a year in an adjacent field, serving as a traveling sorority consultant. The position was similar to what I planned to do as a student affairs professional, though it did not require the same level of education and preparation. I then returned to my home state to complete a student affairs graduate preparation program and worked directly in the student affairs field as a graduate assistant in two different student activities offices simultaneously. Through these many related experiences my passion and strong desire to be in the student affairs field never waned.

Upon graduating, I was fortunate enough to obtain just the position I had wanted when I began graduate school and I was understandably elated. In under a few years' time, however, I found myself frustrated, exhausted, and considering my options for departure from the field. At the same time, some of my most promising student affairs colleagues were having the same doubts and struggles. Those of us who were labeled hard working and assets to student affairs in

our graduate and new professional years were already questioning our paths in about the same amount of time we had spent preparing to get there. Never having been a fickle person, I began to wonder why this was happening when I had been so sure and worked so meticulously to arrive exactly where I had wanted to be. I considered two options to remedy my concern: pursue a Ph.D. to advance my understanding of the field as well as my career in student affairs, or look at other positions in order to move into the private sector. While I chose the Ph.D. route, I know of several others who made the same consideration and ultimately chose the private sector.

Population and Sample

The population for this study included all individuals who had recently earned a master's degree from a student affairs program in the United States. For the purpose of this study, recent referred to those who earned their degree up to five years prior to the survey's administration. Those who hold a student affairs master's degree will be defined as graduates from any master's level program recognized by the ACPA or NASPA and included in their databases as a program which prepares student affairs practitioners (ACPA, 2018b; NASPA, 2018).

Only ACPA programs were originally chosen as a qualifier for inclusion in this study due to its being one of the largest associations for student affairs professionals and due to its criteria for inclusion of programs in the directory (ACPA, 2018a). To be included in the ACPA directory, a program must meet four main criteria. It must have at least one full-time faculty member who provides leadership for the program. The program must have at least four courses that relate to student affairs, student development, the college student, and the college environment. It must have a curriculum equivalent of at least two years. And last, the program requires at least one practicum experience for its participants (ACPA, 2018a).

However, during the process of developing the survey, the ACPA switched to a paid model wherein programs need to also pay a subscription fee (ACPA, 2018a). This drastically reduced the number of programs in the directory. As such, the decision was made to include all master's degree programs in the ACPA and NASPA directories, as the two organizations serve as the largest gatherings of student affairs professionals and each have a preparation program directory.

Graduates of master's programs were selected as the study's population because it allowed me to survey those who once worked in the student affairs field, whether or not they did at the time of the survey's administration. Using only the membership lists of organizations like ACPA or NASPA would likely yield almost exclusively participants who have remained in the field. Such a method would unintentionally exclude those who began in the student affairs field and have since moved elsewhere, as they are likely no longer engaged in a professional association for student affairs. Thus, the alumni of student affairs master's degree programs were chosen in order to avoid this possible pitfall with participant selection and recruitment.

Graduates of student affairs master's programs were not an easy population to reach. The most effective way to sample this population was to use a nonprobability sampling method. While a random sample might have been statistically ideal, it was not necessarily realistic for this study when it was unknown how an important portion of the population, those who have left the field, could be contacted.

Instead, the referral method or snowball sampling (Schuh, 2009) method was the most feasible and appropriate for this study. This method asks participants and other knowledgeable individuals to provide recommendations as to those who might be able to provide the useful information for the study. This sampling approach gave the best opportunity for reaching the

highest number of prepared student affairs professionals, whether or not they have been retained in the student affairs field. Because educational records are federally protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 2010), I did not have direct access to the graduates of every program. Instead, I relied mostly on referrals from the gatekeepers of such information. In my study, the primary faculty member contact noted in the ACPA and NASPA directories for each master's program served as these gatekeepers. These contacts received the survey with the request to share it with their program alumni.

The number of people who make up this population in full is unknown. There are more than 230 master's preparation programs included in the ACPA and NASPA directories, with each having a varied number of graduates each year (ACPA, 2018b; NASPA, 2018). I originally hoped to get at least 240-300 respondents in my sample based on the rule developed by Peduzzi, Concato, Kemper, Holford, and Feinstein (1996) stating $n=10k/p$ for logistic regression models wherein sample size n is equal to 10 times k, the number of factors over p, the proportion. In this instance k=12: 1) overall job satisfaction, 2) satisfaction with pay, 3) satisfaction with promotion, 4) satisfaction with supervision, 5) satisfaction with benefits, 6) satisfaction with contingent rewards, 7) satisfaction with operating procedures, 8) satisfaction with coworkers, 9) satisfaction with communication, 10) satisfaction with the nature of the work, 11) burnout, and 12) occupational commitment and p is between 0.4 and 0.5 based on the most recent data regarding the proportion of those new professionals being retained in the student affairs field (Marshall et al., 2016). Given the equation $n=10k/p$, n=10(12)/0.4, n=300 or n=10(12)/0.5=240.

Instrumentation

My survey consisted of multiple parts (Appendix A). It had a portion to obtain selected participant information, two established validated instruments measuring elements of job satisfaction and occupational commitment that have been modified for the purposes of the study, and several measures of burnout. It was distributed via email to the faculty contacts for distribution to their alumni and was posted directly to social media. This allowed for the broad distribution of the materials and a uniform method to collect the data.

Demographic Information

I created several questions to understand demographic information about the participant including the master's program from which the participant graduated, when the participant earned the degree, whether or not the participant was still in their first postgraduate professional student affairs role at the time of survey completion, whether the participant's current role was within student affairs, and the participant's starting salary in their first postgraduate professional student affairs role. The initial information was used to determine whether the person completing the survey met the criteria to be included as a participant in the study; the beginning salary and current employment information were used as variables in the analyses.

Occupational Commitment

A section of the of the survey to was a modified version of Blau's (1989) Career Commitment Inventory. This inventory has shown to be reliable and valid according to Fields (2002). The inventory has seven items and participants use a five point Likert scale to indicate their agreement on the items. In 1985, Blau (1985) longitudinally studied 119 nurses at a specific hospital to determine if an occupational commitment measure could be operationalized. Three years later, he tested the reliability and validity of the measure on 129 employees in two

industries, at a newspaper company and insurance company and found that occupational commitment could be reliably measured and was different from organizational commitment (Blau, 1988). The next year, he tested the generalizability of this construct by longitudinally studying 133 bank tellers. He again found that occupational commitment was different from organizational commitment (Blau, 1989). I contacted the author and received permission to use and alter the instrument as needed for this dissertation research (G. Blau, personal communication, January 18, 2017) (Appendix C).

I modified the inventory in several ways for this research. The first modification was in the directions, where I asked the respondents to answer with regard to the student affairs profession. Second, for those who have left the field, I reworded the questions to be in the past tense when appropriate (Appendix B). Last, the original version of this inventory uses a five-point Likert scale and I used a six-point scale for consistency with the previous section of the survey as well as more variance.

Blau's (1989) Career Commitment Inventory speaks to a respondent's commitment to their profession instead of a specific role within the profession. Therefore, respondents answered based on their commitment to student affairs as a field. This is important, as my research questions sought to know whether alumni were still working in the field of student affairs, not necessarily their first postgraduate role. These questions additionally made the perfect counterpart to the next part of the survey that focused specifically on the respondent's first postgraduate professional role.

Job Satisfaction and Burnout

I used a modified version of Spector's (1985) Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) as part of the survey to measure the participants' overall job satisfaction within their first postgraduate

professional role. This instrument was designed to be used with human services staff, so it was ideal for this research. It was developed using Locke's (1976) Range of Affect Theory that refers to job satisfaction as an emotional response to elements of the role (Spector, 1985). It uses a six point Likert scale to assess a respondent's job satisfaction in nine areas. The instrument has 36 items and in addition to Spector's (1985) work, others have demonstrated this instrument to be valid and reliable (Fields, 2002). The JSS is a copyrighted survey, but is available for use for research purposes provided the data is shared. As such, I plan to share my dissertation as well as specific descriptive statistics that are requested by the author as a trade for its free use to support my research (Spector, 2011). Further, I contacted the author and received permission to use and alter the instrument as needed for this dissertation research (P. Spector, personal communication, February 15, 2017) (Appendix C).

I made modifications to the JSS for the purposes of this research. The original JSS has both positively and negatively scored items, and the measures of the nine subscales are dispersed evenly throughout the survey. I reworded the inversely-scored items so that every item read and scored positively. I also grouped the items by subscale such that all items related to one's satisfaction with pay were together, all items related to one's satisfaction with coworkers were together, and so on. For those respondents who were not still in their first post-graduate professional role, I altered the items to be past-tense to reflect that they had already left these positions (Appendix B). I also modified the directions. For those currently in their role it read, "regarding your current student affairs position, please share your level of agreement with each statement" (Appendix A). For those who were no longer in that position, it read "Although you are no longer in the role, please think back and share your level of agreement with each statement about your first post-graduate full-time student affairs role" (Appendix B).

Lastly, I also created four items in the style of the questions of the JSS that speak to burnout and included them in the same section of the survey. These items were "I rarely feel burnt out," "I regularly feel engaged in my work," "I seldom feel fed up with my job," and "I feel as though I could continue to do this job for a long time."

Skip Function

The survey was built to be a personalized experience and I essentially built multiple versions of the tool. If participants answered that they were in their first postgraduate professional roles, they received questions about their satisfaction with the role in the present tense. Conversely, if participants answered that they were no longer in the field or had moved positions, they received questions about their satisfaction with their first postgraduate professional role in the past tense. If respondents shared that they were no longer in the field, their questions about commitment were also presented to them in the past tense. This experience was created using the SelectSurvey tool and making question pages that are dependent on previous questions' answers.

Data Collection Procedures

The survey was set up via an electronic format. Information regarding the study was sent via email with a link to the survey to every program coordinator or faculty member for every one of the 232 student affairs master's programs listed in the ACPA and NASPA directories that had contact information, asking them to forward the survey link to their graduates to participate (Appendix D). Additionally, the survey was posted on social media in student affairs groups, as these contain many members who currently are or were in the student affairs field as well as those who have currently connections to other graduates. These decisions were made to have the best opportunity of reaching the highest number of those prepared to be student affairs

professionals, whether or not they have chosen to remain in the student affairs field. To safeguard against repeat responses, the SelectSurvey software allows the researcher to set a single response function, meaning any unique IP address can only answer the survey once. While it is still possible that an individual could take the survey multiple times from different devices, this setting made repeat responses less likely.

All individuals listed in the ACPA and NAPSA directories as the appropriate contact for each graduate program received the email asking them to forward the survey link and providing them with sample language to share with their alumni. To incentivize their program's participation and referrals, an offer to share the specific results related to their program was included in the email text. Therefore, those schools which distributed the survey for their alumni's participation have the opportunity to receive aggregate data about their program's recent graduates' occupational commitment, job satisfaction, whether they continue to work in the field, and their beginning salaries. The program contacts received a follow up email to encourage their participation approximately two weeks after their first invitation.

In addition to the email recruitment, an invitation was posted to several student affairs Facebook groups of which I am a part including "student affairs professionals," "student conduct professionals," "s.a.m.s. student affairs moms," "future dr. and student affairs mothers," "WMU HESA leadership grad students and alums," "expatriates of student affairs," and "ASCA women of student conduct," which is the online group for the Association for Student Conduct Administrators' (ASCA) community of practice. The text of the post asked members of the groups to participate if they qualify and to forward the survey to those in their graduate cohorts, as they may still be in touch with people with whom the graduate program has lost contact

(Appendix E). The information was posted on different days in each group to allow for more exposure.

Respondents themselves were also offered an incentive in order to assist with recruitment of participants. Those who qualified and completed the full survey had the opportunity to enter their email addresses in order to be entered into a drawing for one of eight $25 Amazon gift cards. The drawing was held at the survey's close and winners were contacted via the email accounts provided.

The email and Facebook posts provided a link to the introduction to the survey. The introduction included instructions on how to complete the survey. In addition to instructions, there will be information about informed consent including what is asked of participants, that there is no risk in their participation, the benefits of the study, the promise of confidentiality, their rights as a participant, and my contact information (Appendix F) (Western Michigan University Office of the Vice President for Research, 2016).

The collected data was stored on a secure Western Michigan University (WMU) server while the research was being conducted. At the conclusion of the study, the data was stored in a locked faculty office at WMU, as per the expectations of WMU (Western Michigan University Office of the Vice President for Research, 2016).

Data Analysis

The survey data was analyzed using SPSS to understand descriptive statistics, relationships between the variables, and used logistic regression in order to develop a statistical model to predict the log odds of whether one would stay or leave the student affairs field within the first five years based on several variables of job satisfaction, salary, burnout, and

occupational commitment. Table 1 shows the survey items corresponding to the analysis and variables.

Table 1

Crosswalk Table

Variable/Construct	Items	Analysis
Q1: For recent graduates of student affairs master's degree programs, what are their perceptions of job satisfaction and burnout with their first post-graduate professional role?		
IV: Job Satisfaction	7-14	Descriptive Statistics
IV: Satisfaction with the Nature of the Work	7.1-7.4; 11.1-11.4	Descriptive Statistics
IV: Satisfaction with Pay	7.5-7.8; 11.5-11.8	Descriptive Statistics
IV: Satisfaction with Promotion	7.9-7.12; 11.9-11.12	Descriptive Statistics
IV: Satisfaction with Supervision	8.1-8.4; 12.1-12.4	Descriptive Statistics
IV: Satisfaction with Benefits	8.5-8.8; 12.5-12.8	Descriptive Statistics
IV: Satisfaction with Contingent Rewards	8.9-8.12; 12.9-12.12	Descriptive Statistics
IV: Satisfaction with Operating Conditions	9.1-9.4; 13.1-13.4	Descriptive Statistics
IV: Satisfaction with Coworkers	9.5-9.8; 13.5-13.8	Descriptive Statistics
IV: Satisfaction with Communication	9.9-9.12; 13.9-13.12	Descriptive Statistics
IV: Burnout	10; 14	Descriptive Statistics
Q2: For recent graduates of student affairs master's degree programs, what is their level of occupational commitment to the student affairs field?		
IV: Occupational Commitment	16; 17	Descriptive Statistics
Q3: For recent graduates of student affairs master's degree programs, what was the starting annual salary for their first postgraduate professional role?		
IV: Salary	15	Descriptive Statistics
Q4: To what extent are there differences in the aforementioned variables between those recent alumni who have remained in a student affairs function and those who have left student affairs to work in other disciplines?		
IV: Attrition	5	
DVs: Job satisfaction, Satisfaction with Pay, Satisfaction with Promotion, Satisfaction with Supervision, Satisfaction with Benefits, Satisfaction with Contingent Rewards, Satisfaction with Operating Conditions, Satisfaction with Coworkers, Satisfaction with the Nature of the Work, Burnout, Occupational Commitment, Salary	Items noted above	Independent t-tests
Q5: To what extent can the above variables explain the departure of recent student affairs master's program alumni from the student affairs profession?		
IVs: Satisfaction with Pay, Satisfaction with Promotion, Satisfaction with Supervision, Satisfaction with Benefits, Satisfaction with Contingent Rewards, Satisfaction with Operating Conditions, Satisfaction with Coworkers, Satisfaction with the Nature of the Work, Burnout, Occupational Commitment, Salary	Items noted above	Logistic Regression
DV: Attrition	5	

Research Questions 1, 2, and 3

It is first important to understand the data before running any inferential analyses. Several survey items were combined into 12 construct variables including: 1) overall job satisfaction, 2) satisfaction with pay, 3) satisfaction with promotion, 4) satisfaction with supervision, 5) satisfaction with benefits, 6) satisfaction with contingent rewards, 7) satisfaction with operating procedures, 8) satisfaction with coworkers, 9) satisfaction with communication, 10) satisfaction with the nature of the work, 11) burnout, and 12) occupational commitment. The JSS scoring instructions indicate that constructs are appropriately created by simply adding the scores on each individual item in a subscale (Spector, 1999). This allows for a maximum score of 24 for each subscale. Further, the overall job satisfaction is simply the sum of all 36 items, for a score ranging between 36 and 216. The same premise will be adopted for the measures of burnout created for this survey, giving a maximum score of 24. Cronbach's alpha was calculated for those items being used to identify the respondent's burnout, as the survey items were created for this study and have not been previously validated.

The measures of occupational commitment are additive as well for one overall occupational commitment score, though items 2, 3, and 6 on the inventory are inversely scored. This allows for a range of scores between 7 and 42 for occupational commitment.

Descriptive statistics were run on all of these created construct variables in order to understand useful information about the sample such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations (Lomax & Hahs-Vaughn, 2012).

Research Question 4

It was next important to run several t-tests to answer the questions in this study. This type of analysis allows for the comparison of groups on continuous measures (Lomax & Hahs-

Vaughn, 2012). Therefore, these statistical tests were used to determine the differences on each satisfaction, burnout, and occupational commitment construct, as well as any difference in beginning salary, between the two groups of interest: those who had left the student affairs field and those who had chosen to stay.

Research Question 5

Logistic regression allows the researcher to use the continuous variables of salary, occupational commitment, burnout, and elements of job satisfaction explain the probability that a particular subject in the study would have membership in one of the two groups of either those who leave the field or those who stay (Lomax & Hahs-Vaughn, 2012). Using logistic regression to examine these types of variables is established in the literature. For example, Chen (2006) used job satisfaction and organizational commitment to predict turnover intention in flight attendants using logistic regression. Wright and Bonett (2007) also used job satisfaction and psychological well-being to examine turnover in employment with logistic regression.

