

## **ABSTRACT**

Michele Ann Myers, THE ACQUISITION OF NEW STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS' BELIEFS AND PERCEPTIONS ABOUT FACULTY (under the direction of Dr. David J. Siegel). Department of Educational Leadership, April, 2013.

The purpose of this study is to better understand how new student affairs professionals acquire their beliefs and perceptions about faculty. This study originates from a conceptual framework that includes: (1) a call for collaboration, (2) the link between organizational culture, beliefs, and perceptions, and (3) the propagation of beliefs through socialization. In recent years, student learning has become a focal point for higher education leaders, government agencies, and the public. Collaborative initiatives are seen as a way to promote student learning, while also addressing decreased budgets and increased accountability. Differing, or incorrect beliefs and perceptions, that one group has of the other, can inhibit collaboration.

New resident directors, their experienced peers, and supervisors, from a large, public university, were interviewed to identify their views about faculty and how those beliefs and perceptions are acquired. Data has been presented in narrative form and were analyzed to uncover common and divergent beliefs and perceptions, changes in views that occurred during the study, and variables that shaped beliefs and perceptions about faculty.

Findings reveal that the ways in which student affairs professionals acquire their views about faculty are multifarious. Beliefs and perceptions are shaped by a conglomeration of factors, such as experiences, influence from others, and learning. Participants' previous interactions with faculty were mentioned as common contributors to beliefs about faculty. Lessons learned about faculty through graduate coursework and student employment were noted. To a lesser extent, and through socialization as new employees, participants noted that views of supervisors, peers, and students impacted their perceptions about faculty.

By learning more about beliefs and perceptions and how those views are acquired, the body of knowledge about the student affairs subculture and socialization in the subculture is expanded. Findings and recommendations from this study offer points for consideration and reflection. Learning that includes evaluating and discussing cultural beliefs can challenge negative perceptions that student affairs staff and faculty may have of each other. It can reinforce positive perceptions that promote relationship building and collaboration. Initiatives that promote cultural understanding, whether directed by leaders or those working directly with students, are worthy of consideration.

THE ACQUISITION OF NEW STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS'  
BELIEFS AND PERCEPTIONS ABOUT FACULTY

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

### Introduction to the Study

Today the demand for transparent practices and definable outcomes is pushing educators in American higher education to evaluate and revisit student learning. The federal government has placed student learning as one of the top priorities for college accrediting agencies and is weighing in on issues that include time-to-graduation, economic return, retention rates and 4- and 6-year graduation rates (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2008; Brenchley, 2013; Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Klein, Kuh, Chun, Hamilton, & Shavelson, 2005). Leaders in higher education are called to address requests for increased accountability and quality set forth by politicians and the public (Byrne & W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2006; Creech & Southern Regional Education Board, 2000; Duncan, 2013; U. S. Department of Education, 2006). In addition to the increased demand for accountability and definable outcomes, college and university leaders are responding to a loss of public trust, increased enrollment and student diversity, and limited federal and state assistance (Breneman, Finney, & Roherty, 1997; Cohen & Kisker, 2010; U. S. Department of Education, 2006).

To address the social and economic pressures placed upon them, higher education leaders have begun to explore the most effective ways to promote collaboration on their campuses. In *Organizing Higher Education for Collaboration*, Kezar and Lester (2009) present the “Collaborative Imperative”: a call to college and university leaders, faculty, and staff to focus university efforts around best practices and principles of collaboration. Collaborative initiatives are touted as mechanisms that produce environments and experiences necessary for positive student learning outcomes (Kuh, Kinzie, Schein, Whitt, & Associates, 2010; Pascarelli & Terenzini, 2005). Today, scholars endorse learning initiatives that are a result of student

engagement in both in- and out-of-classroom experiences (Duderstadt, 2000; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2005). Specifically, in *How College Affects Students*, Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) outline factors indicative of educationally effective institutions.

...student involvement in the academic and nonacademic systems of an institution, the nature and frequency of student contact with peers and faculty members, interdisciplinary or integrated core curricula that emphasize making explicit connections across courses and among ideas and disciplines, pedagogies that encourage active student engagement in learning and encourage application of what is being learned in real and meaningful settings, campus environments that emphasize scholarship and provide opportunities for student to encounter different kinds of people and ideas, and environments that encourage and support exploration, whether intellectual or personal. (p. 642)

Those who promote integrated student learning deem collaboration and cooperation, between academic affairs and student affairs, as necessary for its success (AACU, 2008; Kuh et al., 2010; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Buyarski (2004) notes that without new ways of promoting collaboration across organizational boundaries, “the vision of creating integrated student learning environments will remain just that, a vision rather than purposeful campus policies and programs” (p. 1).

The central question in this study is: How do new student affairs professionals acquire commonly held beliefs and perceptions about faculty? This question arises from studies about factors that promote and inhibit collaboration in higher education. The recommendation is that better understanding about faculty and student affairs professionals’ cultures and their perceptions of self and each other can lead to enhanced collaboration (Arcelus, 2008; Beodeker, 2006; Zummo, 2012). As observed by Arcelus (2008), “Collaboration on campus is hindered by

misperceptions, biases and stereotypes that shape people's judgments and erect as barriers between groups" (p. 58).

As members of two different subcultures within the larger organizational culture of the university, faculty and student affairs professionals have similar and dissimilar beliefs and perceptions about one another (Ahren, 2008; Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Tierney, 1990). Negative beliefs and perceptions inhibit positive relationships between faculty and student affairs professionals which can deter collaboration. In turn, relationships built on positive beliefs and perceptions promote collaborative initiatives (Beodeker, 2006; Kolins, 1999; Zummo, 2012). More and improved collaboration is recommended for enhanced student learning (AACU, 2008; Kuh et al., 2010). In addition, as faculty and student affairs professionals work together, Magolda (2005) calls them to reflect on their own values and perceptions. This may lead to understanding of underlying philosophies and beliefs that guide behavior and promote a willingness to collaborate. Acquiring knowledge of individual and group beliefs and perceptions is a logical step if interactions between student affairs professionals and faculty are to be understood (Kezar, 2003; Magolda, 2005; Zummo, 2012). Acquiring such knowledge and understanding may lead to improved communication and collaboration, pushing through the barriers built around "issues of priorities, beliefs, respect and trust" (Ahren, 2008, p. 90).