Using this method, a statistical logistic regression is used to determine the log odds of one leaving or staying in the profession. Given information about one's satisfaction with several portions of satisfaction, burnout, and salary within the first postgraduate professional role as well as that person's commitment to the occupation, the regression assists in showing to what extent the factors explain whether or not a person would leave the field entirely within the first five years of graduating from a master's program. The model was predicted to look similar to the equation below, wherein each factor is represented:

$$\ln[p/(1-p)] = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{commitment}) + \beta_2(\text{burnout}) + \beta_3(\text{pay satisfaction}) + \beta_4(\text{salary}) + \beta_5(\text{promotion satisfaction}) + \beta_6(\text{supervision satisfaction}) + \beta_7(\text{benefits satisfaction}) +$$

β_8(rewards satisfaction) + β_9(procedures satisfaction) + β_{10}(coworker satisfaction) + β_{11}(communication satisfaction) + β_{12}(work nature satisfaction)

Limitations and Delimitations

As with any study, there are expected limitations and delimitations with this work. The most notable delimitation is the sampling method. Using snowball sampling is more common in qualitative research (Schuh, 2009). Without the use of a random sampling technique, the data is less reliable in generalizing to the general population. However, I hoped to have a large enough response to assist in managing this issue.

Theoretically, the entire population of recent student affairs master's degree alumni was eligible to be studied in this research, meaning it could provide more valuable and thorough data than any form of sampling on its own. But, this relates to a second limitation within this sampling method. Because I relied on program faculty and coordinators to disseminate the survey, I could not predict how many of them would fail to pass on the information to their graduates. A low number of referrals from these points of contact had the potential to be a severe limitation of this study.

Additionally, if there are specific institutions, program types, geographical areas, or other demographics that were shared by those who do not receive the referral information, this could serve as a limitation and impact the outcomes.

Another limitation comes with those who are farther removed from their first postgraduate professional role. It may have been difficult for some to remember how they felt in these jobs and respond appropriately to the survey, as their memories may be inaccurate and colored by experiences they have had since that role.

There are also some clear delimitations in this study. The most noteworthy delimitation is likely the choice to use ACPA and NASPA's databases of preparation programs. It is a limitation that there are many professionals who may enter the field through other avenues with different advanced degrees and this study has the potential to overlook information about those professionals. But, the decision to delimit to those programs within the ACPA and NAPSA databases provides for some commonality in the preparation of the professionals and increases the likelihood that the survey reaches those who may no longer work in the field instead of simply using the current directories of professionals.

The additional decision to delimit to new professionals, though grounded in research, may miss valuable information about the first roles of those who stay in the student affairs profession longer but ultimately leave the field.

Chapter 3 Closure

This non-experimental study used the survey method in order to gather information about the variables that may contribute to attrition within the student affairs field. Surveys were electronically distributed to master's degree programs nationwide for recent program graduates to complete. Descriptive statistics, t-tests, and logistic regression were used to appropriately understand the data and answer the research questions.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This study sought to understand the factors that contribute to attrition of the new student affairs professional. The research questions in the study were as follows:

1) For recent graduates of student affairs master's degree programs, what are their perceptions of job satisfaction and burnout with their first post-graduate professional role?

2) For such graduates, what is their level of occupational commitment to the student affairs field?

3) For such graduates, what was the starting annual salary for their first postgraduate professional role?

4) To what extent are there differences in the aforementioned variables between those recent alumni who have remained in a student affairs function and those who have left student affairs to work in other disciplines?

5) To what extent can such variables explain the departure of recent student affairs master's program alumni from the student affairs profession?

In order to answer these questions, a survey was sent to the identified contact persons for more than 200 student affairs master's degree programs, who in turn were asked to forward it to their recent graduates. Approximately two weeks after the first request, a reminder email was sent to each of the contact persons. A second reminder was created if needed, but was not necessary for this research.

Of the 1,405 people who began the survey by answering the first question, 697 met the criteria for inclusion in the study: they had earned student affairs master's degrees within five years of the survey's administration and they had held a full time postgraduate role in student

affairs. Five hundred and ninety-nine respondents completed the survey in its entirety, which was approximately 85% of the respondents who met the inclusion criteria. Of the respondents, approximately 15.6% had left the field of student affairs while 84.4% were still working in the field at the time of the survey, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Attrition from the Student Affairs Field

Current Status	Frequency	%
Currently in Field	588	84.36
Left Student Affairs	109	15.64
Total	697	

Data was also collected regarding the programs from which the respondents graduated in order to provide the aggregate information to those program contacts whom requested it after sharing the survey with their alumni. In total, more than 125 programs' alumni were represented.

Table 3

Graduate Programs Represented

Program	n	%
Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Student Affairs in Higher Education MA	45	7.51
Western Michigan University, Higher Education and Student Affairs Leadership MA	28	4.67
Missouri State University, Student Affairs in Higher Education MEd	21	3.51
Arkansas Tech University, College Student Personnel MS	20	3.34
Buffalo State College, Higher Education Administration MS	19	3.17
University of Iowa, Higher Education and Student Affairs MA	17	2.84
Bowling Green State University, College Student Personnel MA	16	2.67
San Diego State University, Educational Leadership Student Affairs MA	16	2.67
Central Michigan University, Higher Education Administration MA	13	2.17
Merrimack College, Higher Education MEd	13	2.17
Texas State University, Student Affairs in Higher Education MEd	13	2.17
University of Florida, Student Personnel in Higher Education MEd	13	2.17
Indiana State University Student Affairs and Higher Education MS	12	2.00

Table 3 Continued

Program	n	%
Kent State University, Higher Education Administration and Student Personnel MEd	12	2.00
Illinois State University, College Student Personnel Administration MS	11	1.84
University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, Student Affairs in Higher Education MA	11	1.84
University of Connecticut, Higher Education and Student Affairs MA	10	1.67
University of Nebraska, Student Affairs Administration MA	10	1.67
Ball State University, Student Affairs Administration in Higher Education MA	9	1.50
Texas A&M University, Student Affairs Administration in Higher Education MS	8	1.34
The University of Alabama, Higher Education MA	8	1.34
University of Houston- Victoria, Adult and Higher Education MA	8	1.34
University of Northern Iowa, Postsecondary Education: Student Affairs MA	8	1.34
Southern Illinois University Carbondale, College Student Personnel MS	7	1.17
Western Illinois University, College Student Personnel MS	7	1.17
Baldwin Wallace University, Leadership in Higher Education MEd	6	1.00
California State University Long Beach, Educational Leadership MS	6	1.00
Oregon State University, College Student Services Administration MEd	6	1.00
University of North Texas, Higher Education MEd	6	1.00
University of South Florida, College Student Affairs MS	6	1.00
University of Tennessee, College Student Personnel MS	6	1.00
University of Wisconsin- Whitewater, Higher Education Leadership MS	6	1.00
Louisiana State University, Higher Education Administration MA	5	0.83
Loyola University Chicago, Higher Education MEd	5	0.83
University of Arkansas at Little Rock, College Student Affairs MA	5	0.83
University of St. Thomas, Leadership in Student Affairs MA	5	0.83
Eastern Illinois University, Student Affairs MS	4	0.67
Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, Student Affairs in Higher Education MEd	4	0.67
Oklahoma State University, College Student Development MS	4	0.67
University of Mississippi, Higher Education/Student Personnel MA	4	0.67
Slippery Rock University, Student Affairs in Higher Education MA	4	0.67
Texas Tech University, Higher Education MEd	4	0.67
Canisius College, Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration MS	3	0.50
Florida State University, Higher Education Student Affairs MS	3	0.50
Indiana University Bloomington, Higher Education and Student Affairs MS	3	0.50
Marquette University, Student Affairs in Higher Education MEd	3	0.50
Old Dominion University, Higher Education MEd	3	0.50
Nova Southeastern University, College Student Affairs MS	3	0.50
Rutgers the State University of New Jersey, College Student Affairs MEd	3	0.50
University of Kansas, Higher Education MEd	3	0.50
SUNY University at Buffalo, Higher Education Administration MEd	3	0.50
University of South Carolina, Higher Education and Student Affairs MEd	3	0.50

Table 3 Continued

Program	n	%
The University of Memphis, Student Personnel MS	3	0.50
University of West Georgia, College Student Affairs MEd	3	0.50
West Chester University of Pennsylvania, Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs MS	3	0.50
Western Kentucky University, Student Affairs in Higher Education MAE	3	0.50
Appalachian State University, Student Affairs Administration MA	2	<0.01
Auburn University, Administration of Higher Education MEd	2	<0.01
Azusa Pacific University, College Counseling and Student Development MS	2	<0.01
Boston College, Higher Education MA	2	<0.01
Florida International University, Higher Education Administration MS	2	<0.01
Kansas State, College Student Development MS	2	<0.01
New York University, Higher Education and Student Affairs MA	2	<0.01
North Carolina State University, Higher Education Administration MEd	2	<0.01
Northeastern University, College Student Development and Counseling MS	2	<0.01
Rowan University, Higher Education Administration MA	2	<0.01
Sam Houston State University, Higher Education Administration MA	2	<0.01
Shippensburg University, College Student Personnel MS	2	<0.01
Stony Brook University, Higher Education Administration MA	2	<0.01
University of Central Florida, Higher Education and Policy Studies MA	2	<0.01
University of Michigan, Higher Education MA	2	<0.01
University of North Dakota, Higher Education MS	2	<0.01
University of the Pacific, Student Affairs MA	2	<0.01
University of Virginia, Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education MEd	2	<0.01
University of West Florida, College Student Affairs Administration MEd	2	<0.01
Angelo State University, Student Development and Leadership in Higher Education MEd	1	<0.01
Appalachian State University, Higher Education MA	1	<0.01
Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania, Educational Leadership & College Student Affairs MEd	1	<0.01
California Lutheran University, Counseling and College Student Personnel MS	1	<0.01
California State University Fullerton, Higher Education MS	1	<0.01
Drexel University, Higher Education MS	1	<0.01
Eastern Michigan University, Student Affairs MA	1	<0.01
Grand Valley State University, College Student Affairs Leadership MEd	1	<0.01
Iowa State University, Student Affairs MEd	1	<0.01
Merrimack College, Community Engagement MEd	1	<0.01
Messiah College, Higher Education MA	1	<0.01
Miami University, Student Affairs in Higher Education MS	1	<0.01
Michigan State University, Student Affairs Administration MA	1	<0.01
Murray State University, Postsecondary Education Administration MA	1	<0.01
New England College, Higher Education Administration MS	1	<0.01
Northern Arizona University, Counseling Student Affairs MEd	1	<0.01

Table 3 Continued

Program	n	%
Northwestern State University, Student Affairs in Higher Education MA	1	<0.01
Northwestern University, Higher Education Administration and Policy MS	1	<0.01
Ohio State University, The, Higher Education and Student Affairs MA	1	<0.01
Ohio University, College Student Personnel MEd	1	<0.01
Portland State University, Postsecondary, Adult, and Continuing Education MS	1	<0.01
Rider University, Organizational Leadership MA	1	<0.01
Saint Louis University, Student Personnel Administration MA	1	<0.01
Salem State University, Higher Education in Student Affairs MEd	1	<0.01
St. Cloud State University, Higher Education Administration	1	<0.01
SUNY Binghamton, Student Affairs Administration MS	1	<0.01
Syracuse University, Higher Education MS	1	<0.01
University of Arizona, College Student Personnel Administration MA	1	<0.01
University of Central Arkansas, College Student Personnel Services and Administration MS	1	<0.01
University of Dayton, Higher Education Administration MS	1	<0.01
University of Dayton, College Student Personnel MS	1	<0.01
University of Georgia, College Student Affairs Administration MS	1	<0.01
University of Louisville, College Student Personnel MEd	1	<0.01
University of Massachusetts, Higher Education MEd	1	<0.01
University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Student Personnel Administration in Higher Education MEd	1	<0.01
University of North Carolina at Wilmington, Higher Education MEd	1	<0.01
University of Northern Colorado, Higher Education and Student Affairs Leadership MA	1	<0.01
University of Oklahoma, Adult and Higher Education MS	1	<0.01
University of Southern Mississippi, College Personnel Services MEd	1	<0.01
University of Texas at Austin, College and University Student Personnel Administration MEd	1	<0.01
University of Texas at San Antonio, Educational Leadership Higher Education MEd	1	<0.01
University of Utah, Student Affairs MEd	1	<0.01
University of Vermont, Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration MEd	1	<0.01
University of Wisconsin- La Crosse, Student Affairs Administration in Higher Education MSEd	1	<0.01
Valdosta State University, Higher Education Leadership MEd	1	<0.01
Vanderbilt University, Higher Education Administration MEd	1	<0.01
West Virginia University, Higher Education Administration MA	1	<0.01
Western Illinois University, Higher Education Leadership MS	1	<0.01
Wright State University, Student Affairs in Higher Education MA	1	<0.01
Other program not listed	29	4.84
Total	599	

In order to answer the first research question, respondents were asked a series of 40 items: 36 from the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) and four created for this survey to measure burnout. The questions related to burnout in the survey were positively phrased so as to align with the rest of the surrounding questions. As such, they measure a respondent's *endurance* or lack of burnout in their role, which is used as the factor name going forward in data reporting so as to showcase the respondents' feelings appropriately.

For all satisfaction and burnout questions, responses were numerically coded, with "disagree very much" coded as 1, "disagree moderately" coded as 2, "disagree slightly" coded as 3, "agree slightly" coded as 4, "agree moderately" coded as 5, and "agree very much" coded as 6. The same coding was used for four of the seven items on the Career Commitment Inventory. Three other items, "If I could do it all over again, I would not choose to work in student affairs," "If I could go into a different profession which paid the same, I would probably take it," and "I am disappointed that I ever entered student affairs," were inversely scored, with "disagree very much" coded as 6, "disagree moderately" coded as 5, "disagree slightly" coded as 4, "agree slightly" coded as 3, "agree moderately" coded as 2, and "agree very much" coded as 1.

Table 4 contains the information about the responses for each satisfaction question for those in their first student affairs role at the time of the survey and thus received their questions in present tense. Table 5 contains the information about the responses for each satisfaction question for those no longer in their first student affairs role and thus received their questions in the past tense. Table 6 has this information combined across all respondents regardless of their current role. Table 7 contains the information about the responses for each burnout question for those in their first student affairs role at the time of the survey and thus received their questions in the present tense. Table 8 contains information about the responses for each burnout question

for those no longer in their first student affairs role and thus received their questions in the past tense. Table 9 combines this information to include all respondents. The n in each response varies as respondents were not required to answer all questions.

Tables 4-12 are organized from the highest to lowest mean with the tables offering dotted horizontal lines to delineate items within each Likert category range. Those who were in their first role at the time of the survey most agreed with the statements "I feel like my job is meaningful" ($\bar{x}$=5.05, σ=1.014), "I like the people I work with" ($\bar{x}$=4.99, σ=1.085), "my supervisor is fair to me" ($\bar{x}$=4.94, σ=1.305), "I feel a sense of pride in doing my job" ($\bar{x}$=4.93, σ=1.087), and "I like my supervisor" ($\bar{x}$=5.05, σ=1.014). They most disagreed with the statements "there is enough chance for promotion in my job" ($\bar{x}$=2.6, σ=1.352), "people get ahead as fast here as they do in other places" ($\bar{x}$=2.63, σ=1.389), "I feel satisfied with my chances for salary increases ($\bar{x}$=2.71, σ=1.488), "I am satisfied with my chance for promotion" ($\bar{x}$=2.71, σ=1.334), and "raises are an appropriate amount and appropriately frequent" ($\bar{x}$=2.72, σ=1.524). Further details are in Table 4.

Table 4

Satisfaction with Elements of First Student Affairs Role, Currently in First Postgraduate Professional Role

Satisfaction with Items, Currently in First Postgraduate Professional Role	Disagree Very Much (1) % (n)	Disagree Moderately (2) % (n)	Disagree Slightly (3) % (n)	Agree Slightly (4) % (n)	Agree Moderately (5) % (n)	Agree Very Much (6) % (n)	N	Mean SD
I feel my job is meaningful	0.00 (0)	2.98 (9)	4.97 (15)	14.90 (45)	35.67 (108)	41.39 (125)	302	5.05 1.01
I like the people I work with	0.35 (1)	4.53 (13)	2.79 (8)	20.21 (58)	32.40 (93)	39.72 (114)	287	4.99 1.09

Table 4 Continued

---	Disagree Very Much (1)	Disagree Moderately (2)	Disagree Slightly (3)	Agree Slightly (4)	Agree Moderately (5)	Agree Very Much (6)		
Satisfaction with Items, Currently in First Postgraduate Professional Role	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	N	Mean SD
My supervisor is fair to me	3.39 (10)	4.07 (12)	4.75 (14)	15.59 (46)	27.46 (81)	44.75 (132)	295	4.94 1.31
I feel a sense of pride in doing my job	0.33 (1)	3.33 (10)	5.67 (17)	23.33 (67)	30.33 (91)	38.00 (114)	300	4.93 1.09
I like my supervisor	3.72 (11)	4.73 (14)	4.73 (14)	15.20 (45)	25.34 (75)	46.28 (137)	296	4.93 1.35
I enjoy my coworkers	1.05 (3)	3.50 (10)	5.59 (16)	20.63 (59)	30.77 (88)	38.46 (110)	286	4.92 1.14
I am satisfied with the benefits I receive	1.69 (5)	3.05 (9)	5.42 (16)	17.63 (52)	37.97 (112)	34.24 (101)	295	4.90 1.13
I like doing the things I do at work	0.99 (3)	2.32 (7)	3.64 (11)	24.50 (74)	39.07 (118)	29.47 (89)	302	4.87 1.02
The benefits we receive are as good as most other organizations offer	1.69 (5)	4.05 (12)	7.43 (22)	17.91 (53)	32.09 (95)	36.82 (109)	296	4.85 1.21
The benefit package we have is equitable	1.35 (4)	4.05 (12)	6.42 (19)	19.93 (59)	33.78 (100)	34.46 (102)	296	4.84 1.17
My supervisor shows sufficient interest in feelings of subordinates	5.42 (16)	5.08 (15)	5.42 (16)	16.61 (49)	24.07 (71)	43.39 (128)	295	4.79 1.45
My job is enjoyable	1.00 (3)	5.69 (17)	7.69 (23)	23.08 (69)	36.12 (108)	26.42 (79)	299	4.67 1.17
My supervisor is quite competent in doing their job	6.76 (20)	7.09 (21)	6.08 (18)	13.51 (40)	30.07 (89)	36.49 (108)	296	4.63 1.53
My job is easier because my colleagues are competent	3.15 (9)	5.24 (15)	8.04 (23)	24.48 (70)	27.62 (79)	31.47 (90)	286	4.63 1.31
We have all of the benefits we should	3.39 (10)	6.10 (18)	12.20 (36)	22.37 (66)	27.12 (80)	28.81 (85)	295	4.50 1.36
There is very little bickering or fighting at work	3.86 (11)	8.42 (24)	12.63 (36)	17.19 (49)	28.07 (80)	29.82 (85)	285	4.47 1.44
I feel the work I do is appreciated	7.14 (21)	8.16 (24)	11.22 (33)	27.55 (81)	28.57 (84)	17.35 (51)	294	4.14 1.43

Table 4 Continued

Satisfaction with Items, Currently in First Postgraduate Professional Role	Disagree Very Much (1) % (n)	Disagree Moderately (2) % (n)	Disagree Slightly (3) % (n)	Agree Slightly (4) % (n)	Agree Moderately (5) % (n)	Agree Very Much (6) % (n)	N	Mean SD
When I do a good job, I receive the recognition for it that I should	8.47 (25)	12.54 (37)	11.86 (35)	26.10 (77)	25.42 (75)	15.59 (46)	295	3.94 1.51
The goals of this organization are clear to me	9.06 (26)	11.85 (34)	14.63 (42)	23.34 (67)	25.78 (74)	15.33 (44)	287	3.91 1.52
Work assignments are fully explained	6.64 (19)	12.24 (35)	16.78 (48)	27.27 (78)	23.78 (68)	13.29 (38)	286	3.89 1.42
I know what is going on with the organization	10.18 (29)	13.68 (39)	18.25 (52)	23.86 (68)	22.11 (63)	11.93 (34)	285	3.70 1.50
I have the right amount of paperwork	8.39 (24)	16.78 (48)	16.43 (47)	27.97 (80)	19.58 (56)	10.84 (31)	286	3.66 1.45
Our rules and procedures make it easier to do a good job	10.10 (29)	14.98 (43)	16.03 (46)	24.74 (71)	27.18 (78)	6.97 (20)	287	3.65 1.45
My efforts are rewarded the way they should be	10.92 (32)	13.31 (39)	21.16 (62)	27.65 (81)	17.41 (51)	9.56 (28)	293	3.56 1.45
My efforts to do a good job are seldom blocked by red tape	9.47 (27)	16.14 (46)	21.40 (61)	23.16 (66)	23.16 (66)	6.67 (19)	285	3.54 1.42
There are sufficient rewards for those who work here	11.60 (34)	13.99 (41)	22.18 (65)	29.01 (85)	13.99 (41)	9.22 (27)	293	3.47 1.44
Communications seem good within this organization	14.29 (41)	17.07 (49)	20.91 (60)	17.42 (50)	19.86 (57)	10.45 (30)	287	3.43 1.57
I have the right amount to do at work	12.54 (36)	16.03 (46)	24.04 (69)	20.21 (58)	19.86 (57)	7.32 (21)	287	3.41 1.47
I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do	20.86 (63)	19.87 (60)	15.56 (47)	20.53 (62)	16.56 (50)	6.62 (20)	302	3.12 1.58
I feel appreciated by the organization when I think about what they pay me	21.52 (65)	18.21 (55)	19.21 (58)	18.87 (57)	16.23 (49)	5.96 (18)	302	3.08 1.56
Those who do well on the job stand a fair chance at being promoted	21.33 (64)	23.67 (71)	17.33 (52)	21.67 (65)	11.33 (34)	4.67 (14)	300	2.92 1.48
Raises are an appropriate amount and appropriately frequent	31.99 (95)	14.81 (44)	20.88 (62)	18.18 (54)	9.76 (29)	4.38 (13)	297	2.72 1.52

Table 4 Continued

Satisfaction with Items, Currently in First Postgraduate Professional Role	Disagree Very Much (1) % (n)	Disagree Moderately (2) % (n)	Disagree Slightly (3) % (n)	Agree Slightly (4) % (n)	Agree Moderately (5) % (n)	Agree Very Much (6) % (n)	N	Mean SD
I feel satisfied with my chance for promotion	21.74 (65)	27.42 (82)	22.07 (66)	18.39 (55)	8.03 (24)	2.34 (7)	299	2.71 1.33
I feel satisfied with my chances for salary increases	28.86 (86)	20.81 (62)	18.79 (56)	17.79 (53)	9.73 (29)	4.03 (12)	298	2.71 1.49
People get ahead as fast as they do in other places	26.17 (78)	26.51 (79)	19.13 (57)	16.11 (48)	10.07 (30)	2.01 (6)	298	2.63 1.39
There is enough chance for promotion in my job	27.00 (81)	24.00 (72)	23.33 (70)	16.00 (48)	7.33 (22)	2.33 (7)	300	2.60 1.35

Those who were no longer in their first full time postgraduate professional role had some similar rankings. These respondents most strongly agreed with the statements "I felt my job was meaningful" ($\bar{x}$=4.73, σ=1.261), "I felt a sense of pride in doing my job" ($\bar{x}$=4.7, σ=1.27), "I liked doing the things I did at work" ($\bar{x}$=4.61, σ=1.227), "the benefit package we had was equitable" ($\bar{x}$=4.55, σ=1.28), and "I was satisfied with the benefits I received" ($\bar{x}$=4.55, σ=1.282). They most strongly disagreed with the statements "there was enough chance for promotion in my job" ($\bar{x}$=2.1, σ=1.417), "I felt satisfied with my chances for salary increases" ($\bar{x}$=2.12, σ=1.353), Raises were an appropriate amount and appropriately frequent" ($\bar{x}$=2.16, σ=1.353), "I was satisfied with my chance for promotion" ($\bar{x}$=2.18, σ=1.391) and "those who did well on the job stood a fair chance of being promoted" ($\bar{x}$=2.2, σ=1.363).

Table 5

Satisfaction with Elements of First Student Affairs Role, No Longer in First Postgraduate Professional Role

Satisfaction with Items, No Longer in First Postgraduate Professional Role	Disagree Very Much (1) % (n)	Disagree Moderately (2) % (n)	Disagree Slightly (3) % (n)	Agree Slightly (4) % (n)	Agree Moderately (5) % (n)	Agree Very Much (6) % (n)	N	Mean SD
I felt my job was meaningful	2.69 (9)	6.59 (22)	2.99 (10)	20.66 (69)	36.53 (122)	30.54 (102)	334	4.73 1.26
I felt a sense of pride in doing my job	2.10 (7)	5.71 (19)	7.81 (26)	21.02 (70)	30.93 (103)	32.43 (108)	333	4.70 1.27
I liked doing the things I did at work	3.30 (11)	3.90 (13)	7.21 (24)	24.32 (81)	36.94 (123)	24.32 (81)	333	4.61 1.23
The benefit package we had was equitable	3.68 (12)	5.83 (19)	7.06 (23)	21.47 (70)	39.26 (128)	22.70 (74)	326	4.55 1.28
I was satisfied with the benefits I received	3.66 (12)	4.88 (16)	9.45 (31)	22.87 (75)	35.67 (117)	23.48 (77)	328	4.52 1.28
I liked the people I worked with	6.15 (20)	5.54 (18)	8.62 (28)	19.08 (62)	32.62 (106)	28.00 (91)	325	4.50 1.44
The benefits we received were as good as most other organizations offer	3.99 (13)	7.36 (24)	8.28 (27)	22.70 (74)	32.82 (107)	24.85 (81)	326	4.48 1.36
I enjoyed my coworkers	5.57 (18)	6.19 (20)	9.60 (31)	20.43 (66)	29.41 (95)	28.79 (93)	323	4.48 1.44
We had all of the benefits we should have	4.91 (16)	8.90 (29)	11.35 (37)	22.39 (73)	32.82 (107)	19.63 (64)	326	4.28 1.40
My job was enjoyable	6.34 (21)	7.25 (24)	12.39 (41)	24.77 (82)	32.33 (107)	16.92 (56)	331	4.20 1.40
My supervisor was fair to me	12.54 (41)	11.93 (39)	7.34 (24)	18.96 (62)	21.10 (69)	28.13 (92)	327	4.09 1.74
I liked my supervisor	12.62 (41)	13.23 (43)	8.31 (27)	16.92 (55)	17.23 (56)	31.69 (103)	325	4.08 1.79
My job was easier because my colleagues were competent	10.46 (34)	11.38 (37)	12.62 (41)	17.85 (58)	26.77 (87)	20.92 (68)	325	4.02 1.62

Table 5 Continued

Satisfaction with Items, No Longer in First Postgraduate Professional Role	Disagree Very Much (1) % (n)	Disagree Moderately (2) % (n)	Disagree Slightly (3) % (n)	Agree Slightly (4) % (n)	Agree Moderately (5) % (n)	Agree Very Much (6) % (n)	N	Mean SD
My supervisor showed sufficient interest in the feelings of subordinates	16.56 (54)	12.27 (40)	10.43 (34)	17.48 (57)	17.79 (58)	25.46 (83)	326	3.84 1.81
My supervisor was quite competent in doing their job	16.77 (55)	16.16 (53)	7.93 (26)	12.80 (42)	22.87 (75)	23.48 (77)	328	3.79 1.84
There was very little bickering or fighting at work	13.54 (44)	14.77 (48)	12.31 (40)	18.15 (59)	27.08 (88)	14.15 (46)	325	3.73 1.64
The goals of that organization were clear to me	16.31 (53)	15.69 (51)	15.38 (50)	21.23 (69)	21.85 (71)	9.54 (31)	325	3.45 1.60
I felt the work I did was appreciated	16.26 (53)	16.26 (53)	16.87 (55)	23.31 (76)	17.79 (58)	9.51 (31)	326	3.39 1.57
Work assignments were fully explained	16.92 (55)	14.46 (47)	16.62 (54)	24.31 (79)	20.31 (66)	7.38 (24)	325	3.39 1.55
When I did a good job, I received the recognition for it that I should have	16.82 (55)	16.21 (53)	15.90 (52)	26.30 (86)	18.65 (61)	6.12 (20)	327	3.32 1.52
I had the right amount of paperwork	17.03 (55)	13.93 (45)	17.03 (55)	29.10 (94)	18.27 (59)	4.64 (15)	323	3.32 1.47
I knew what was going on with the organization	13.27 (43)	21.30 (69)	18.83 (61)	21.91 (71)	18.52 (60)	6.17 (20)	324	3.30 1.48
Our rules and procedures made it easier to do a good job	16.00 (52)	18.77 (61)	16.31 (53)	28.00 (91)	16.31 (53)	4.62 (15)	325	3.24 1.46
My efforts to do a good job were seldom blocked by red tape	19.81 (64)	22.29 (72)	20.12 (65)	19.81 (64)	12.07 (39)	5.88 (19)	323	3.00 1.49
I had the right amount to do at work	20.92 (68)	22.46 (73)	18.77 (61)	17.85 (58)	15.69 (51)	4.31 (14)	325	2.98 1.50
Communications seemed good within organization	21.85 (71)	25.85 (84)	16.31 (53)	17.85 (58)	13.54 (44)	4.62 (15)	325	2.89 1.50
My efforts were rewarded the way they should have been	22.63 (74)	23.55 (77)	22.32 (73)	18.35 (60)	10.09 (33)	3.06 (10)	327	2.79 1.40

Table 5 Continued

Satisfaction with Items, No Longer in First Postgraduate Professional Role	Disagree Very Much (1) % (n)	Disagree Moderately (2) % (n)	Disagree Slightly (3) % (n)	Agree Slightly (4) % (n)	Agree Moderately (5) % (n)	Agree Very Much (6) % (n)	N	Mean SD
There were sufficient rewards for those who worked there	22.09 (72)	26.38 (86)	23.62 (77)	17.48 (57)	8.28 (27)	2.15 (7)	326	2.70 1.33
I felt I was being paid a fair amount for the work	33.23 (111)	22.16 (74)	17.37 (58)	12.87 (43)	10.78 (36)	3.59 (12)	334	2.57 1.50
I felt appreciated by the organization when I thought about what they paid me	32.34 (108)	28.44 (95)	19.16 (64)	11.38 (38)	6.59 (22)	2.10 (7)	334	2.38 1.33
People got ahead as fast there as they did in other places	36.56 (121)	27.79 (92)	19.03 (63)	11.18 (37)	4.83 (16)	0.60 (2)	331	2.22 1.22
Those who did well on the job stood a fair chance of being promoted	41.74 (139)	24.32 (81)	17.72 (59)	8.71 (29)	3.60 (12)	3.90 (13)	333	2.20 1.22
I was satisfied with my chance for promotion	45.05 (150)	20.72 (69)	17.42 (58)	9.01 (30)	3.90 (13)	3.90 (13)	333	2.18 1.39
Raises were an appropriate amount and appropriately frequent	47.45 (158)	17.72 (59)	15.92 (53)	11.11 (37)	5.71 (19)	2.10 (7)	333	2.16 1.38
I felt satisfied with my chances for salary increases	46.41 (155)	22.75 (76)	12.87 (43)	10.78 (36)	4.79 (16)	2.40 (8)	334	2.12 1.35
There was enough chance for promotion in my job	49.40 (165)	21.56 (72)	11.98 (40)	7.78 (26)	5.69 (19)	3.59 (12)	334	2.10 1.42

The items from the JSS from the present tense and past tense questions were combined to include all respondents irrespective of whether they were in their first role at the time of the survey. Across all respondents, recent graduates felt that their first postgraduate jobs were meaningful ($\bar{x}$=4.896, σ=1.162), they had a sense of pride in those roles ($\bar{x}$=4.81, σ=1.192), they liked the people with whom they worked ($\bar{x}$=4.732, σ=1.305), they liked doing the things they did at work ($\bar{x}$=4.731, σ=1.139), and were satisfied with the benefits they received ($\bar{x}$=4.701,

σ=1.226). They did not believe there was enough chance for promotion in those roles ($\bar{x}$=2.333, σ=1.408), they were not satisfied with their chances for salary increase ($\bar{x}$=2.397, σ=1.447), they did not feel people got ahead in their organization as fast as other places ($\bar{x}$=2.415, σ=1.319), they did not feel that raises were appropriately frequent or of an appropriate amount ($\bar{x}$=2.425 σ=1.476), and they were not satisfied with their chance for promotion ($\bar{x}$=2.427, σ=1.389). Full details of the elements of satisfaction across all respondents are in Table 6.

Regarding feelings of burnout/endurance, those in their first position reported already feeling some burnout, with the means of three of the four measures falling between "disagree slightly" and "agree slightly." The fourth measure, "I regularly feel engaged in my work," yielded the highest level of agreement, just above "agree slightly" ($\bar{x}$=4.25, σ=1.366). The information regarding all items about endurance for those who were in their first role at the time of the survey are found in Table 7.

Table 6

Satisfaction with Elements of First Student Affairs Role Across All Respondents

Element	N	Mean	SD
Job is/was meaningful	636	4.90	1.162
Sense of pride in job	633	4.81	1.192
Like(d) people work(ed) with	612	4.73	1.305
Like(d) doing things at work	635	4.73	1.139
Satisfied with benefits	623	4.70	1.226
Benefits are/were equitable	622	4.69	1.235
Enjoy(ed) coworkers	609	4.69	1.322
Benefits are/were as good as elsewhere	622	4.65	1.301
Supervisor is/was fair to me	622	4.49	1.604
I like(d) my supervisor	621	4.48	1.648
My job is/was enjoyable	630	4.42	1.314
We have/had all benefits we should	621	4.39	1.383
Job is/was easier because colleagues are competent	611	4.30	1.515
Supervisor show(ed) sufficient interest in feelings of subordinates	621	4.29	1.713
Supervisor is/was competent	624	4.19	1.745
There is/was very little bickering and fighting at work	610	4.07	1.594
Work I do/did is/was appreciated	620	3.75	1.552
Organization's goals clear	612	3.67	1.577
Work assignments fully explained	611	3.62	1.51
Good job receives/d recognition	622	3.62	1.541
I know/knew what was going on in organization	609	3.48	1.501
Have/had the right amount of paperwork	609	3.48	1.472
Rules and procedures make/made it easier	612	3.43	1.468
Efforts are/were seldom blocked by red tape	608	3.25	1.483
Have/had the right amount of work	612	3.18	1.502
Efforts are/were rewarded the way they should be/have been	620	3.15	1.474
Communications seem(ed) good within organization	612	3.14	1.559
Sufficient rewards for those who work(ed) (t)here	619	3.07	1.433
Paid fair amount	636	2.83	1.562
Pay makes/made me feel appreciated	636	2.71	1.481
Those who do/did well have/had fair chance at promotion	633	2.54	1.462
Satisfied with my chance for promotion	632	2.43	1.389
Raises are/were appropriately frequent and of appropriate amount	630	2.43	1.476
People get/got ahead (t)here as fast as anywhere else	629	2.42	1.319
Chances for salary increase	632	2.40	1.447
Enough chance for promotion in job	634	2.33	1.408

Table 7

Feelings of Burnout/Endurance in First Student Affairs Role, Currently in First Postgraduate Professional Role

Survey Item	Disagree Very Much (1) % (n)	Disagree Moderately (2) % (n)	Disagree Slightly (3) % (n)	Agree Slightly (4) % (n)	Agree Moderately (5) % (n)	Agree Very Much (6) % (n)	N	Mean SD
I regularly feel engaged in my work	4.90 (14)	6.29 (18)	16.08 (46)	23.43 (67)	30.07 (86)	19.23 (55)	286	4.25 1.37
I seldom feel fed up with my job	11.89 (34)	19.93 (57)	15.38 (44)	21.33 (61)	18.88 (54)	12.59 (36)	286	3.53 1.58
I feel as though I could continue to do this job for a long time	26.48 (76)	12.54 (36)	13.24 (38)	19.51 (56)	16.72 (48)	11.50 (33)	287	3.22 1.75
I rarely feel burnt out	20.28 (58)	19.23 (55)	18.53 (53)	17.13 (49)	17.48 (50)	7.34 (21)	286	3.14 1.59

Those who were no longer in their first position reported higher levels of disagreement with the questions of endurance. Three of the four means fell between "disagree moderately" and "disagree slightly." The highest-rated measure, the same as the highest-rated measure by the group of those in their first role of "I regularly felt engaged in my work," still only found its mean between "disagree slightly" and "agree slightly" ($\bar{x}$=3.9, σ=1.438). The complete information about the endurance questions for those who were no longer in their first role can be found in Table 8.