### **Conceptual Framework**

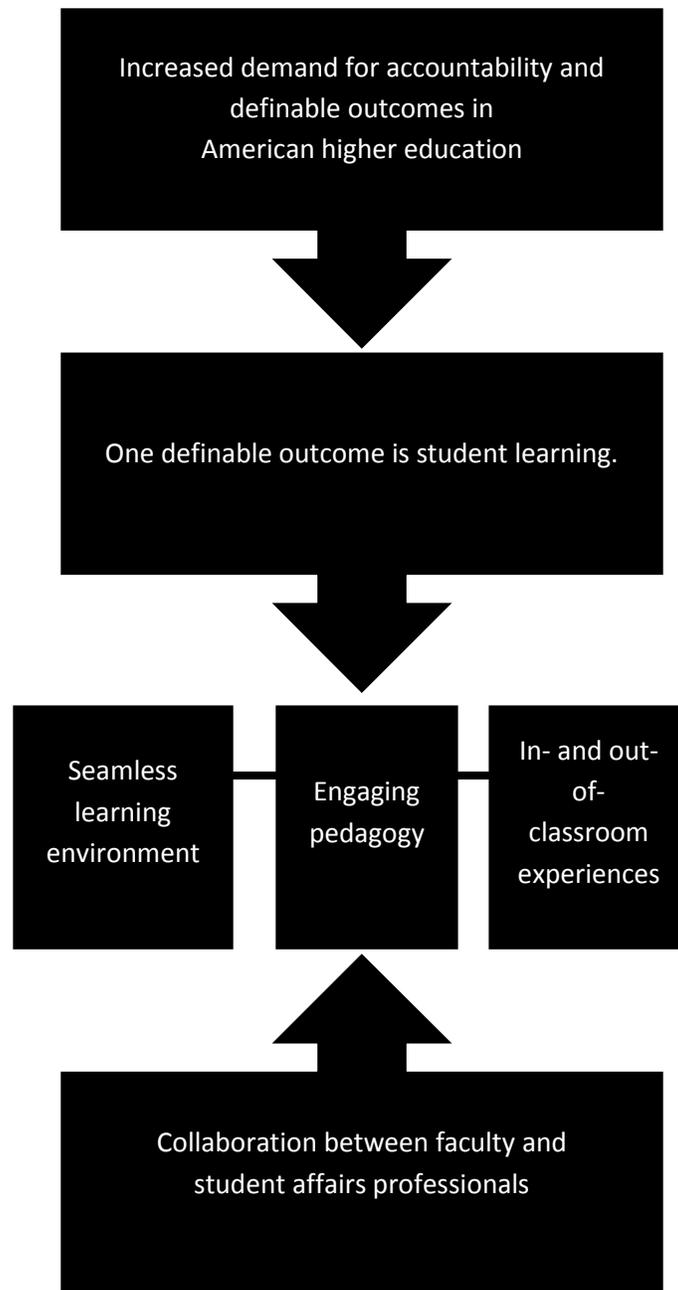
Increased understanding of student affairs professionals' acquisition of beliefs and perceptions about faculty, which may lead to more and enhanced collaboration, is the focus of this conceptual framework. For the purposes of this study, the conceptual framework is a set of ideas melded together to provide context for the primary research question. Tenets of the conceptual framework are more loosely connected than the components of a theory or hypothesis

where ideas are more connected with one idea leading directly to another. I came to focus this study on the acquisition of beliefs and perceptions by connecting these tenets: a call for collaboration to enhance student learning, the link between organizational culture, beliefs and perceptions, and the propagation of beliefs and perceptions through socialization. A detailed explanation and diagrams of the three tenets follows.

1. A Call for Collaboration (see Figure 1).

In recent years, student learning has become a focal point for higher education leaders, government agents and the public (AACU, 2008; Brenchley, 2013; Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Duncan, 2013). Higher education scholars contend that positive learning outcomes are the result of student engagement with integrated in-classroom and out-of-classroom experiences (Kuh et al., 2005; Kuh et al., 2010; Tinto, 1997). In addition, increased collaboration can improve student learning (AACU, 2008; Kuh et al., 2010; Pascarelli & Terenzini, 2005). Researchers and leaders in American higher education encourage faculty, staff, and administrators to create learning environments that address needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, promote engaging pedagogies, and provide enriching educational experiences (AACU, 2008; Duderstadt, 2000; Pascarelli & Terenzini, 2005). Steering efforts towards holistic student learning will prompt colleges and universities to do things differently and more efficiently, while developing highly educated students who will “realize greater benefits from attending college” (Kuh, 1996, p. 145). This type of learning occurs in seamless learning environments where student experiences, both inside and outside of the classroom, are interconnected.

Collaboration, specifically between faculty and student affairs professionals, is recommended as one strategy for creating and providing environments and experiences for



*Figure 1. A call for collaboration.*

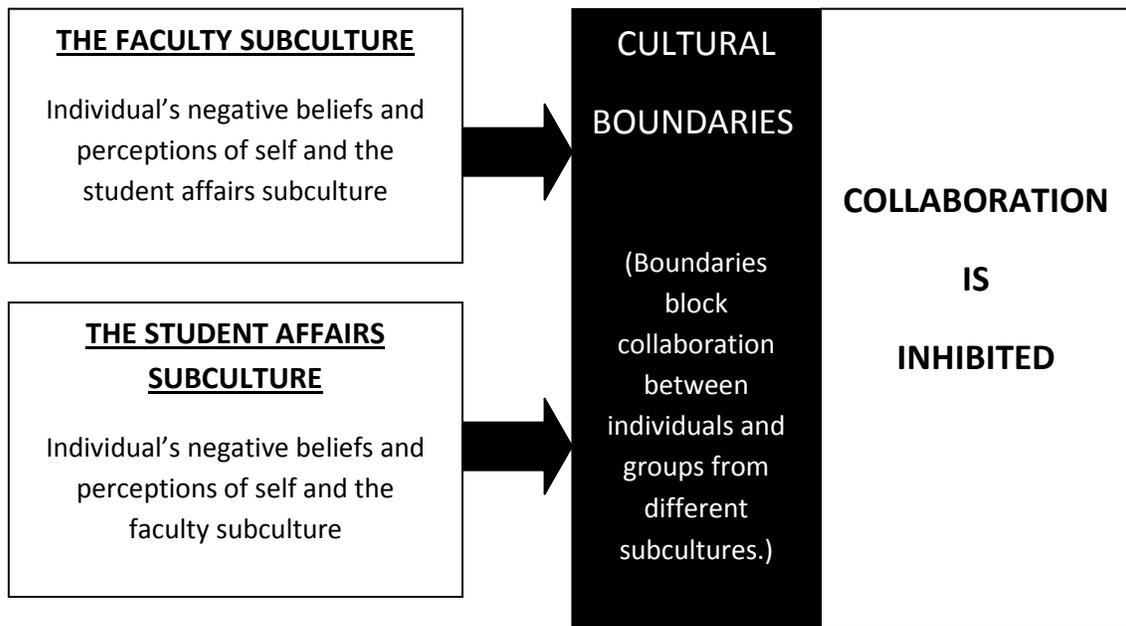
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integrated student learning (AACU, 2008; American Association of Higher Education, American College Personnel Association, & National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, 1998; Kuh et al., 2010). In addition, Student Affairs continues to promote their role in student learning by defining what they do, tying efforts to student learning outcomes, and engaging and educating faculty about their purpose (Arcelus, 2008; Carpenter & Stimpson, 2007; Taylor, 2011; Whitt, 2006). Fostering collaboration that enhances student learning may prompt faculty and student affairs professionals to interact in ways that they may not have in the past. As faculty and student affairs professionals are prompted to interact in new ways, a clearer understanding of the two groups and their ability to collaborate with one another is a logical next step which leads to the next tenet of the conceptual framework.