The items measuring burnout/endurance in the present tense and past tense questions were next combined to include all respondents irrespective of whether they were in their first role at the time of the survey. Because the order of the four elements matched between those

who were still in the role and those who were not, the order remained the same when the groups were combined. Full details are in Table 9.

Table 8

Feelings of Burnout/Endurance in First Student Affairs Role, No Longer in First Postgraduate Professional Role

Survey Item	Disagree Very Much (1) % (n)	Disagree Moderately (2) % (n)	Disagree Slightly (3) % (n)	Agree Slightly (4) % (n)	Agree Moderately (5) % (n)	Agree Very Much (6) % (n)	N	Mean SD
I regularly felt engaged in my work	8.31 (27)	12.00 (39)	11.38 (37)	28.62 (93)	28.62 (93)	11.08 (36)	325	3.90 1.44
I seldom felt fed up with my job	25.00 (81)	27.16 (88)	18.83 (61)	14.20 (46)	10.80 (35)	4.01 (13)	324	2.71 1.46
I rarely felt burnt out	35.38 (115)	26.77 (87)	13.23 (43)	12.62 (41)	8.31 (27)	3.69 (12)	325	2.43 1.47
I felt as though I could have continued to do that job for a long time	51.08 (166)	13.23 (43)	11.38 (37)	12.31 (40)	6.77 (22)	5.23 (17)	325	2.26 1.58

Table 9

Feelings of Burnout/Endurance in First Student Affairs Role Across All Respondents

Element	N	Mean	SD
Regularly feel/felt engaged in my work	611	4.07	1.414
Seldom feel/felt fed up	610	3.09	1.571
Rarely feel/felt burnt out	611	2.76	1.565
Feel/Felt I could (have) continue(d) to do job for long time	612	2.71	1.727

To answer the second research question, respondents were asked a series of questions from the Career Commitment Inventory. Both those currently in the field of student affairs and those whom had left the profession most strongly disagreed with the concept that they were disappointed they had ever entered student affairs, making that measure the highest-rated

measure of both groups' occupational commitment due to its inverse scoring ($\bar{x}$=5.02, σ=1.187 for currently in field, $\bar{x}$=4.1, σ=1.655 for those who had left). Unsurprisingly, those who had left the student affairs field had the lowest commitment score when evaluating their agreement with the statement "I liked that career too well to give it up" ($\bar{x}$=2.47, σ=1.441) directly between "moderately disagree" and "slightly disagree." Those in the field however, rated the statement "if I had all the money I needed without working, I would probably still continue to work in student affairs" the lowest ($\bar{x}$=3.79, σ=1.607), just below "slightly agree." Further detail regarding the occupational commitment outcomes are found in Tables 10 and 11.

Table 10

Occupational Commitment to Student Affairs, Currently in Student Affairs Field

Survey Item	Disagree Very Much (1) % (n)	Disagree Moderately (2) % (n)	Disagree Slightly (3) % (n)	Agree Slightly (4) % (n)	Agree Moderately (5) % (n)	Agree Very Much (6) % (n)	N	Mean SD
I am disappointed that I ever entered student affairs*	49.14 (257)	21.22 (111)	15.49 (81)	10.52 (55)	3.44 (18)	0.19 (1)	523	5.02* 1.19
I definitely want a career for myself in student affairs	1.90 (10)	6.10 (32)	13.14 (69)	28.00 (147)	27.43 (144)	23.43 (123)	525	4.43 1.26
If I could do it all over again, I would not choose to work in student affairs*	27.24 (143)	26.67 (140)	20.00 (105)	14.29 (75)	6.48 (34)	5.33 (28)	525	4.38* 1.45
If I could go into a different profession which paid the same, I would probably take it*	23.95 (126)	25.48 (134)	23.76 (125)	16.54 (87)	6.27 (33)	3.99 (21)	526	4.32* 1.37
I like this career too well to give it up	4.77 (25)	14.31 (75)	15.08 (79)	23.66 (124)	23.28 (122)	18.89 (99)	524	4.03 1.46
This is the ideal profession for a life's work	6.29 (33)	11.05 (58)	20.19 (106)	28.38 (149)	24.76 (130)	9.33 (49)	525	3.82 1.34
If I had all the money I needed without working, I would probably still continue to work in student affairs	13.52 (71)	10.10 (53)	13.71 (72)	24.95 (131)	21.52 (113)	16.19 (85)	525	3.79 1.61
Total Commitment Score	-	-	-	-	-	-	526	29.72 7.52

*Inversely scored items, higher means indicate a stronger disagreement with the item and thus higher commitment to student affairs field

Table 11

Occupational Commitment to Student Affairs, No Longer in Student Affairs Field

Survey Item	Disagree Very Much (1) % (n)	Disagree Moderately (2) % (n)	Disagree Slightly (3) % (n)	Agree Slightly (4) % (n)	Agree Moderately (5) % (n)	Agree Very Much (6) % (n)	N	Mean SD
I am disappointed that I ever entered student affairs*	23.46 (19)	25.93 (21)	19.75 (16)	11.11 (9)	7.41 (6)	12.35 (10)	81	4.10* 1.66
If I could go into a different profession which paid the same, I would probably take it*	24.39 (20)	18.29 (15)	17.07 (14)	12.20 (10)	12.20 (10)	15.85 (13)	82	3.83* 1.79
If I could do it all over again, I would not choose to work in student affairs*	19.51 (16)	15.85 (13)	14.63 (12)	15.85 (13)	10.98 (9)	23.17 (19)	82	3.48* 1.84
If I had all the money I needed without working, I would probably work in student affairs	28.05 (23)	18.29 (15)	12.20 (10)	23.17 (19)	6.10 (5)	12.20 (10)	82	2.98 1.71
I definitely want a career for myself in student affairs	21.95 (18)	18.29 (15)	25.61 (21)	21.95 (18)	7.32 (6)	4.88 (4)	82	2.89 1.42
That was the ideal profession for a life's work	20.73 (17)	21.95 (18)	28.05 (23)	19.51 (16)	8.54 (7)	1.22 (1)	82	2.77 1.29
I liked that career too well to give it up	33.33 (27)	25.93 (21)	16.05 (13)	12.35 (10)	9.88 (8)	2.47 (2)	81	2.47 1.44
Total Commitment Score	-	-	-	-	-	-		22.43 7.81

*Inversely scored items, higher means indicate a stronger disagreement with the item and thus higher commitment to student affairs field

The Career Commitment Inventory measures that were worded in the present tense were combined with those worded in the past tense to get one measure for each item on the questionnaire irrespective of whether someone was in the field at the time of the survey. Across all respondents, they strongly indicated they were not disappointed they had entered student

affairs ($\bar{x}$=4.892, σ=1.297). This is unsurprising, as it was the most highly-rated item for both groups with its inverse scoring. The group showed the lowest level of occupational commitment on the measure asking them to indicate their agreement that student affairs was the "ideal profession for a life's work" ($\bar{x}$=3.68, σ=1.382), which places them between "slightly disagree" and "slightly agree," though closer to slightly agreeing with the statement on average.

Table 12

Occupational Commitment to Student Affairs Across All Respondents

Element	N	Mean	SD
Disappointed that I ever entered SA*	604	4.89*	1.297
Would not choose SA if I could do it again*	607	4.26*	1.537
Would go into another profession which paid the same*	608	4.26*	1.445
Definitely want a career in SA	607	4.22	1.382
Like(d) career too well to give it up	605	3.82	1.554
If had all the money needed without working, would work in SA	607	3.68	1.644
SA is the ideal profession for a life's work	607	3.68	1.382

*Inversely scored items, higher means indicate a stronger disagreement with the item and thus higher commitment to student affairs field

Using responses from all participants, Cronbach's alpha was computed for all factors with multiple additive survey items in order to understand they were measuring the same constructs and could be appropriately collapsed into factors. For measures of occupational commitment, the recoded inverse items were used in the Cronbach's Alpha analysis in order to measure appropriately. All factors were determined to have high reliability based on the values of Cronbach's alpha, as shown in Table 13.

Table 13

Cronbach's Alpha Calculations for Elements of Factors

Factor	Status	A
Supervision	Still in First Job	.938
	Now in Subsequent Job	.951
Contingent Rewards	Still in First Job	.947
	Now in Subsequent Job	.935
Operating Procedures	Still in First Job	.844
	Now in Subsequent Job	.822
Burnout/Endurance	Still in First Job	.852
	Now in Subsequent Job	.816
Benefits	Still in First Job	.930
	Now in Subsequent Job	.940
Promotion	Still in First Job	.929
	Now in Subsequent Job	.901
Pay	Still in First Job	.919
	Now in Subsequent Job	.894
Coworkers	Still in First Job	.881
	Now in Subsequent Job	.907
Nature of Work	Still in First Job	.916
	Now in Subsequent Job	.916
Communication	Still in First Job	.903
	Now in Subsequent Job	.885
Overall Satisfaction	Still in First Job	.960
	Now in Subsequent Job	.952
Occupational Commitment	In Student Affairs (SA)	.889
	Left	.826

After the Cronbach's alpha analyses, new variables were created using the sum of the answers to each item that created each factor as is expected by the JSS and Career Commitment Inventory scoring. For example, answers to "I feel my job is meaningful," "I like doing the things I do at work," "I feel a sense of pride in doing my job," "my job is enjoyable," "I felt my

job was meaningful," "I liked doing the things I did at work," "I felt a sense of pride in doing my job," and "my job was enjoyable" were all combined into a variable for the respondent's satisfaction with the nature of the work. It should be noted that no single respondent received all eight questions due to the difference in tenses, thus the need for separate Cronbach's alpha analyses. Each respondent only received the four questions in the proper tense, but the tense was the only difference in questions. As such, they were combined into one factor for the remaining analyses.

As expected, the most highly rated factor in terms of satisfaction across all respondents was the nature of the work ($\bar{x}$=18.79, σ=4.34), indicating that on average respondents moderately agree that they are satisfied on that factor. The second most highly rated factor across all respondents was their satisfaction with the benefits of the role ($\bar{x}$=18.37, σ=4.74), which was directly between slightly and moderately satisfied on average. The third most highly rated factor was satisfaction with their coworkers ($\bar{x}$=17.75, σ=5.08), again between slightly and moderate satisfaction. The respondents were least satisfied with their chances for promotion ($\bar{x}$=9.68, σ=4.99), indicating a they were between moderately and slightly dissatisfied with this factor. The next lowest-rated factor was the respondents' satisfaction with pay ($\bar{x}$=10.32, σ=5.19), again between moderately and slightly dissatisfied. The respondents' third-lowest rated factor was the burnout/endurance, indicating the respondents slightly disagreed that they had the endurance to continue in their role or had on average a slight level of burnout. Full information on the satisfaction and burnout/endurance factors is found in Table 14.

Table 14

Levels of Satisfaction and Endurance

Factors		Mean	SD
Nature of work	All Respondents	18.79	4.34
	In Student Affairs	19.03	4.19
	Left Student Affairs	17.24	4.93
Benefits	All Respondents	18.37	4.74
	In Student Affairs	18.73	4.56
	Left Student Affairs	16.06	5.26
Coworkers	All Respondents	17.75	5.08
	In Student Affairs	18.06	4.90
	Left Student Affairs	15.79	5.76
Supervision	All Respondents	17.40	6.26
	In Student Affairs	17.84	6.02
	Left Student Affairs	14.51	7.04
Communication	All Respondents	13.90	5.36
	In Student Affairs	14.14	5.32
	Left Student Affairs	12.27	5.38
Contingent Rewards	All Respondents	13.50	5.56
	In Student Affairs	13.94	5.45
	Left Student Affairs	10.67	5.44
Operating Procedures	All Respondents	13.30	4.86
	In Student Affairs	13.68	4.83
	Left Student Affairs	10.85	4.39
Burnout/Endurance	All Respondents	12.61	5.19
	In Student Affairs	12.98	5.18
	Left Student Affairs	10.22	4.67
Pay	All Respondents	10.32	5.29
	In Student Affairs	10.65	5.24
	Left Student Affairs	8.30	5.13
Promotion	All Respondents	9.68	4.99
	In Student Affairs	10.04	5.00
	Left Student Affairs	7.47	4.34

In reviewing the data for the third question, I removed an outlier in the salary variable from the dataset based on z-score of 21.39. This respondent entered $370,000 as their starting

salary. An additional respondent entered $3,000. While it seems unlikely that this is an accurate report of a starting salary, the z-score for this case was within the acceptable range to not be determined a statistical outlier eligible for removal. The average starting salary for the respondents' first postgraduate professional role was $37,360.44, with a standard deviation of $7,724.95.

Table 15

Overall Measures Across All Respondents

Measure		Mean	SD
Overall Satisfaction	All Respondents	130.36	35.51
	In Student Affairs	133.67	34.52
	Left Student Affairs	109.51	54.76
Occupational Commitment	All Respondents	28.74	7.95
	In Student Affairs	29.72	7.52
	Left Student Affairs	22.43	7.81
Starting Salary	All Respondents	$37,360.44	$7,724.95
	In Student Affairs	$37,424.48	$7,588.43
	Left Student Affairs	$36,948.85	$8,590.09

Before analyzing the data to compare the means of the factors, it was important to perform Levene's Test for Equality of Variance in order to appropriately read the results of the t-tests. Four of the 13 factors' variance tests were significant ($p<0.05$), meaning equal variance between the groups could not be assumed. The results of Levene's Test for Equality of Variance for all factors is found in Table 16.

Table 16

Levene's Test for Equality of Variance Between Those Remaining in the Field and Those Who Have Left

Factor	F	Sig	Assume Equal Variance?
Supervision	10.133	.002*	No
Coworkers	7.476	.006*	No
Nature of Work	5.583	.018*	No
Promotion	4.805	.029*	No
Burnout/Endurance	3.576	.059	Yes
Pay	2.128	.145	Yes
Benefits	2.048	.153	Yes
Operating Procedures	1.027	.311	Yes
Communication	.363	.547	Yes
Starting Salary	.244	.624	Yes
Contingent Rewards	.059	.809	Yes
Overall Satisfaction	.025	.874	Yes
Occupational Commitment	.010	.921	Yes

*Significant at $p<.05$

Next, independent samples t-tests were performed on all factors. Every factor showed significant differences between those who had stayed in the field and those who had left with the exception of starting salary ($p<0.05$). Those who were in the student affairs field indicated significantly higher satisfaction on measures of satisfaction with supervision, satisfaction with contingent rewards, satisfaction with operating procedures, satisfaction with benefits, satisfaction with promotion, satisfaction with pay, satisfaction with coworkers, satisfaction with communication, and satisfaction with the nature of the work, as well as higher overall job satisfaction. They also reported lower levels of burnout at a significant rate, as well as statistically significantly higher occupational commitment. In spite of there being a difference in satisfaction with pay, there was no significant difference in terms of starting salary ($p=.604$). The full results of the independent samples t-tests can be found in Table 17.

Table 17

Independent Samples T-Test Results for Satisfaction, Burnout, and Occupational Commitment by Whether in Field

Factor	Status	N	Mean	SD	Sig	Mean Diff
Supervision	In SA	540	17.84	6.02	.000*	3.333
	Left	84	14.51	7.04		
Contingent Rewards	In SA	540	13.94	5.45	.000*	3.274
	Left	84	10.67	5.44		
Operating Procedures	In SA	530	13.68	4.83	.000*	2.827
	Left	82	10.85	4.39		
Burnout/Endurance	In SA	530	12.98	5.18	.000*	2.764
	Left	82	10.22	4.67		
Benefits	In SA	540	18.73	4.56	.000*	2.672
	Left	84	16.06	5.26		
Promotion	In SA	547	10.04	5.00	.000*	2.565
	Left	87	7.47	4.34		
Pay	In SA	549	10.65	5.24	.000*	2.346
	Left	87	8.30	5.13		
Coworkers	In SA	530	18.06	4.90	.001*	2.264
	Left	82	15.79	5.76		
Communication	In SA	530	14.14	5.32	.003*	1.879
	Left	82	12.27	5.38		
Nature of Work	In SA	549	19.03	4.19	.002*	1.793
	Left	87	17.24	4.93		
Overall Satisfaction	In SA	549	133.67	34.52	.000*	24.159
	Left	87	109.51	54.76		
Occupational Commitment	In SA	526	29.72	7.52	.000*	7.296
	Left	82	22.43	7.81		
Starting Salary	In SA	527	$37,424.48	$7,588.43	.604	$475.63
	Left	82	$36,948.85	$8,590.09		

*Significant at p<.05

To answer the final research question, several logistic regression models were built using forward, backward, stepwise, and manual entry logistic regression methods. I sought the model

with the fewest predictor variables while still maintaining the highest level of predictive success without compromising Nagelkerke R^2 values. The final model became:

ln[p/(1-p)] = -2.732 + 0.095(commitment) + 0.029(overall satisfaction) - 0.11(communication satisfaction)

Table 18

Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1	Occupational Commitment	0.095	0.017	29.983	1	>0.001	1.100
	Overall Satisfaction	0.029	0.007	16.296	1	>0.001	1.029
	Satisfaction with Communication	-0.110	0.042	6.948	1	0.008	0.896
	Constant	-2.732	0.592	21.260	1	>0.001	0.065

In this model, only occupational commitment, communication satisfaction, and overall satisfaction are represented with Beta coefficients as shown in Table 18. Even with only three of the several tested factors, the model correctly predicted 88.3% of the cases in the dataset as shown in Table 19. The Nagelkerke R^2 value of the model is .216. While there is not an equivalent to the R^2 found in ordinary least squares (OLS) regression for logistic regression, the Nagelkerke R^2 is one of many pseudo R^2 values that have been created to determine the goodness of fit of a model (UCLA, 2011). This shows that the model certainly has room for improvement. This model indicates that for every one-point increase in occupational commitment, the odds of remaining in the student affairs field increase by about 10%. For every one-point increase in overall satisfaction in one's first postgraduate professional role (the combination of all JSS items), the odds of remaining in the student affairs field increase by 2.9%. And last, for every one-point increase in satisfaction with communication in one's first postgraduate professional role, the odds of remaining in the student affairs field decrease by 10%.