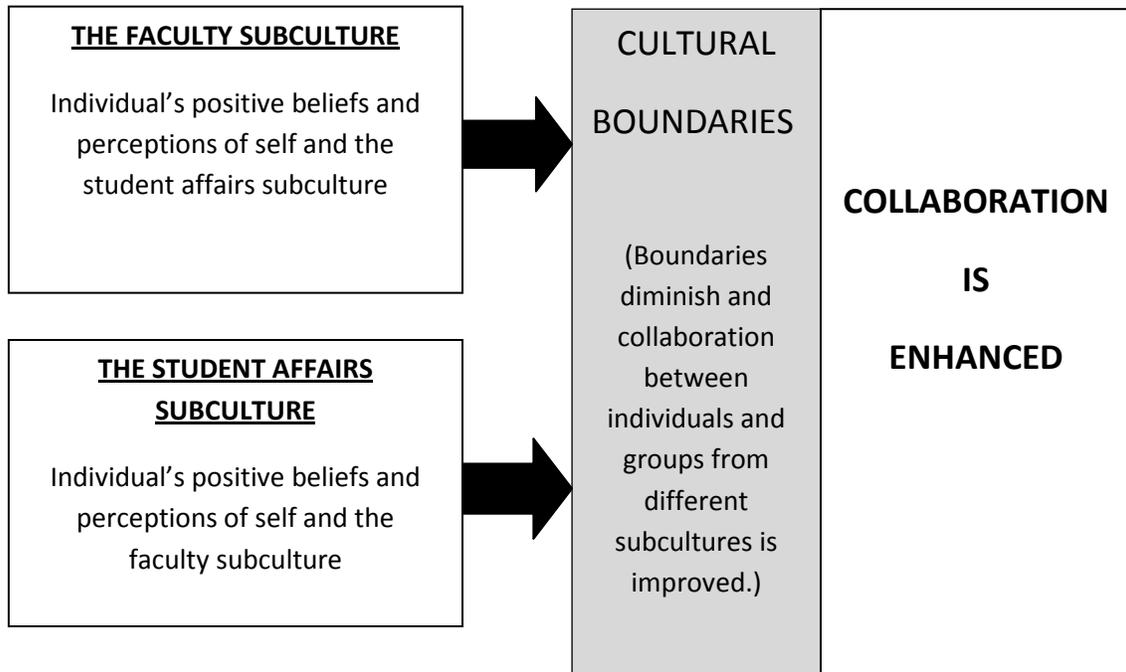
## 2. Collaboration and the Link Between Organizational Culture (see Figure 2).

As integral parts of the overarching institutional culture of a college or university, both faculty and student affairs professionals share a common work environment, yet they experience university life in ways that reflect different norms, values, and behaviors (Tierney, 1988; Tierney, 1990). Student affairs professionals and faculty come from two different cultures, yet exist within the larger organizational culture of a university (Adkinson, 2005; Hirt, 2007; Kuh & Banta, 2000; Tierney, 1990). Each subculture has its own beliefs and perceptions. Scholars who have recently studied collaboration note the need for future research that provides clearer understanding of the perceptual differences between the two subcultures (Arcelus, 2008; Bourassa & Kruger, 2001; Kolins, 1999) and a closer look at the role that culture plays in collaboration (Zummo, 2012). In this vein, organizational culture provides a basis by which to understand what inhibits and enhances collaboration between faculty and student affairs professionals.

**Negative Beliefs and Perceptions  
Lack of Understanding of Self and Other Culture**



**Positive Beliefs and Perceptions  
Understanding of Self and Other Culture**



*Figure 2. Organizational culture and collaboration.*

A key concept of organization culture in this study is how new members of one subculture acquire beliefs and perceptions of another subculture. Arcelus (2008) notes that "...faculty and student affairs staff bring cultural assumptions to their interaction with each other and these assumptions can coincide with or contradict the assumptions of people in the opposing group" (p. 57). Positive beliefs and perceptions student affairs professionals and faculty have of each other can enhance collaboration. Negative beliefs and perceptions that student affairs professionals and faculty have of each other inhibit collaboration (Arcelus, 2008; Kezar, 2006; Philpott & Strange, 2003). Additionally, interpersonal relationships, regard between the subcultures, and individual attitudes and behaviors are concepts of organizational culture that may be exposed (Martin, 2002; Schein, 2004; Smircich, 1983).

In an effort to improve student learning through collaborative initiatives, university leaders are encouraged to better understand the interactions between student affairs professionals and faculty. According to Beodeker (2006), "It has become increasingly clear that collaboration requires faculty and student affairs professionals to cross numerous occupational and cultural boundaries and borders" (p. 279). The ability of faculty and student affairs professionals to cross occupational and cultural boundaries and borders is hindered by lack of understanding of self and each other (Magolda, 2005). Real and perceived differences between faculty and student affairs professionals serve as a significant barrier to collaboration between these two subcultures (Beodeker, 2006; Love & Love, 1995) and may hinder the creation and promotion of engaged student learning and positive student learning outcomes.

Research has helped clarify differences between student affairs and the professorate; however, higher education would be well served with research about faculty and student affairs professionals that goes further (Beodeker, 2006; Buyarski, 2004; Schuh & Whitt, 1999).

Reflective evaluation of roles on campus, philosophies and approaches to education, and key criticisms of their division by another division can lead to enhanced collaboration, because people develop greater self-awareness and clarity of purpose (Arcelus, 2008). Exploring how members come to hold and pass on similar beliefs and perceptions is one way to gain deeper understanding of role expectations held by each group. Members of the two subcultures can build and nurture relationships with one another when they have a better understanding of self and of each other. Their respect and appreciation of each other's roles may lead to a deeper mutual understanding and a realization of the shared commitment to student learning (Arcelus, 2008; Magolda, 2005).

There is little research about the student affairs subculture (Beodeker, 2006) and even less about how commonly held beliefs and perceptions about faculty are conveyed within the student affairs subculture. A call for further studies of the role of beliefs and beliefs system has been made by researchers who have recently studied faculty and student affairs collaboration (Arcelus, 2008; Zummo, 2012). Student affairs professionals have common beliefs and perceptions about faculty (Arcelus, 2008; Beodeker, 2006; Love & Love, 1995). These beliefs and perceptions are generally negative – placing faculty in a category of higher education professionals who do not care about the individual student. Conversely, there are beliefs and perceptions that faculty are committed to the individual student and to a comprehensive learning experience (Arcelus, 2008; Buyarski, 2004; Dale & Drake, 2005; Hargrave, 2000). Some beliefs and perceptions that student affairs professionals have about faculty are generally negative and inhibit relationship building and collaboration (Beodeker, 2006); however, those beliefs and perceptions are not held by all student affairs professionals (Buyarski, 2004; Dale & Drake, 2005; Hargrove, 2000).

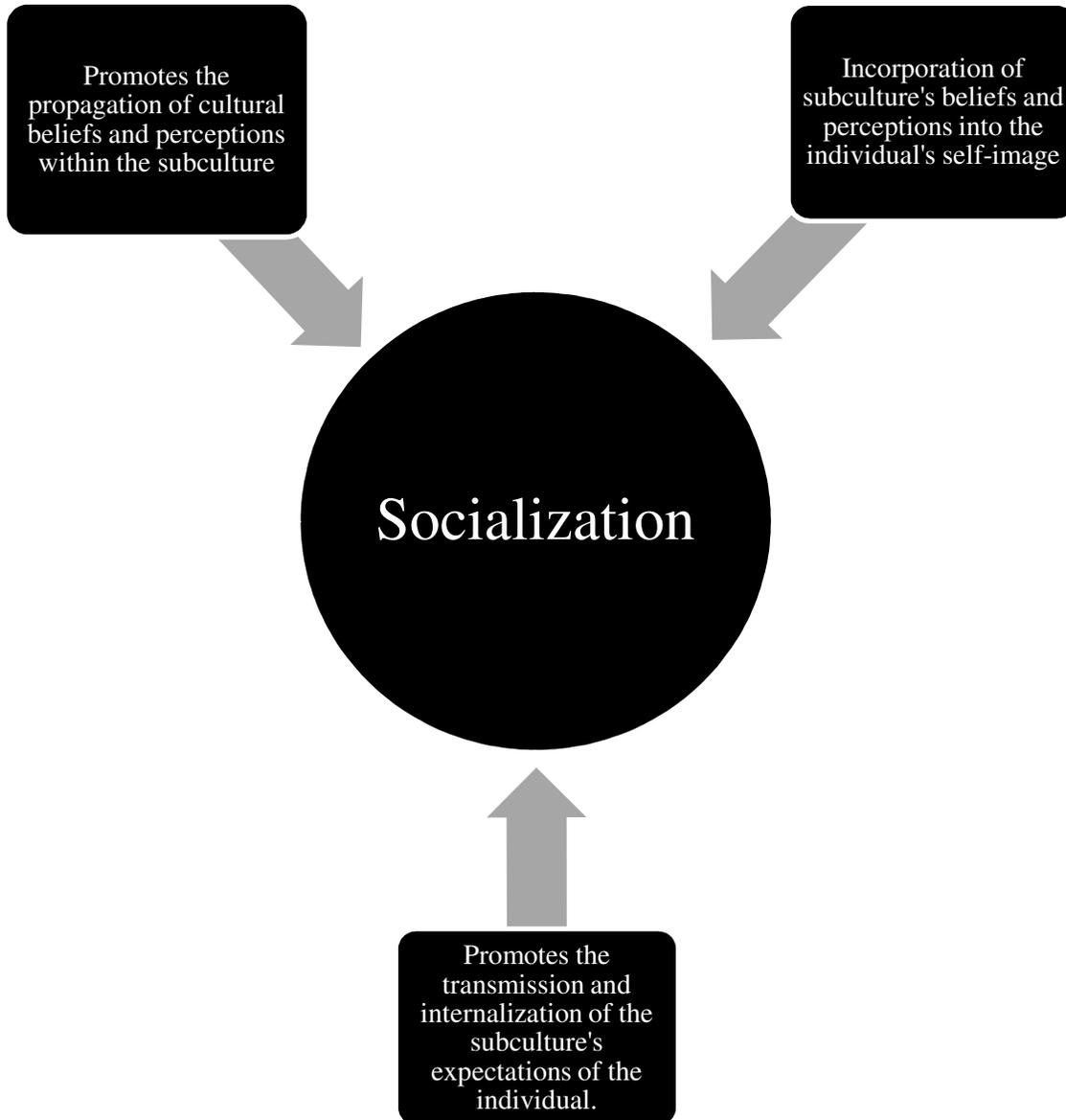
A better understanding of organizational culture and the impact of beliefs and perceptions on collaboration leads to the questions of how beliefs and perceptions are acquired within the subcultures. This led to the third tenet of the conceptual framework – socialization and the propagation of beliefs and perceptions.

### 3. Socialization and the Propagation of Beliefs and Perceptions (see Figure 3).

Beodeker (2006) writes, "...leadership in higher education must consider how the group culture of faculty and student affairs have taught members of those subgroups ways to perceive, think and feel that are inconsistent with goals of collaboration and cooperation" (p. 13).