It should be additionally noted here that one's satisfaction with communication is also included in the overall satisfaction scoring. Therefore, satisfaction with communication became

the best factor to assist in correcting the overestimates that would happen by only using the overall JSS score and occupational commitment. It should be noted that a separate variable of overall satisfaction without communication satisfaction was created to test in a model to determine if it could improve the best-fit model. This test did not significantly alter the beta coefficients nor the Nagelkerke R^2 value, so satisfaction with communication remains in both the overall satisfaction factor's positive beta coefficient and the communication satisfaction factor's negative beta coefficient. If entered into the model alone with no covariates, communication satisfaction has a positive beta coefficient, but again, the best-fit model included satisfaction with communication in both places in the model.

Table 19

Predictive Capabilities of Final Model

			Predicted Attrition		
	Observed		Left	Stayed	Percentage Correct
Step 1	Attrition	Left	14	68	17.1
		Stayed	3	523	99.4
	Overall Percentage				88.3

Chapter 4 Closure

This chapter has served to review the results of surveying 697 recent alumni of student affairs master's degree programs nationwide. It was determined that respondents were most satisfied with the nature of the work, the benefits received, and their coworkers when reflecting on their first postgraduate professional role. They were least satisfied with their pay and opportunities for promotion in these roles and experienced moderate burnout. Respondents were overall committed to the student affairs field.

There were differences discovered between those who were still in the student affairs field at the time of the survey and those who no longer worked in the field. Those who were still in the student affairs field rated their satisfaction with supervision, contingent rewards, operating procedures, benefits, promotion, pay, coworkers, communication, and the nature of the work in their first postgraduate role significantly higher than those who had left the field. This also resulted in a significantly higher overall satisfaction score for those who stayed. They also scored higher on measures of occupational commitment. There was no significant difference in the starting salaries of those who stayed and those who left.

In working to develop a model to predict the log odds of leaving or staying in the field, only three factors were valuable in this pursuit: overall satisfaction, occupational commitment, and satisfaction with communication. Chapter 5 will explain how the above findings connect to the existing literature as well as provide recommendations for researchers as well as higher education employers and graduate preparation programs.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In seeking to answer my research questions, several major results were found in the areas of attrition rates, levels of satisfaction, levels of occupational commitment, starting salaries, and determining the odds of one staying in or leaving the field.

Job Satisfaction and Burnout

When considering different elements of their first postgraduate professional role, recent alumni of student affairs master's degree programs reported quite varied levels of satisfaction (see Figure 2).

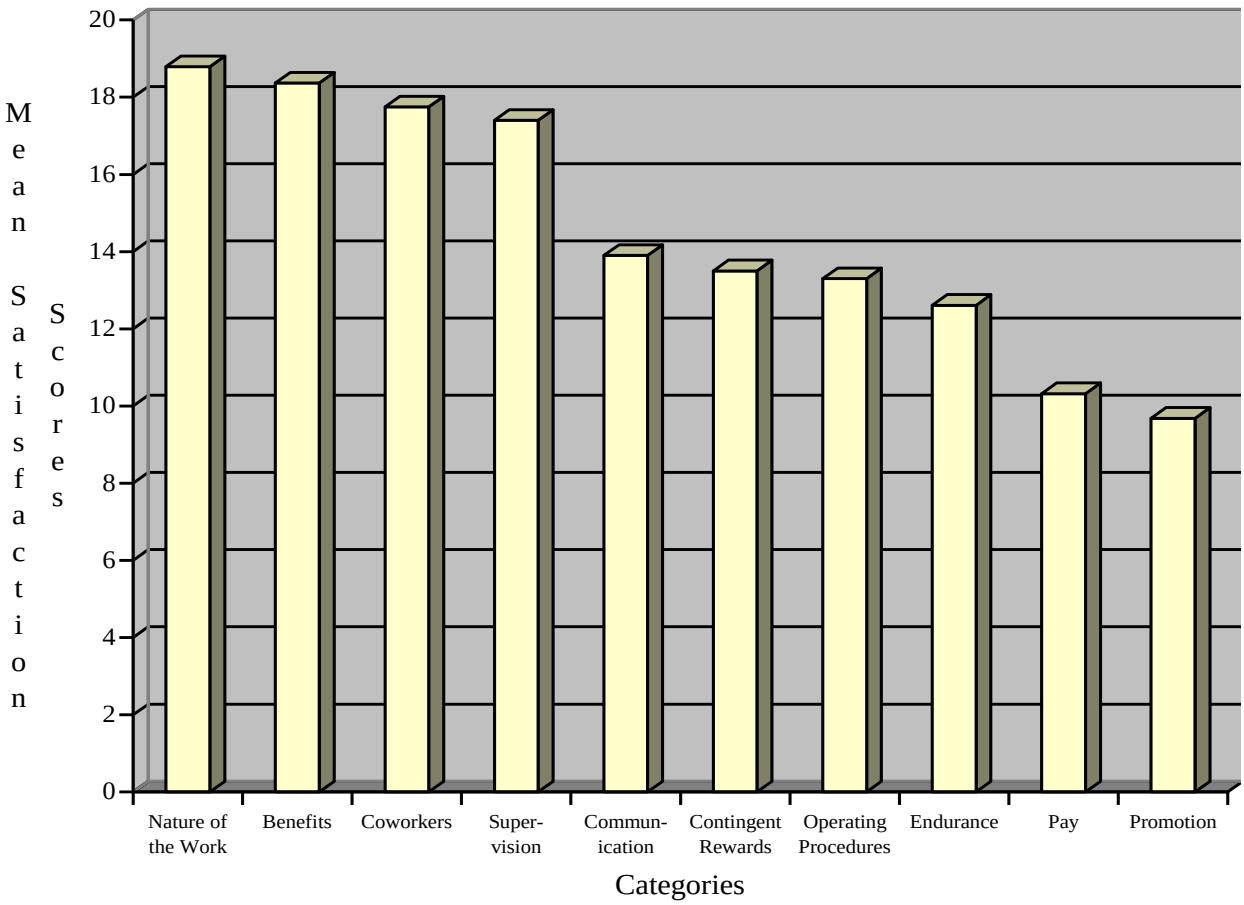

Figure 2. Mean satisfaction/endurance scores among all respondents. Minimum score of 4, (disagree very much), maximum score of 24, (agree very much).

Unsurprisingly, all respondents were most satisfied with the nature of the work, with the average falling near "agree moderately" when answering satisfaction questions about this factor. The next highest rated factor was satisfaction with benefits, again with the average falling closest to respondents indicating they "agree moderately" they are satisfied. Coming in third and falling closer to but still above "agree slightly" was respondents' satisfaction with coworkers. Similarly situated was respondents' satisfaction with supervision.

There is then a large gap in the mean satisfaction scores, with satisfaction with communication, satisfaction with contingent rewards, and satisfaction with operating procedures coming in fifth, sixth, and seventh, respectively, and falling almost directly in the middle of "agree slightly" and "disagree slightly" on average. Respondents were really neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with these factors on average.

A smaller but still noticeable space follows before the next factor of endurance/burnout. The respondents on average fell close to the "disagree slightly" rating, indicating that they experienced a slight level of burnout in their first postgraduate professional role.

Another large drop follows, with satisfaction with pay being rated firmly between "disagree moderately" and "disagree slightly" on average. It is clear that respondents were dissatisfied with their pay, as expected. Respondents reported being most dissatisfied with their satisfaction with promotion. It was the lowest rated factor with a score also between "disagree moderately" and "disagree slightly," though closer to "disagree moderately." The respondents, as whole, were dissatisfied with their opportunities for advancement from their first postgraduate professional role.

When turning to my research question which examined differences between those who left the student affairs field and those who remained, there were statistically significant ($p<.05$) differences on nearly every factor that was studied (see Figure 3).

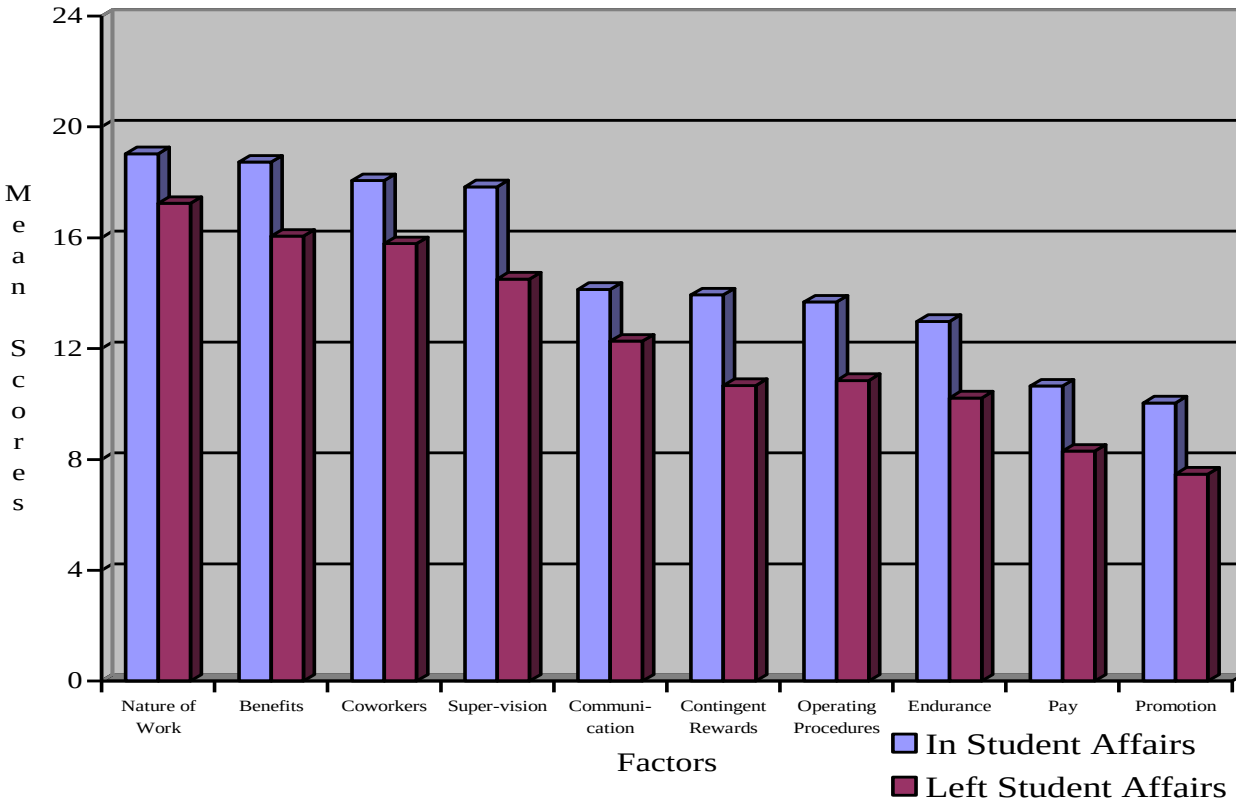

Figure 3. Mean satisfaction/endurance scores between groups of interest. Minimum score of 4, (disagree very much), maximum score of 24, (agree very much).

The largest difference was found in the respondents' satisfaction with supervision. Those who were in the field at the time of the survey indicated more satisfaction with their supervision in their first postgraduate professional role than those who had moved into other career paths. While those who were still in student affairs reported being solidly between "agree slightly" and "agree moderately" in being satisfied with their supervision, those who had left the field neither agreed nor disagreed, falling firmly in the middle.

The next largest difference was found in the respondents' satisfaction with contingent rewards. This was a slightly more surprising finding, as the contingent rewards factor was not necessarily at the forefront of past research. However, it is possible that this is related to respondents' varied satisfaction with supervision, as respondents may have attributed the questions to their supervisor or salary when asked to rate their agreement with the contingent reward questions: "when I do a good job, I receive the recognition for it that I should," "I feel the work I do is appreciated," "there are sufficient rewards for those who work here," and "my efforts are rewarded the way they should be." Indeed, the supervision factor is positively correlated with the contingent rewards factor ($r=0.61$; $p<0.05$).

Overall, those in student affairs reported higher levels of satisfaction with contingent rewards than those who were no longer in the field. Those who were no longer in the field fell between "disagree moderately" and "disagree slightly" on average, and those who were in the field at the time of the study were directly in the middle of the range, indicating on average they neither agree nor disagree with being satisfied with the factor. This could also be a difference in their experiences with contingent rewards in their subsequent profession(s) after leaving the field.

Satisfaction with operating procedures had the next largest difference between those who had left the field and those who were still in student affairs at the time of the survey. While those in the student affairs field indicated that on average they neither agreed nor disagreed with being satisfied with the elements related to operating procedures, those who had left the field indicated they were between slightly and moderately dissatisfied. This could also be related to how respondents understood the questions in relation to the questions for the supervision factor. The questions in the operating procedures factor: "our rules and procedures make it easier to do a

good job," "my efforts to do a good job are seldom blocked by red tape," "I have the right amount to do at work," and "I have the right amount of paperwork" could easily be influenced by and related to the respondent's perception of their supervision. Again, this factor is correlated with the supervision factor ($r=0.434$; $p<0.05$). Another possible explanation is also related to the departed respondents' experiences after leaving the field. Their new fields may have provided insight into what they perceived to be better operating procedures, influencing their reported satisfaction levels regarding their first role within the student affairs field.

When answering questions of burnout/endurance, those in the student affairs field reported levels that were approaching slight burnout in their first postgraduate student affairs role on average. However, those who had left the field averaged higher levels of burnout (lower means on their endurance scores), which showed them to be almost directly in between slightly and moderately burnt out in their roles.

All respondents were satisfied with the benefits they received in their first postgraduate professional role, but the two groups reported significantly different levels of satisfaction with this factor as well. Those in the student affairs field reported being between slightly and moderately satisfied on average, leaning toward moderate satisfaction. Those who had left the field were only slightly satisfied with their benefits in the first postgraduate professional student affairs role on average.

Quite the contrary to their benefits satisfaction, all respondents were dissatisfied with their promotion opportunities and overall it was the lowest-rated factor studied. But again, there was a significant difference in the two groups' satisfaction on this factor. While those in the student affairs field reported being between slightly and moderately dissatisfied with their

promotion opportunities in their first roles, those who had left the field were between moderately and strongly dissatisfied on average.

As with their satisfaction with their promotion opportunities, all respondents were dissatisfied with their pay on average but there was a significant difference in the two groups' satisfaction on this measure. While those who were in the field on average were between slightly and moderately dissatisfied with their pay, those who had left the field reported being moderately dissatisfied.

The respondents' satisfaction with their coworkers in their first postgraduate professional role is quite the opposite. While all respondents on average were satisfied with their coworkers, those still in the student affairs field were directly between slight and moderate satisfaction whereas those who had departed were only slightly satisfied with their colleagues. This still resulted in a significant difference between the means of the two groups.

When reporting their levels of satisfaction with communication, those still in the field seemed to be neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with this facet of their first postgraduate professional roles on average. However, those who had left the field reported being slightly dissatisfied with the communication in their comparable roles.

While the nature of the work was the most highly-rated factor among all respondents, there was still a significant difference between the two groups with respect to their satisfaction on this factor. While those who were still in the field at the time of the survey on average reported moderate satisfaction with this factor, those who had left the field were on average just above slight satisfaction with the nature of the work.

When examining the totality of all of the items from the JSS including the sum of respondents' satisfaction with the nature of the work, their benefits, their coworkers, their

supervision, the communication at their workplaces, the contingent rewards available, the operating procedures at their institution, their pay, and their promotion opportunities, there was also a significant difference between the average overall satisfaction. This is unsurprising, given that all of these factors were individually significant as well. Overall, those still in the student affairs field report being moderately satisfied with their first postgraduate professional role. Those who had left the field reported being slightly satisfied with their comparable roles. This is depicted in Figure 4.