Understanding where and how these beliefs and perceptions are developed and sustained can help leaders address and mitigate the development of such stereotypes in the future (Oblander, 1990; Soh, 2000). This may lead to better understanding by addressing inaccurate beliefs and perceptions and by endorsing a more positive view about faculty. It may also promote self-evaluation and increased self-awareness about perceptions about faculty that cast doubt upon negative stereotypes. In turn, more positive collaboration between faculty and student affairs professionals may result. Promotion of more and enhanced collaboration, to address the needs of higher education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and to enrich student learning, may result (AACU, 2008; Kezar & Lester, 2009; Kuh et al., 2010).

Underlying all of this is a question posed by Van Maanen and Schein (1979) who ask, "How is it that certain patterns of thought and action are passed from one generation of organization members to the next?" (p. 1). Student affairs professionals like everyone learn about



*Figure 3. Socialization and the propagation of beliefs and perceptions.*

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beliefs and perceptions of the student affairs subculture through socialization (Oblander, 1990; Tull, Hirt & Saunders, 2009). Socialization processes convey cultural norms, beliefs, perceptions, and behaviors onto new and experienced members of a culture (Trice & Beyer, 1993; Van Maanen, 1984). It involves the transmission and internalization of expectations associated with knowledge and skills required for a position, along with the cultural beliefs and perceptions of the organization (Tierney, 1997; Trice & Beyer, 1993; Van Maanen, 1984). Through socialization, “newcomers come to learn the culture of the organization and in this way the culture influences their behavior and decision-making” (Oblander, 1990, p. 17). Further understanding of socialization may also uncover intragroup dialogue – shared messages or mental models within a culture (Arcelus, 2008). Therefore, understanding how beliefs and perceptions are acquired may assist higher education leaders in developing socialization experiences that promote positive beliefs and perceptions (Schein, 2004; Tierney, 1997; Van Maanen, 1984).

There is a need for research about student affairs professionals socialization (Tull et al., 2009). The most recent book about the socialization of new student affairs professionals (Tull et al., 2009) noted the importance of understanding the faculty culture and provided some recommendations towards that end. However, it stated: “no studies were readily uncovered that focus on new professionals in student affairs administration” (Tull et al., 2009, p. 154). One study has explored socialization from the side of the new student affairs professional (Henning, Cilente, Kennedy, & Sloane, 2011). New student affairs professionals were asked to rank training needs and preferred methods of delivery. Among the 30 possible training issues, understanding the culture of one’s institution ranked seventh. Mentoring from peers and supervisors stood out as the preferred method of socialization. Little in-depth research about the

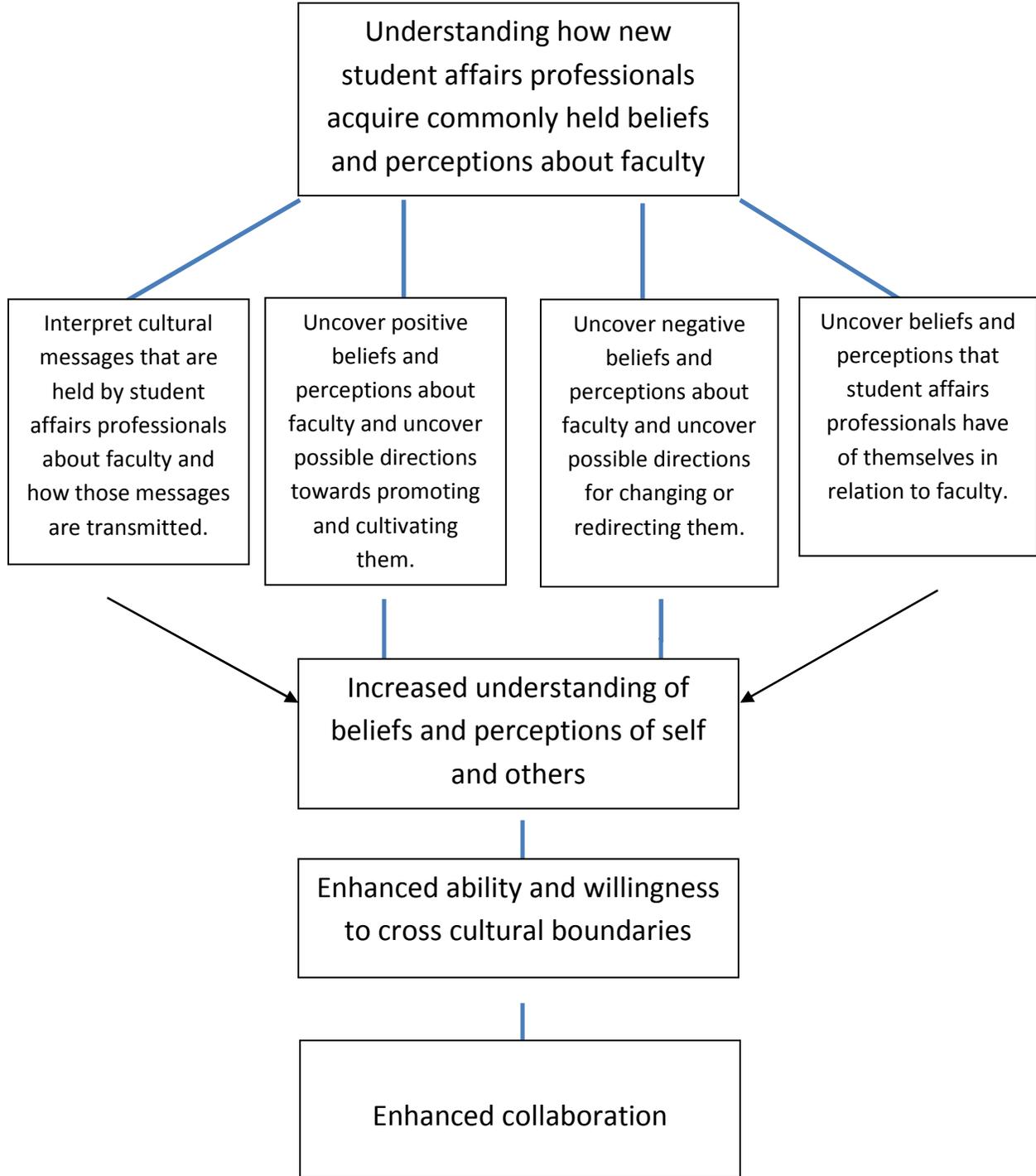
socialization of new student affairs professionals outside of Oblander's 1990 dissertation was found. The conceptual framework for this study links beliefs and perceptions propagated through cultural socialization with the collaboration necessary for student learning (see Figure 4).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The guiding question of this study is "How do student affairs professionals acquire commonly held beliefs and perceptions about faculty?" The purpose is to gain knowledge by focusing on socialization experiences of new student affairs professionals. The goal is to create a rich description of how new student affairs professionals acquire commonly held beliefs and perceptions about faculty. The goal of this study is not to prove or disprove a hypothesis, but rather to gain understanding and to stimulate self-reflection and discussion among study participants and readers of this study. Data has been analyzed to generate the following:

- Identification of the beliefs and perceptions new student affairs professionals have about faculty.
- A detailed description of how new student affairs professionals acquire beliefs and perceptions about faculty.
- An understanding of how new student affairs professionals' beliefs and perceptions about faculty are passed on within the student affairs' subculture.