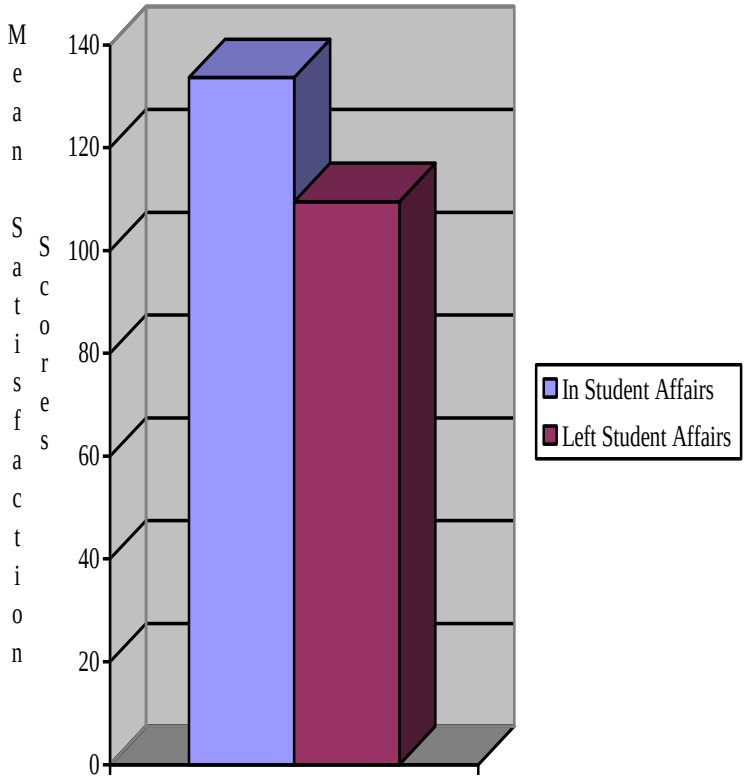

Figure 4. Mean overall satisfaction scores between groups of interest. Minimum possible score of 36, (disagree very much), maximum possible score of 216, (agree very much).

Occupational Commitment

Overall, respondents indicate a slight level of occupational commitment to the student affairs field as a whole versus their satisfaction with their particular positions as discussed above.

When considering all of the portions of the Career Commitment Inventory, all respondents averaged just above “agree slightly” on measures of occupational commitment.

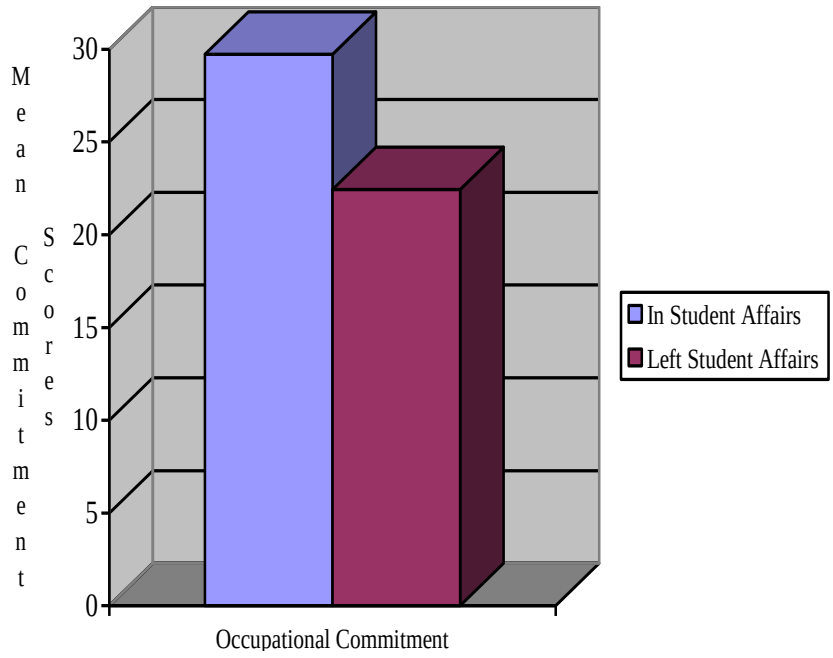

Figure 5. Mean overall occupational commitment scores between groups of interest. Minimum possible score of 7, (lack of commitment), maximum possible score of 42, (strong commitment).

In comparing the respondents’ overall occupational commitment, there was a significant difference, with those in the student affairs field predictably reporting higher levels of occupational commitment. While those in the field have just above a slight level of occupational commitment on average, those who had left the field fared somewhat lower on the tool, overall reporting a slight lack of occupational commitment, as shown in Figure 5.

Starting Salary

The average starting annual salary for all respondents’ first postgraduate professional role was $37,360.44 USD. Reported starting salaries ranged from $3,000 to $70,000. While it is likely that $3,000 was entered in error, it was not statistically different enough from the average to warrant removal and was thus factored into the overall mean.

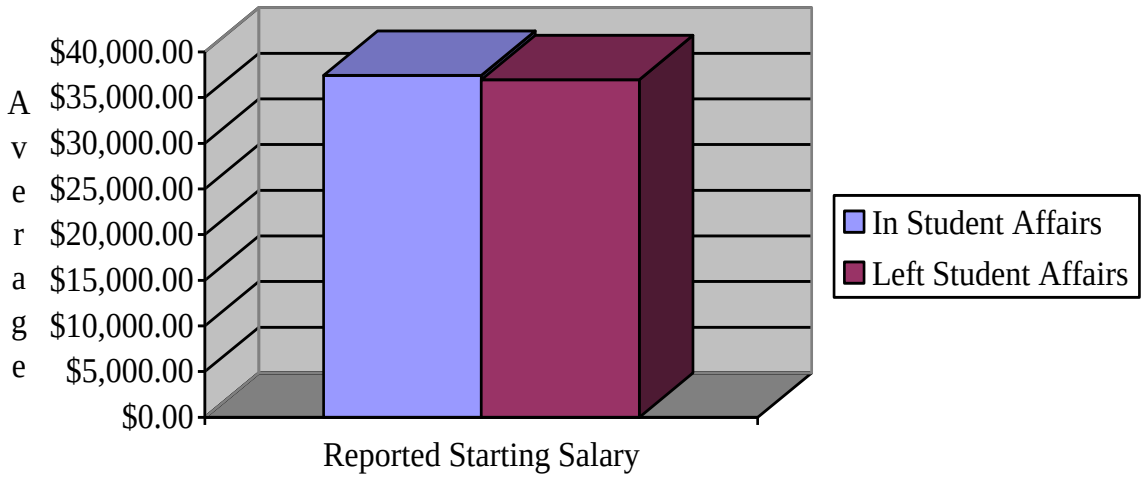

Figure 6. Mean starting salary in first postgraduate professional role, USD.

Interestingly, there was *no* significant difference between those who stayed and those who left in their reported starting salary. Starting salary in their first postgraduate role was the *only* factor studied that did not yield a significant difference between the two groups. As noted above, there was a difference in their satisfaction with salary, though they were assessing comparable salaries for comparable roles. The average starting salary of the groups differed by only $475.63. These similar salaries shown in Figure 6.

Determining the Odds of Staying or Leaving

The rate of retention among those surveyed was an astounding 84.4% meaning only about one in six alumni had left the field at the time of the survey and this group has a much better retention rate in the field than those reported in the past. When investigating the option of building a model to predict the log odds of attrition from the field, three factors were determined to be significant in explaining those professionals' departure: overall satisfaction with one's first postgraduate role, communication satisfaction with one's first postgraduate role, and occupational commitment to the student affairs field.

The resulting model of

$$ln[p/(1-p)] = -2.732 + 0.095(commitment) + 0.029(overall\ satisfaction) - 0.11(communication\ satisfaction)$$

indicates that for every one-point increase in occupational commitment to the student affairs field according to the Career Commitment Inventory, it is expected that the odds of someone remaining in the field increase by about 9.5%. For every one-point increase in one's overall satisfaction in their first postgraduate professional role according to the JSS, it is expected that the odds of staying in the field increase by almost 3%. However, included in that overall JSS score is a score for communication satisfaction, and the same model notes that for every one-point increase in satisfaction with communication in one's first postgraduate professional role, it is expected that the odds of one staying in the field decrease by 11%.

Revised Conceptual Framework

Based on these results, the conceptual model presented in Chapter 1 was revised to remove starting salary and burnout as influencing factors on whether or not someone remains in the field. Starting salary was not significant in any comparative analyses nor in the logistic regression model. While burnout was significant in determining differences between the two groups, the factor was not significant and thus not used in the best fit logistic regression model. Using the model to shape the conceptual framework, overall job satisfaction, occupational commitment, and an additional consideration outside of overall job satisfaction for satisfaction with communication area the included factors that influence whether someone remains in the student affairs field in the updated framework shown in Figure 7.

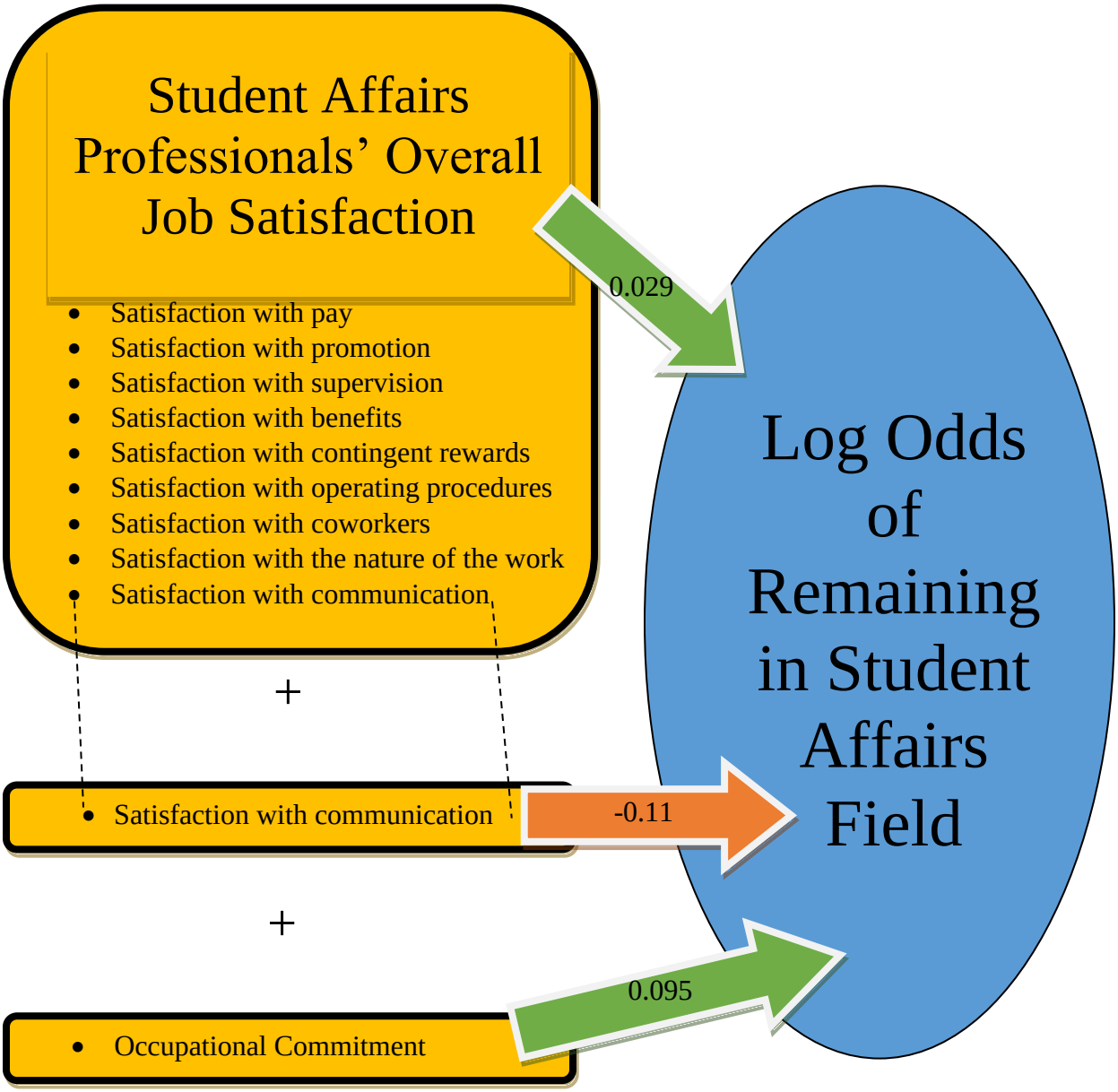

Figure 7. Revised conceptual framework (Allbee, 2019).

Relationship of Results to Existing Studies

As this research becomes a part of the larger body of literature available regarding student affairs attrition, it is important to discuss how the results relate to previous studies.

Attrition

First, the attrition rate of the surveyed group of alumni was much lower than has been reported in the literature in the past only 15.67% of the 697 respondents had left the student affairs field. This is in sharp contrast to the much higher rates found in Burns (1982) and Tull et al. (2008), who had noted more than half and between 20% and 40%, respectively. It is possible this is due to sampling and those who left the field were not reached in the same ways as those who were. However, it is important to note that many previous studies regarding satisfaction and commitment have examined the respondents' *intent* to leave the field instead of hearing from those who had made the switch (e.g., Johnsrud, et al., 2000; Rosser & Javinar, 2003; Silver & Jakeman, 2014; Tull, 2006; Valadez & Anthony, 2001). Within those studies which asked about respondents' intent to leave, there is not data about whether they actually subsequently left, which may yield a smaller percentage.

Job Satisfaction

When examining the participants' levels of satisfaction with different elements of their first postgraduate professional role and how the two groups compare on these items, there are many instances of these results connecting to existing literature.

Satisfaction with the nature of the work. Participants reported the highest levels of satisfaction with the nature of the work ($\bar{x}$=18.79; σ=4.34). This is in alignment with the foundational work of Bender (1980) wherein student affairs professionals indicated they were highly satisfied. These results also share a strong connection to the work of Hirt et al. (2005), as participants in that study also rated "meaningful work" as the most important factor in their job satisfaction.

Though both groups rated the nature of the work highly, there was still a significant difference between those who stayed in the field ($\bar{x}$=19.03; σ=4.19) and those who left ($\bar{x}$=17.24; σ=4.93) in terms of how satisfied they were on this factor. Those who were still in the field were more satisfied with the nature of the work than their counterparts who had left. This very much supports the work of Johnsrud et al. (2000) which found that the quality of the work among midlevel student affairs administrators was closely related to morale, which shared a significant negative correlation with one's intent to leave their role in that study.

Satisfaction with benefits. The participants' strong satisfaction with their benefits ($\bar{x}$=18.37; σ=4.74) has a clear connection to the AFLAC WorkForces Report (2012). This report spoke specifically to the importance of an organization offering robust benefits when it came to their employees' satisfaction. The AFLAC information also supports the finding in this study that those who stayed in the field ($\bar{x}$=18.73; σ=4.56) reported higher levels of satisfaction with their benefits than those who had left ($\bar{x}$=16.06; σ=5.26). This finding also affirms the work of Valadez and Anthony (2001) wherein they found that faculty respondents would leave their positions for opportunities which offered better benefits.

Satisfaction with coworkers. The respondents' high level of satisfaction with their coworkers ($\bar{x}$=17.75; σ=5.08) affirms the work of Renn and Hodges (2007) and Volkwein et al. (1998). Renn and Hodges noted the importance of relationships in the first year of a professional position for recent student affairs alumni while Volkwein et al. found the same importance of coworkers among administrators. This finding also connects to Fraser and Hodge's (2000) research; though they were studying faculty, they expressed the influence of experiences with coworkers on satisfaction.

Beyond simply being satisfied with their coworkers as a whole population, it was again found that those who were still in the field rated their satisfaction with coworkers significantly higher on average ($\bar{x}$=18.06; σ=4.90) than those who had left the field ($\bar{x}$=15.79; σ=5.76). This finding is related to the Hirschy et al. (2015) findings wherein they explained the importance of socialization to the field in terms of retention of the new student affairs professional. Coworkers are a distinct part of socialization to the field and the researchers found this to be important for professional identity development, which is supported by this research.

Satisfaction with supervision. However, the participants' satisfaction with their supervision ($\bar{x}$=17.40; σ=6.26) runs contrary to the work of a few different research studies including Barham and Winston (2006), Cooper et al. (2001), Tull (2011), and Winston et al. (2001). These studies all reported on a distinct lack of understanding of appropriate supervision practices in the student affairs world, which one would expect to yield a low level of satisfaction on this factor.

While the respondents as a whole were satisfied with their supervision, this factor held the largest difference in the two groups' satisfaction. Those who were still in the field reported being markedly more satisfied with their supervision ($\bar{x}$=17.84; σ= 6.02) than those who left the field ($\bar{x}$=14.51; σ=7.04). This aligns with the work of Marshall et al. (2016) and Tull (2006). While Tull's work focused specifically on synergistic supervision, the participants' perceived level of synergistic supervision was negatively related to their turnover intent, which is clearly supported by my findings. Additionally, in the findings from Marshall et al. (2016), more than a quarter of respondents who had left student affairs indicated that their supervisor was a factor in their attrition; this research my supports this finding.

One possible explanation for the large difference in satisfaction with supervision between the two groups could be attributed to the knowledge gained from the study by Barham and Winston (2006). The authors found that supervisors and supervisees alike within student affairs had trouble articulating the needs of new professionals in terms of supervision. It is possible, then, that those who left the field continued on to other fields with better knowledge of supervisory skill and thus retroactively shaped their opinions of their first supervisor as they learned more.

Satisfaction with pay. Conversely, the current findings regarding participants' dissatisfaction with their pay ($\bar{x}$=10.32; σ=5.29) is right in line with the literature and affirms the work of Silver and Jakeman (2014) and Marshall et al. (2016). These two studies examined opposite ends of the attrition experience, with Silver and Jakeman learning from master's students that they were already concerned about their pay opportunities in student affairs, and Marshall et al. discovering that pay was one of the important reasons that was cited by those who had already left the field. Though the work of Marshall et al. cited "pay," more reflection makes one understand that it was particularly the respondents' satisfaction with their pay that they were likely citing instead of specifically their numerical salary, which was studied as a separate factor in this research.

This same portion of Marshall et al.'s (2016) work is also supported by the current finding of the difference between those who stayed ($\bar{x}$=10.65; σ=5.24) and those who left ($\bar{x}$=8.30; 5.13) regarding their satisfaction with pay. Similarly, Rosser and Javinar's (2003) study noted that salary was directly related to intent to leave amongst midlevel student affairs practitioners and the faculty studied in Valadez and Anthony (2001) indicated they would leave

for higher salaries. All of these works are somewhat supported by the difference in salary satisfaction between those who stayed and those who had left found in my research.

In spite of this difference in satisfaction with their salaries, there was not a significant difference in the actual average starting salaries of those who stayed in ($\bar{x}$=$37,424.48; σ=$7,588.43) and those who left the field ($\bar{x}$=$36,948.85; σ=$8,590.09). This finding is probably best explained by the work of Card et al. (2012) and the statistics available from CUPA-HR (2016). Card et al. found that when people knew that their salaries were lower than others' salaries, their respondents expressed lower satisfaction and more intent to leave their roles. It is possible people who reported lower satisfaction and left were more aware of statistics like those from CUPA-HR and knew that they were making less than the average salary of those with a bachelor's degree in their master's-level position.

Satisfaction with promotion. The respondents' dissatisfaction with their promotion opportunities ($\bar{x}$=9.68; σ=4.99) is also very much in line with the literature. Going back all the way back to the 1977 work of Solomon and Tierney, college administrators were already reporting they were not satisfied with their mobility opportunities. In 1988 Hancock reported on graduate students' expressed needs and highlighted the concern of deficient opportunities for promotion. By 1996, Johnsrud included promotion opportunities in a guide for assessing the morale of the midlevel student affairs practitioner. And most recently, in 2016 Marshall et al. found that nearly half of those who had left the student affairs field indicated attractive career opportunities contributed to their departure while one third indicated that limited advancement opportunities played a role in their attrition.

The difference in satisfaction with promotion opportunities between those who left the field ($\bar{x}$=7.47; σ=4.34) and those who were in student affairs at the time of the study ($\bar{x}$=10.04;

σ=5.00) further supports the recent work of Marshall et al. (2016), as those who had left the field cited the lack of these opportunities as a reason for their departures.

Satisfaction with contingent rewards. While there are many points of support in this research for the work of Rosser and Javinar (2003), the differences with respect to their satisfaction with contingent rewards in their first postgraduate professional role found in my study between those who left ($\bar{x}$=10.67; σ=5.44) and those who stayed in the field of student affairs ($\bar{x}$=13.94; σ=5.45) is actually different from some of Rosser and Javinar's findings. While the researchers found that recognition was important for job satisfaction and morale, they found no impact between this factor and the respondents' intent to leave their roles.

Satisfaction with operating procedures. The difference in satisfaction with operating procedures between those who were in the field at the time of the study ($\bar{x}$=13.68; σ=4.83) and those who had left student affairs ($\bar{x}$=10.85; σ=4.39) provides limited support for the work of Lee and Helm (2013), who found that some of the operating procedures at their respondents' institutions with respect to student affairs capitalism conflicted with the ideals they understood to be important as student affairs professionals. When tied with the work of Hancock's (1988) work on the differences between expectations of those entering the field and the reality they were soon to face, one can begin to find connections and limited support for why operating procedures satisfaction levels may have been distinct for these two groups. Conversely, Volkwein et al. (1998) indicated that regulatory climate was not something that influenced satisfaction at public institutions. The current findings are in contrast to their findings in the differences reported.

Satisfaction with communication. The differences present between those who left the field ($\bar{x}$=14.14; σ=5.32) and those who stayed ($\bar{x}$=12.27; σ=5.38) regarding their satisfaction with communication is directly supportive of the research findings of Bucklin et al. (2014) and Tsai et

al. (2009). Bucklin et al.'s work with faculty showed that dissatisfaction with communication was one of the largest reasons for faculty departure. Tsai et al. found that across nearly 1,300 service industry workers their intention to leave their positions was directly related to their satisfaction with communication. This strong of a finding may be why this is the single factor out of all nine JSS subcategories (satisfaction with communication, nature of the work, operating procedures, coworkers, pay, promotion, contingent rewards, benefits, and supervision) in my study which was strong enough to serve with a negative beta coefficient in the logistic regression model to possibly balance out any over estimates that may have arisen from using only the factors of occupational commitment and the summation of all nine subcategories: overall satisfaction.

In reviewing all nine JSS subcategories and their significant differences between the two groups of interest explained above, it is unsurprising that the overall satisfaction score was also significantly different between those who left the field ($\bar{x}$=109.51; σ=54.76) and those who stayed ($\bar{x}$=133.67; σ=34.52) and that it serves as one of the factors in the best fit logistic regression model (β=0.029). These results further support the research of Rosser and Javinar (2003) and Rosser (2004) who explained job satisfaction's significant impact on intent to leave.

Burnout/Endurance

The slight level of burnout reported by my study participants ($\bar{x}$=12.61; σ=5.19) provides limited support for the work of Morrell (1994) and Marshall et al. (2016). Morrell indicated that midlevel managers in student affairs reported significantly higher stress levels than their senior student affairs officers and more than half of Marshall's respondents indicated a high level of burnout while in the field. While the respondents in this research reported being burnt out, when

given these previous findings one would expect the level of burnout among new student affairs professionals to be higher than was found in this study.

The higher level of burnout reported by those who had left the field, explained by the lower endurance scores ($\bar{x}$=10.22; σ=4.67) compared to those who had remained ($\bar{x}$=12.98; σ=5.18) is consistent with the work of Marshall et al. (2016) and Morrell (1994). While Morrell's respondents explained their leading stressor was their workload, Marshall et al.'s respondents indicated burnout was a reason they had left the field.

Occupational Commitment

Overall, the slight level of occupational commitment reported by the respondents in my study ($\bar{x}$=28.74; σ=7.95) is different from the work of Hunter (1992). When working with graduate students in student affairs, Hunter found that respondents were already unsure of their career paths, which one might believe would lead to a lower overall occupational commitment for the group. This did not hold true for my study.

Unsurprisingly, there was a difference in reported levels of occupational commitment between those who were in the field ($\bar{x}$=29.72; σ=7.52) and those who had departed ($\bar{x}$=22.43; σ=7.81) and this factor was significant in the logistic regression model (β=0.095). This supports the work of Blau (1985) in defining occupational commitment as commitment to a field of work versus a particular role or employer, though it was termed career commitment at the time. It additionally supports the work of Lee et al. (2000) who found through a meta-analysis literature review that occupational commitment held the strongest relationship with occupational turnover. Further, the work of Yousaf et al. (2015) is supported in these results such that occupational commitment was inversely related to occupational turnover intent among higher education employees at one university.

Table 20

Comparison of Key Findings and Prior Research

Allbee (2019) Key Findings	Previous Research
Overall Participants	
84.36% of recent alumni participants have remained in the student affairs field	***Contrasts*** Burns (1982); Tull et al. (2008) higher rates of attrition
High satisfaction with nature of work	***Affirms*** Bender (1980) high satisfaction in student affairs Hirt et al. (2005) importance of meaningful work
Satisfied with benefits	***Affirms*** Aflac (2012) benefits of importance to overall satisfaction
Satisfied with coworkers	***Affirms*** Renn and Hodges (2007) importance of relationships in first year; Fraser and Hodge (2000) satisfaction with coworkers; Volkwein et al. (1998) importance of coworkers among administrators
Satisfied with supervision	***Contrasts*** Barham and Wintson (2006); Cooper et al. (2001); Tull (2011); Winston et al. (2001) which all showed poor understanding of supervision practices in student affairs
Slight burnout	***Limited support*** Marshall et al. (2016); Morrell (1994) which showed burnout at higher levels
Slight occupational commitment	***Contrasts*** Hunter (1992) which showed early uncertainty in student affairs careers
Dissatisfaction with pay	***Affirms*** Silver and Jakeman (2014); Marshall et al. (2016) which showed concerns about pay in student affairs
Dissatisfaction with promotion	***Affirms*** Hancock (1988); Johnsrud (1996); Marshall et al. (2016); Solomon and Tierney (1977) which all spoke to the lack of opportunities for advancement in the field
Significant Differences Between Those Retained and Those Who Left the Field	
In satisfaction with supervision	***Affirms*** Marshall et al. (2016); Tull (2006) which both noted the relationship between attrition and supervision satisfaction
In satisfaction with contingent rewards	***Contrasts*** Rosser and Javinar (2003) which showed no impact between recognition and intent to leave

Table 20 Continued

Allbee (2019) Key Findings	Previous Research
In satisfaction with operating procedures	***Limited support*** Lee and Helm (2013) which showed operating procedures conflicting with values of student affairs ***Contrasts*** Volkwein et al. (1998) which showed regulations did not impact satisfaction
In satisfaction with benefits	***Affirms*** Aflac (2012); Valadez and Anthony (2001) which showed importance of benefits to retention
In satisfaction with promotion	***Affirms*** Marshall et al. (2016) in which former student affairs cited this reason for their departure
In satisfaction with pay	***Affirms*** Marshall et al. (2016) in which former student affairs cited this reason for their departure
In satisfaction with coworkers	***Limited support*** Hirschy (2015) which found the importance of socialization in retention
In satisfaction with pay but not in actual salary	***Limited support*** Card (2012) which reported on satisfaction after salary comparisons ***Affirms*** Rosser and Javinar (2003); Valadez and Anthony (2001) wherein pay was related to turnover intent in both studies
In overall satisfaction	***Affirms*** Rosser and Javinar (2003); Rosser (2004) which explained job satisfaction's impact on departure intent
In burnout	***Affirms*** Marshall (2016) in which former student affairs cited this reason for their departure
In occupational commitment	***Affirms*** Blau (1985) which defined occupational commitment as commitment to a field; Lee et al. (2000) which found the strong relationship between occupational commitment and occupational turnover; Yousaf et al. (2015) which showed occupational commitment was inversely related to occupational turnover intent

Table 20 Continued

Allbee (2019) Key Findings	Previous Research
Logistic Regression Factors	
Occupational Commitment, Overall Job Satisfaction, and Satisfaction with Communication are significant factors in the log odds of whether one will leave or stay in the field	***Affirms*** Blau (1985) definition of occupational commitment for occupational retention; Lee et al. (2000) which explained occupational commitment was strongly related to occupational turnover; Rosser (2004) and Rosser and Javinar (2003) which showed job satisfaction's impact on turnover intent; Yousaf et al. (2015) which showed occupational commitment's inverse relationship to turnover intent ***Limited support*** Tsai et al. (2009) and Bucklin et al. (2014) which showed dissatisfaction with communication being related to departure intent and actual departure, respectively

Limitations

Though this research has provided many valuable insights, there were limitations to this work similar to all research studies. The most notable is the possibility that a representative sample was likely not reached through the snowball sampling method and there is not necessarily a way to know whether this is the case.

Another important limitation is the different experiences between those who stayed and those who left in terms of what those who left may have experienced after their departure. It is possible that their experiences since leaving the field have colored how they view their satisfaction with their first postgraduate professional student affairs role and thus impacted how they rated those areas.

Implications for Future Research

After reviewing my research findings, there are many opportunities to continue to grow this work. Some options lie directly in this dataset. With such a robust national response, many additional analyses could be conducted in order to further understand the nature of satisfaction,

burnout, and occupational commitment of these new student affairs professionals. For example, a researcher might consider reviewing the program characteristics of each of the graduate preparation programs and seeing what insight can be gathered about the influence of graduate program elements on eventual satisfaction and retention or departure.

Additionally, with such a distinct difference between those who leave and those who stay in terms of their satisfaction with the supervision they received, it is worthwhile to investigate how one's satisfaction with supervision is related to the other variables studied in addition to departure. While some correlations in this dataset were reported here, this seems to be an influential factor that has the ability to permeate many facets of one's role. More exploration of this factor specifically could prove valuable to researchers and practitioners alike.

Further, given the differences regarding satisfaction with pay versus actual salary, one might hold some of these factors as constant is possible in the natural world. For instance, one might study employees at one institution or one department who, theoretically, would be exposed to the same supervision, same operating procedures, same communication, etc., and see what differences lie in terms of their reported satisfaction. It would be additionally beneficial to apply a lens of intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation as in the work of Iiacqua et al. (1995) see if that alters one's satisfaction even when they are in similarly situated roles or have the similar experiences.

It was clear from Winston et al.'s (2001) work that there is an "apparent lack of attention" (p. 23) to supervision in the field, which was further supported by the findings of Cooper et al. (2001) and Tull (2011). This was the factor with the largest difference in satisfaction between those left the field and those who remain. It is imperative to heed the advice of Cooper et al. and use empirical research to better understand this factor within the field.

Leadership Implications

Beyond adding to the knowledge base on the topic of new student affairs professionals, this research also provides important insight for anyone provided the opportunity to interact with this population. The two groups who may take the most explicit direction from this research are those who develop student affairs professionals through graduate preparation programs and those who subsequently employ these alumni in their first postgraduate professional student affairs roles.

Graduate Preparation Programs

One of the important audiences for this work is those involved in the building of new student affairs professionals through their master's degree preparation programs. Given Hancock's (1988) finding that the differences between the needs of upcoming professionals and the reinforcers their jobs would soon hold were already present before graduation, and the work of Silver and Jakeman (2014) that half of those who began a graduate program with intent to work in the field were considering other options before they even graduated, it is obvious that having a clear picture of the field early in the development process is incredibly important.

This is the same sentiment expressed by Ward (1995), who at the time explained the expertise of the instructors in master's level programs may be in educational areas such as student development theory instead of the instructors having an in-depth and realistic view of what it means to serve in administration day-to-day. Graduate programs' use of current student affairs administrators at their home or nearby institutions to serve as instructors or minimally guest lecturers for their courses could serve to help this gap. In the event such administrators are teaching in the program, they can be sure to highlight the "perks" of working in student affairs, or rather, the factors with which people are most satisfied: the nature of the work, the benefits,

and the coworkers, as these factors scored highly for satisfaction across all respondents. They are also capable of simultaneously realistically discussing the factors with which student affairs professionals struggle: namely satisfaction with salary and satisfaction with promotion opportunities. A long time professional explaining their career path could shed light on the opportunities for promotion in their history. Further, sharing the data found here that it was one's satisfaction with pay and not actually the pay itself may be helpful in developing this understanding as well.

Employers

There is even more to be taken from this research for those who employ new student affairs professionals. Even as people transition from student affairs graduate students to student affairs professionals via the interview process, employers can begin their work to help support the retention of those they seek to hire. When interviewing and recruiting, the team could be sure to explain how the "perks" listed above are relevant and important at their institution, highlighting the nature of the work, the benefits offered, and the nature and depth of relationships between colleagues at the institution. It would also be incredibly important to ask interview questions that speak to the idea of the candidate's occupational commitment. So, in addition to asking why the candidates are interested in a particular role or institution, asking them broader questions about the field of student affairs may provide insight into a candidate who will be in the field for a longer duration.

Once the new student affairs professional is a part of the team, there are additional opportunities to keep that person in the field. First and foremost, creating and institutionalizing supervision training involving synergistic supervision strategies for those tasked with the supervision of new student affairs professionals is a must. Supervision was the factor with the

largest difference between those who left the field and those who stayed and it also had the largest standard deviation. This shows that as a field, student affairs is all over the map in reference to supervision. Supervision was also correlated with other factors that ranked highly for the differences between those who had left the field and those who stayed. Understanding the work of Shupp and Arminio (2012) and Tull (2006) in conjunction with the results of this study would be incredibly helpful for those working to supervise new student affairs professionals and may ultimately result in lower attrition rates.

Another opportunity to assist with retention is to create and maintain meaningful recognition programs. This would serve to enhance new professionals' satisfaction with contingent rewards, as this was the second largest difference between those who remained in the field and those who left in this study.

Given that the third largest difference in reported satisfaction rates between those who had left the field and those who had remained was the respondents' satisfaction with operating procedures, asking for and genuinely considering the feedback provided by new professionals in terms of operating procedures could prove impactful in their satisfaction and thus retention.

Further, when working with student affairs professionals, it may be worthwhile to use the JSS tool to better understand their satisfaction with their roles. Since overall satisfaction, made up of all nine subsets, was vital to the logistic regression model, getting to understand more about what one's specific institution does well and needs to improve could prove largely beneficial for retention efforts.

In all, there are many ways that leaders on multiple levels could make the most of this research in order to help retain their new student affairs professionals, whether that is in the

formative stages of a graduate program, the interview phase, or during their tenure in their first postgraduate professional role, as that role has the capacity to shape their future.

Concluding Thoughts

With more student affairs professionals entering the field with their freshly-minted master's degrees each year, it is of incredible importance that researchers and leaders in higher education alike work to support their retention in the profession. While the results of this study are very much in line with many portions of previous research, it further expands on this knowledge by showing the most satisfying (e.g., nature of the work, benefits, and coworkers) and least satisfying portions (e.g., pay and promotion opportunities) of entry-level student affairs roles. This work additionally shows the stark differences in satisfaction levels through a direct comparison between those who are in the field and those who have left, instead of simply looking at those with intent to leave or only working with those who are already gone. Understanding the importance of several elements of one's first postgraduate professional role and commitment levels in the field can be incredibly helpful to both better inform future research as well as the practices of student affairs master's programs and employers of new student affairs professionals.

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Appendix A

Survey Instrument

Factors Contributing to the Attrition of New Student Affairs Professionals

Page 1

Please read this consent information before you begin the survey.

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled "Factors Contributing to the Attrition of New Student Affairs Professionals" designed to better understand the relationship between characteristics of one's first postgraduate professional role on whether a recent graduate remains in the student affairs field.

This study is being conducted by Dr. Louann Bierlein Palmer and Nicole Allbee from Western Michigan University, Department of Educational Leadership, Research, and Technology. This research is being conducted as part of the dissertation requirements for Nicole Allbee.

This survey is comprised of questions related to your first postgraduate professional role and the field of student affairs and will take about 5 minutes to complete.