To date there has not been a systematic, qualitative study of how student affairs professionals acquire their beliefs and perceptions about faculty. In conducting the literature review for this study, research about what student affairs professionals know and think about faculty was found (Arcelus, 2008; Beodeker, 2006; Buyarski, 2004; Rodems, 2011). In addition, some investigations and accounts of student affairs socialization processes have been undertaken (Evans & Phelps-Tobin, 1998; Oblander, 1990; Tull et al., 2009). These developing bodies of



*Figure 4.* The link between sub-cultural beliefs and perceptions and collaboration.

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literature branch off, independent of one another. One highlights the beliefs and perceptions that student affairs professionals have about faculty. The other describes, evaluates, and recommends socialization processes for new and experienced student affairs professionals. Neither explores how, through socialization, new student affairs professionals acquire beliefs and perceptions about faculty. This study will begin to fill that gap.

### **Significance of the Study**

Today's American society expects defined and demonstrated learning outcomes from its colleges and universities. As resources have tightened, the expectation that college students will graduate prepared for the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century has increased. In 2008, federal and state tuition subsidies and state support of publically funded institutions approximated half of all operating revenues (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). This has resulted in greater demands for accountability of student learning outcomes by the federal government and the general public, which is expected to continue (Brenchley, 2013; Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Department of Education, 2006). Leaders are looking to collaborative initiatives as a way to pool expertise, promote idea generation, and combine resources. Scholars recommend concerted efforts geared towards holistic student learning that considers all aspects of the college experience, not just the academic/intellectual component (AACU, 2008; AAHE et al., 1998; Boyer Commission, 1998). By bringing together knowledge, skills, and resources, collaboration between faculty and student affairs professionals is recommended to promote such efforts. However, negative beliefs and perceptions that faculty and student affairs professionals have of one another inhibit collaboration (Beodeker, 2006; Buyarski, 2004; Kezar & Lester, 2009). This study focuses specifically on student affairs professionals by asking: How do new student affairs professionals acquire beliefs and perceptions about faculty? Gathering and interpreting data about beliefs and

perceptions that student affairs professionals have about faculty may result in the following outcomes. It can help increase and enhance collaboration. Knowledge uncovered by this study provides an interpretation of some cultural messages that are proliferated throughout student affairs. Such understanding provides a clearer picture of cultural beliefs and perceptions and how they are acquired (Schein, 2004). This provides leaders with additional knowledge to facilitate direction and promotion of more positive beliefs and perceptions about faculty (Oblander, 1990; Soh, 2000).

This study uncovers notions within the organizational culture in the form of negative beliefs and perceptions that student affairs professionals have about faculty. Based on Tierney (2008), higher education leaders have cause to reconfigure socialization processes to promote more positive beliefs and perceptions about faculty. In other words, if new members are socialized from a similar perspective, and this perspective is leading to problems within the organizational culture, by identifying the problem(s) it may be possible to reconfigure socialization to improve outcomes (Tierney, 2008). Conversely, this study uncovered positive beliefs and perceptions and a direction by which to promote and cultivate them in the socialization of future student affairs professionals. Knowledge of the acquisition of beliefs and perceptions can assist leaders in socializing people to different objectives and goals. Previous studies have shown that student affairs professionals are socialized in similar ways and that there is a need for enhanced socialization that promotes increased exposure to and knowledge about faculty (Tull et al., 2009).

This study facilitates the promotion of understanding by student affairs professionals about faculty. Increased understanding can occur when stereotypes are questioned and perceptions are modified to build a foundation for increased collaboration and cooperation (Beodeker, 2006;

Kezar & Lester, 2009). Consequently, one outcome of this study is that increased knowledge of beliefs and perceptions, related to collaboration, may improve the ability of student affairs professionals to cross the cultural divide that separates them from faculty. In addition, participants of this study gained knowledge about their own beliefs and perceptions and began to understand how those beliefs and perceptions impact their willingness or ability to collaborate. Participants were called to reflect on and articulate their beliefs and perceptions about faculty over a semester. This introspection resulted in questioning and more clearly defining their personal views about faculty. Another outcome is that readers of this study will gain knowledge about their own beliefs and perceptions and begin to understand how those beliefs and perceptions impact their willingness or ability to collaborate. Ultimately, such knowledge may promote and improve collaborative efforts, with the preferred outcome being enhanced, effective, and integrated student learning.

### **Overview of Methodology**

Perceptual, cultural studies are best conducted with qualitative methods (Martin, 2002; Schein, 2004). Ethnography, the qualitative research method for this study, requires the researcher to describe and interpret the shared and learned values, behaviors, beliefs, and language of a culture-sharing group – in this case, the subculture of student affairs. This study will focus on the student affairs subculture because “student affairs professionals have a less storied culture than faculty, which can be attributed to the relative youth of the field in comparison” (Ahren, 2008, p. 84). This is an ethnographic study conducted at a large, public, research institution in the Southeast. It will be referred to as Cogentia University in this study. Ethnographic research provides a framework where to begin understanding and interpreting sub-

cultural beliefs and perceptions. Residence Life Coordinators, in their first year of employment at Cogentia University will be studied.

Data collection techniques used included interviewing, observation, and document analysis. Interviews of new Residence Life Coordinators, their experienced peers and their supervisors will serve as the primary data collection method. Observations of a meeting with a committee of faculty and residence life staff will provide additional data. Information gathered through the review of documents will provide understanding of departmental mission, goals, values, services, and programs. Using such methods allowed for inductive reasoning by which description, interpretation, and explanation of gathered information results in conclusions. Data collection and analysis are simultaneous, with preliminary data analysis informing future data collection (Huberman & Miles, 2002).