There is no cost to your participation. Your responses will be kept confidential and they will not be connected to you in the data analysis or results section of the survey.

At the completion of the survey you will have an opportunity to win one of eight $25 Amazon gift cards. Please note, information entered for the gift card drawing will be kept separate from your survey responses.

When you begin the survey you are consenting to participate in the study. If you do not agree to participate in this research, simply exit this window now. If after beginning the survey you decide you do not wish to continue, you may stop at any time. You may choose to not answer any question for any reason. If you have any questions prior to or during the survey, you may contact Dr. Louann Bierlein Palmer at 269-387-3596, Nicole Allbee at 269-387-2568, the Human Studies Institutional Review Board at 269-387-8293, or the Vice President for Research at Western Michigan University at 269-387-8298.

This study was approved by the Western Michigan University Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) on October 11, 2018. Please do not participate in this study after October 10, 2019. Participating in this online survey indicates your consent for use of the answers you provide.

All surveys must be completed before October 10, 2019 to be included in the study.

Factors Contributing to the Attrition of New Student Affairs Professionals

Page 2

Have you earned a student affairs master's degree?*

○ Yes ○ No

Factors Contributing to the Attrition of New Student Affairs Professionals

Page 3

When did you earn your master's degree?*

○ Five or fewer years ago
○ More than five years ago

Factors Contributing to the Attrition of New Student Affairs Professionals

Page 4

Since earning your master's degree, have you held a full time student affairs role?*

○ Yes ○ No

Factors Contributing to the Attrition of New Student Affairs Professionals

Page 5

Are you currently working in a student affairs function at a higher education institution?*

○ Yes ○ No

Factors Contributing to the Attrition of New Student Affairs Professionals

Page 6

Are you still working the first full-time student affairs role you held after graduation?*

○ Yes ○ No

Factors Contributing to the Attrition of New Student Affairs Professionals

Page 7

Regarding your current student affairs position, please share your level of agreement with each statement.

	Disagree very much	Disagree moderately	Disagree slightly	Agree slightly	Agree moderately	Agree very much
I feel my job is meaningful	○	○	○	○	○	○
I like doing the things I do at work	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel a sense of pride in doing my job	○	○	○	○	○	○
My job is enjoyable	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do	○	○	○	○	○	○
Raises are an appropriate amount and appropriately frequent	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel appreciated by the organization when I think about what they pay me	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel satisfied with my chances for salary increases	○	○	○	○	○	○
There is enough chance for promotion in my job	○	○	○	○	○	○
Those who do well on the job stand a fair chance of being promoted	○	○	○	○	○	○
People get ahead as fast here as they do in other places	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am satisfied with my chance for promotion	○	○	○	○	○	○

Factors Contributing to the Attrition of New Student Affairs Professionals

Page 8

Regarding your current student affairs position, please share your level of agreement with each statement.

	Disagree very much	Disagree moderately	Disagree slightly	Agree slightly	Agree moderately	Agree very much
My supervisor is quite competent in doing their job	○	○	○	○	○	○
My supervisor is fair to me	○	○	○	○	○	○
My supervisor shows sufficient interest in the feelings of subordinates	○	○	○	○	○	○
I like my supervisor	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am satisfied with the benefits I receive	○	○	○	○	○	○
The benefits we receive are as good as most other organizations offer	○	○	○	○	○	○
The benefit package we have is equitable	○	○	○	○	○	○
We have all of the benefits we should	○	○	○	○	○	○
When I do a good job, I receive the recognition for it that I should	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel the work I do is appreciated	○	○	○	○	○	○
There are sufficient rewards for those who work here	○	○	○	○	○	○
My efforts are rewarded the way they should be	○	○	○	○	○	○

Factors Contributing to the Attrition of New Student Affairs Professionals

Page 9

Regarding your current student affairs position, please share your level of agreement with each statement.

	Disagree very much	Disagree moderately	Disagree slightly	Agree slightly	Agree moderately	Agree very much
Our rules and procedures make it easier to do a good job	○	○	○	○	○	○
My efforts to do a good job are seldom blocked by red tape	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have the right amount to do at work	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have the right amount of paperwork	○	○	○	○	○	○
I like the people I work with	○	○	○	○	○	○
My job is easier because my colleagues are competent	○	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoy my coworkers	○	○	○	○	○	○
There is very little bickering or fighting at work	○	○	○	○	○	○
Communications seem good within this organization	○	○	○	○	○	○
The goals of this organization are clear to me	○	○	○	○	○	○
I know what is going on with the organization	○	○	○	○	○	○
Work assignments are fully explained	○	○	○	○	○	○

Factors Contributing to the Attrition of New Student Affairs Professionals

Page 10

Regarding your current student affairs position, please share your level of agreement with each statement.

	Disagree very much	Disagree moderately	Disagree slightly	Agree slightly	Agree moderately	Agree very much
I rarely feel burnt out	○	○	○	○	○	○
I regularly feel engaged in my work	○	○	○	○	○	○
I seldom feel fed up with my job	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel as though I could continue to do this job for a long time	○	○	○	○	○	○

Factors Contributing to the Attrition of New Student Affairs Professionals

Page 15

Please enter your starting annual salary in USD in that role
For example enter 30000 for $30,000 USD

Factors Contributing to the Attrition of New Student Affairs Professionals

Page 16

Please choose the one number for each question that comes closest to reflecting your opinion about the student affairs field

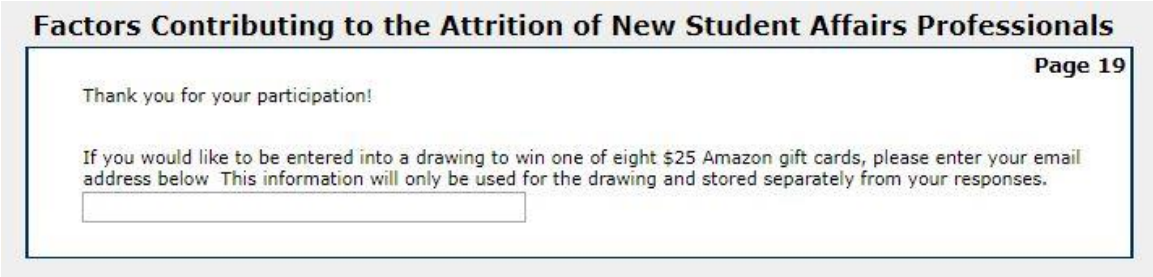
	Disagree very much	Disagree moderately	Disagree slightly	Agree slightly	Agree moderately	Agree very much
I like this career too well to give it up	○	○	○	○	○	○
If I could go into a different profession which paid the same, I would probably take it	○	○	○	○	○	○
If I could do it all over again, I would not choose to work in student affairs	○	○	○	○	○	○
I definitely want a career for myself in student affairs	○	○	○	○	○	○
If I had all the money I needed without working, I would probably still continue to work in student affairs	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am disappointed that I ever entered student affairs	○	○	○	○	○	○
This is the ideal profession for a life's work	○	○	○	○	○	○

Factors Contributing to the Attrition of New Student Affairs Professionals

Page 18

From which program do you hold a master's degree?
Begin typing your school's name to jump to your program.

-- None --



Factors Contributing to the Attrition of New Student Affairs Professionals

Page 19

Thank you for your participation!

If you would like to be entered into a drawing to win one of eight $25 Amazon gift cards, please enter your email address below This information will only be used for the drawing and stored separately from your responses.

Appendix B

Past Tense Alternative Survey Pages

Factors Contributing to the Attrition of New Student Affairs Professionals

Page 11

Although you are no longer in the role, please think back and share your level of agreement with each statement about your first post-graduate full-time student affairs role

	Disagree very much	Disagree moderately	Disagree slightly	Agree slightly	Agree moderately	Agree very much
I felt my job was meaningful	○	○	○	○	○	○
I liked doing the things I did at work	○	○	○	○	○	○
I felt a sense of pride in doing my job	○	○	○	○	○	○
My job was enjoyable	○	○	○	○	○	○
I felt I was being paid a fair amount for the work I do	○	○	○	○	○	○
Raises were an appropriate amount and appropriately frequent	○	○	○	○	○	○
I felt appreciated by the organization when I thought about what they paid me	○	○	○	○	○	○
I felt satisfied with my chances for salary increases	○	○	○	○	○	○
There was enough chance for promotion in my job	○	○	○	○	○	○
Those who did well on the job stood a fair chance of being promoted	○	○	○	○	○	○
People got ahead as fast there as they did in other places	○	○	○	○	○	○
I was satisfied with my chance for promotion	○	○	○	○	○	○

Factors Contributing to the Attrition of New Student Affairs Professionals

Page 12

Although you are no longer in the role, please think back and share your level of agreement with each statement about your first post-graduate full-time student affairs role

	Disagree very much	Disagree moderately	Disagree slightly	Agree slightly	Agree moderately	Agree very much
My supervisor was quite competent in doing their job	○	○	○	○	○	○
My supervisor was fair to me	○	○	○	○	○	○
My supervisor showed sufficient interest in the feelings of subordinates	○	○	○	○	○	○
I liked my supervisor	○	○	○	○	○	○
I was satisfied with the benefits I received	○	○	○	○	○	○
The benefits we received were as good as most other organizations offer	○	○	○	○	○	○
The benefit package we had was equitable	○	○	○	○	○	○
We had all of the benefits we should have	○	○	○	○	○	○
When I did a good job, I received the recognition for it that I should have	○	○	○	○	○	○
I felt the work I did was appreciated	○	○	○	○	○	○
There were sufficient rewards for those who worked there	○	○	○	○	○	○
My efforts were rewarded the way they should have been	○	○	○	○	○	○

Factors Contributing to the Attrition of New Student Affairs Professionals

Page 13

Although you are no longer in the role, please think back and share your level of agreement with each statement about your first post-graduate full-time student affairs role

	Disagree very much	Disagree moderately	Disagree slightly	Agree slightly	Agree moderately	Agree very much
Our rules and procedures made it easier to do a good job	○	○	○	○	○	○
My efforts to do a good job were seldom blocked by red tape	○	○	○	○	○	○
I had the right amount to do at work	○	○	○	○	○	○
I had the right amount of paperwork	○	○	○	○	○	○
I liked the people I worked with	○	○	○	○	○	○
My job was easier because my colleagues were competent	○	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoyed my coworkers	○	○	○	○	○	○
There was very little bickering or fighting at work	○	○	○	○	○	○
Communications seemed good within this organization	○	○	○	○	○	○
The goals of that organization were clear to me	○	○	○	○	○	○
I knew what was going on with the organization	○	○	○	○	○	○
Work assignments were fully explained	○	○	○	○	○	○

Factors Contributing to the Attrition of New Student Affairs Professionals

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Although you are no longer in the role, please think back and share your level of agreement with each statement about your first post-graduate full-time student affairs role

	Disagree very much	Disagree moderately	Disagree slightly	Agree slightly	Agree moderately	Agree very much
I rarely felt burnt out	○	○	○	○	○	○
I regularly felt engaged in my work	○	○	○	○	○	○
I seldom felt fed up with my job	○	○	○	○	○	○
I felt as though I could have continued to do that job for a long time	○	○	○	○	○	○

Factors Contributing to the Attrition of New Student Affairs Professionals

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Please choose the one number for each question that comes closest to reflecting your opinion about the student affairs field

	Disagree very much	Disagree moderately	Disagree slightly	Agree slightly	Agree moderately	Agree very much
I liked that career too well to give it up	○	○	○	○	○	○
If I could go into a different profession which paid the same, I would probably take it	○	○	○	○	○	○
If I could do it all over again, I would not choose to work in student affairs	○	○	○	○	○	○
I definitely want a career for myself in student affairs	○	○	○	○	○	○
If I had all the money I needed without working, I would probably work in student affairs	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am disappointed that I ever entered student affairs	○	○	○	○	○	○
That was the ideal profession for a life's work	○	○	○	○	○	○

Appendix C

Permission Emails

Re: Dissertation Instrument

Gary Blau <gblau@temple.edu>

Wed 1/18/2017 9:51 AM

To:Nicole Millar Allbee <nicole.allbee@wmich.edu>;

Cc:Gary Blau <gblau@temple.edu>;

4 attachments (6 MB)

Blau, 1985_JOP_career commitment.pdf; Leel at al, JAP, 2000.pdf; Blau_JOOP, 2003, 4 dimensions of OcC reprint.pdf; Blau, 2009, CDI, M & B sample.pdf;

Hi Nicole - thanks for your email. Its been a few years since I have worked with occupational commitment (no longer termed career commitment). I have attached some relevant articles that I hope will help you. You have my permission to revise my occupational commitment measure however it best serves your research purpose.

best wishes on your dissertation, ☺

gary blau

RE: JSS for Dissertation Work

Spector, Paul <pspector@usf.edu>

Wed 2/15/2017 9:01 AM

To:Nicole Millar Allbee <nicole.allbee@wmich.edu>;

Dear Nichole:

You have my permission for noncommercial research/teaching use and modification of the JSS. You can find copies of the scale in the original English and several other languages, as well as details about the scale's development and norms in the Scales section of my website (link below). I allow free use for noncommercial research and teaching purposes in return for sharing of results. This includes student theses and dissertations, as well as other student research projects. Copies of the scale can be reproduced in a thesis or dissertation as long as the copyright notice is included, "Copyright Paul E. Spector 1994, All rights reserved." Results can be shared by providing an e-copy of a published or unpublished research report (e.g., a dissertation). You also have permission to translate the JSS into another language under the same conditions in addition to sharing a copy of the translation with me. Be sure to include the copyright statement, as well as credit the person who did the translation with the year.

Thank you for your interest in the JSS, and good luck with your research.

Best,

Paul Spector, Distinguished Professor
Department of Psychology
PCD 4118
University of South Florida
Tampa, FL 33620
813-974-0357
Pspector@usf.edu
http://shell.cas.usf.edu/~spector

Appendix D

Email Invitations

Initial Email:

Subject: Assistance with Dissertation Research: Gain Insight into Your Program's Alumni!

Hello from Western Michigan University!

I write to you today because I am studying the factors contributing to the attrition of new student affairs professionals. As the [Title] for the [Program] at [Institution], it is my hope that you are willing to take a moment to share this survey with your program alumni and encourage their participation. For your convenience, please feel free to copy and paste the following to share on your social media or via email:

Hello Program Alumni,

Please consider taking 5 minutes to complete the following survey and assist with dissertation research regarding the retention or departure of student affairs professionals.

http://bit.ly/allbeeresearch

Those completing the full survey have the option to enter a drawing for one of eight $25 Amazon gift cards. Please contact nicole.allbee@wmich.edu with questions.

As a thank you for your assistance, I would like to offer you the opportunity to gain valuable aggregate information about your program alumni's job satisfaction in their first postgraduate professional role as well as their retention and occupational commitment to the field of student affairs if more than five of your alumni complete the survey. Please contact me directly to request this information.

I understand how busy this time of year can be, so I appreciate any help you are able to provide in sharing this with your program alumni as I work toward the important goal of understanding the factors that contribute to the departure of new student affairs professionals.

Thank you,
Nicole Allbee

Reminder Email:

Subject: Reminder: Assistance with Dissertation Research: Gain Insight into Your Program's Alumni!

Hello again from Western Michigan University!

I write to you today to ask for your help in reminding your program alumni about their invitation to take part in this research about the factors contributing to the attrition of new student affairs professionals. I hope you will again encourage their participation:

http://bit.ly/allbeeresearch

Please remember there is an opportunity for you to receive aggregate information about your program alumni's job satisfaction in their first postgraduate professional role as well as their retention and occupational commitment to the field of student affairs. Please contact me directly to request this information.

I appreciate any help you are able to provide in encouraging your program alumni's participation!

Thank you,
Nicole Allbee

Appendix E

Social Media Posts

Facebook group post:

[Group name]!

I am currently conducting my dissertation research on attrition in the student affairs profession and could really use your help. Below is a link to the survey intended for those who've graduated from student affairs master's programs within the last 5 years. It should take about 5 minutes to complete and can be completely anonymous, or you can choose to enter a drawing for one of several $25 Amazon gift cards. I'm in need of both people who are currently in the profession as well as those who've left the field. Please feel encouraged to pass it along to your grad school friends who may not be as engaged on this page (you've been meaning to text them anyway, right?) Please contact me if you have any questions. I appreciate your help!

http://bit.ly/allbeeresearch

Appendix F

HSIRB Approvals

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board
FWA00007042
IRB00000254

Date: October 11, 2018

To: Louann Bierlein Palmer, Principal Investigator
Nicole Allbee, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: IRB Project Number 18-10-05

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project titled "Factors Contributing to the Attrition of New Student Affairs Professionals" has been **approved** under the **exempt** category of review by the Western Michigan University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note: This research may **only** be conducted exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes to this project (e.g., ***you must request a post-approval change to enroll subjects beyond the number stated in your application under "Number of subjects you want to complete the study"***). Failure to obtain approval for changes will result in a protocol deviation. In addition, if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the IRB for consultation.

Reapproval of the project is required if it extends beyond the termination date stated below.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: **October 10, 2019**

Office of the Vice President for Research
Research Compliance Office
1903 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5456
PHONE: (269) 387-8293 FAX: (269) 387-8276
WEBSITE: wmich.edu/research/compliance/hsirb

CAMPUS SITE: Room 251 W. Walwood Hall

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board
FWA 00007042
IRB 00000254

Date: November 5, 2018

To: Louann Bierlein Palmer, Principal Investigator
Nicole Allbee, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: IRB Project Number 18-10-05

This letter will serve as confirmation that the change to your research project titled "Factors Contributing to the Attrition of New Student Affairs Professionals" requested in your memo received November 5, 2018 (to increase maximum number of people recruited from 1165 to 2368 to achieve desired sample size) has been approved by the WMU Institutional Review Board.

The conditions and the duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University.

Please note that you may **only** conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the IRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: **October 10, 2019**

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