### **Summary**

This study begins to identify how new student affairs professionals acquire their beliefs and perceptions about faculty. It provides an understanding of the student affairs subculture. Moreover, it begins to expose underlying sub-cultural beliefs and perceptions that may impact student affairs professionals' willingness to collaborate with faculty.

This study was born out of a call from politicians and the public for increased accountability and defined student learning outcomes in American higher education. Student learning rooted in engaging in- and out-of-classroom experiences and environments has come forth. Collaboration between faculty and student affairs professionals is a vehicle for the creation and promotion of engaging student learning experiences and environments. Viewed as sub-cultures, within the larger organizational culture of higher education, faculty and student affairs professionals have different roles, values, beliefs, and norms. Negative beliefs and perceptions

these subcultures have of each other can inhibit collaboration. As higher education leaders look for ways to improve collaboration, obtaining knowledge about how new student affairs professionals acquire beliefs and perceptions about faculty seems reasonable.

The review of literature in Chapter II provides an overview of topics connected to this study: student learning, organizational culture in higher education, collaboration between faculty and student affairs, the student affairs subculture, and socialization. Chapter III is an overview of the research methodology for this study. Results, presented in a narrative form, are presented in Chapter IV. Narratives about the individual new RLCs, the buddy pairs, and the supervisors are included. Chapter V provides descriptions and discussion of the findings. Recommendations for practice and implications for future research are presented in Chapter VI.

## **CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

To understand how new student affairs professionals acquire commonly held beliefs and perceptions about faculty research literature on student learning, collaboration, faculty and student affairs sub-cultures, and socialization was explored. Student learning and collaboration in higher education serve as the starting point for this study and review of literature. Next, research on organizational culture is discussed followed by an overview of student affairs and finally, socialization.

Student learning is reviewed in the first section of this chapter. It begins with a definition of student learning then turns to outcomes and accountability. Learning outcomes, strategies for student learning, and the responsibilities of students, faculty and staff were uncovered (Love & Love, 1995; Terenzini & Pascarelli, 1997; Whitt, 2006). Recommended strategies that promote student learning by integrating in-class and out-of-class experiences through collaborative efforts were researched. Definitions of collaboration, recommendations for effective collaboration, and roadblocks to collaboration have been studied. Common threads appear among the various disciplines and are discussed (D'Amour, Ferrada-Videla, Rodriques, & Beauliero, 2005; Gray, 1989; Haskins, Liedtka & Rosenbum, 1998; Lawson, 2004; Kanter, 2000; Reilly, 2001; Wood & Gray, 1991). In addition, it was important to include current research about factors that strengthen or inhibit collaboration (Arcelus, 2008; Beodeker, 2006; Buyarski, 2004; Kezar & Lester, 2009).

Some of the research about the factors that strengthen or inhibit collaboration focused on the beliefs and perceptions that faculty and student affairs professionals have of each other.

Common threads were found. Beliefs and perceptions included misunderstanding of roles, focus on self and one's area of expertise, and different values related to the purpose of higher education (Arcelus, 2008; Beodeker, 2006; Buyarski, 2004; Stein & Short, 2001). With this knowledge in hand, the next step was to research how these beliefs and perceptions are developed, fostered, and encouraged to continue.

Organizational culture was the lens through which this study was viewed. Consequently gaining an understanding of culture, organizational culture, and the sub-culture of student affairs was necessary (Martin, 2002; Schein, 2004; Smircich, 1983; Tierney, 1988). Besides considering an overview of the field of organizational culture, specific studies about higher education culture (Berquist, 1992; Chaffee & Tierney, 1988; Hirt, 2006; Kuh & Whitt, 1988), and student affairs and faculty subcultures (Arcelus, 2008; Beodeker, 2006; Buyarski, 2004; Hargrave, 2000) were reviewed. The profession of student affairs, its history, functions, and values as related to student learning and collaboration were reviewed. A historical perspective uncovered student affairs' ongoing search for its place in higher education, specifically its role with the academic mission (Cohen, 1998; Komives, Woodard, & Associates, 2003; MacKinnon, 2004).

Finally, as a conduit for the development of beliefs and perceptions, organizational socialization was studied. Introducing job responsibilities and skills to new members was found to be only one function of organizational socialization. The dissemination and perpetuation of organizational values, beliefs, and behaviors was another. Specific to this study was the socialization of student affairs professionals. There was a decided lack of research on the socialization of student affairs professionals (Oblander, 1990; Tull et al., 2009). As a result, general information about organizational socialization is shared. To review, literature on the

following topics have been researched and synthesized in preparation for this study: student learning in American higher education, collaboration, organizational culture, the student affairs' profession, and socialization.

## **The Focus on Student Learning in American Higher Education**

### **Defining Student Learning**

“We commit ourselves to educational opportunity that is genuinely equal; excellence across the board in our curricula; to the civic purposes of higher learning; to complex broad-based agendas for discovery, research, and graduate education; and to active engagement that brings the resources of our institutions to bear in a coherent way on community, state, national and international problems. Finally, we commit ourselves to accountability that is public and effective...” (Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities, 2000, p. 13)

The ideas presented by the Kellogg Commission are found in other reports about the future of American higher education. Non-profit foundations, professional associations, and the federal government have written documents that call upon colleges and universities to evaluate and restructure practices against the backdrop of 21<sup>st</sup> century societal needs. Student learning has been a key agenda item in these reports. As one of the primary responsibilities of American higher education student learning is an idea that needs to be re-conceptualized (Duderstadt, 2000; Kuh, 1996). Whether referred to as holistic, integrative, seamless, or engaged, student learning is a central topic of today's scholars, university administrators, and political leaders (AACU, 2008; AAHE et al., 1998; Kellogg Commission, 2001; ACPA, 1994; U.S. Department of Education 2006; Wingspread Group, 1993).

Recognizing that intellectual pursuits are at the heart of higher education (Kerr, 1963), recent writings about student learning mention the importance of the entire college student experience. Central to holistic student learning is the idea that learning is complex and involves encountering, challenging, and synthesizing different experiences (Duderstadt, 2000; Newell, 1999). In-class and out-of-class experiences and cognitive and affective development are intertwined. Holistic learning that considers social, emotional, and intellectual growth is a foundation of student learning today (Banta & Kuh, 1998; Cross, 1996). Understanding and incorporating knowledge of the learning process, the roles of faculty and staff, and the campus environment are other important components (Love & Love, 1995; Schroeder, 1999). Proponents supporting this contemporary notion of student learning have recommended that a student-centered philosophy be at the core of institutional values and practices (AACU, 2008; ACPA, 1994; Kellogg Commission, 2000).

Much of the recent work about student-centered learning stems from earlier descriptions. Kuh (1996) outlines the environments most conducive for integrated student learning when he defined “seamless learning environment”:

What was once believed to be separate, distinct parts (e.g. in-class and out-of-class, academic and non-academic, curricular and co-curricular, or on-campus and off-campus experiences) are now of one piece, bound together so as to appear whole and continuous.  
(p. 135)

What students need to learn, how they learn, and the conditions under which learning occurs the best, are central to the seamless learning environment. Schroeder (1999) sees seamless learning as a way “to combat the current disjointedness of general education, co-curricular experiences and campus employment” (p. 7). The primary goal of holistic student learning in

seamless learning environments is to develop educated students in efficient, purposeful ways (Duderstadt, 2000; Kuh, 1996).

### **Outcomes and Accountability**

Investments in learning are a national imperative. Byrne and W. K. Kellogg Commission (2006) wrote, “Investments in learning contribute to the overall competitiveness and the economic social well-being of the nation” (p. 10). This championing of higher education comes with a demand for production and transparent practices and results. Those wishing to advance the integrated student-learning concept have addressed accountability and outcomes (AAHE et al., 1998; ACPA, 1994; Byrne & W.K. Kellogg Commission, 2006; Creech et al., 2000). In *The Shaping of American Higher Education; Emergence and Growth of the Contemporary System*, Cohen and Kisker (2010), note that declining revenues, demands from accrediting agencies, and difficulties in selling the intrinsic value of a college education have contributed to a focus on student learning. Declines in revenue are supported by these findings:

- By the end of 2008, most states were facing declines in revenue.
- State revenue to higher education dropped from 61% in 1976 to 25% in 2005.
- The State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) predicted that every state will have a shortfall by 2013 (Cohen & Kisker, 2010).

Even with these declines, federal and state tuition subsidies and state support accounted for approximately half of all operating revenues for publically funded institutions. As a result, demands for accountability grew with accrediting agencies focusing on quantitative data and student learning outcomes. Accrediting agencies began requiring data on retention, graduation and job placement rates, time to degree completion, and passing rates on license exams. In addition, institutions are now pressed to publish intended learning outcomes. The Southern

Regional Education Board has prompted higher education leaders to ask, “What do college students know? In addition, what can they do?” They also ask, “In striving to educate students, are physical and human resources being used efficiently” (Creech et al., 2000)? Legislators and the public have focused on receiving a good return for their investment, so universities and colleges are faced with defining and showing benefits, and providing evidence of a college education. A lucrative, secure career is the result desired by many; however, the benefits of attending college continue to produce not only cognitive, but also psychological developments. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) note net change attributable to college exposure in several areas. Specifically, change in increased skills, positive outcomes, and developmental growth in these areas are listed: academic and cognitive, psychosocial, attitudes and values, career and economic, and quality of life.

In addition, the evidence strongly suggests that these outcomes are interdependent, that learning is holistic rather than segmented, and that multiple forces operate in multiple settings to shape student learning and change in ways that cross the “cognitive-affective” divide. Numerous studies examining multiple sources of influence that shape change and learning in virtually every outcome area have found statistically significant and independent effects of classroom experiences and pedagogies, coursework, institutional environments and cultures, and an array of out-of-class activities. (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, pp. 629-630)

The focus on learning productivity and outcomes assessment has made it important for educators in colleges and universities to define desired goals and outcomes. Several documents outlined the desired outcomes of student learning (AACU, 2008; Kellogg Commission, 2000;

Newell, 1999; Schroeder, 1999; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1997). Four categories of learning outcomes have emerged from the literature:

1. Cognitive skills - knowledge acquisition and application, complex problem solving, and critical, contextual, and reflexive thinking
2. Affective and social skills - increased empathy and compassion, the ability to work in a team, and interpersonal communication competencies
3. Worldview- exposure to alternative worldviews, diverse perspectives, and acquiring a respect for differences
4. Leadership skills - self-understanding, citizenship (accepting responsibility for self and others), social responsibility, and exposure to service learning and volunteerism

Assessment of learning outcomes is a key component of recent literature about the role and responsibilities of American higher education (Byrne et al., 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Love and Love (1995) noted that holistic student learning is a cultural, paradigmatic shift in higher education and needs to be “intentionally integrated into assessment efforts” (p. 100). Assessing holistic, seamless student learning requires looking for different outcomes in different ways (Love & Love, 1995; Terenzini & Pascarelli, 1997). As higher education defines student learning, identifies desired outcomes, and is able to assess such, what is needed to foster continued success?

### **Recommended Conditions for Student Learning**

Standing atop the list of recommended conditions for student success is a call for higher education leaders to have a common vision for student learning for their institutions (Kezar, 2006; Kuh et al., 2005; Whitt, 2006). A focus on the academic mission is a component of that vision. Love and Love (1995) viewed fragmentation of administrative structures and academic

disciplines as a hindrance to developing a common vision. Creating a common vision for student learning can be a challenging task, because faculty and student affairs professionals might not have the same definition of student learning. Faculty value the acquisition and advancement of intellectual knowledge, while student affairs professionals value the development of the whole student that encompasses social and emotional influences (Arcelus, 2008; Buyarski, 2004; Sousa-Peoples, 2001). The value that faculty place on certain aspects of the college student experience may vary. Sousa-Peoples (2001) and Arcelus (2008) found that faculty view the out-of-classroom experience as the sole responsibility of student affairs professionals and view student affairs involvement with intellectual activities with trepidation. These differences underscore the challenge of establishing a common vision of student learning on a college campus.

Despite real or perceived differences, student affairs scholars have noted that student affairs must support the academic mission of higher education while being part of a learning agenda that can benefit from their expertise in student development and student cultures (MacKinnon, 2004; Woodard, Love, & Komives, 2000). Woodard et al. (2000) wrote, “Student learning should be the desired outcome and goal of every student affairs program and activity” (p. 7). Whitt (2006) concurred with the notion that academic and student affairs must merge under the umbrella of student learning to enhance higher education outcomes. In her article entitled, “*Are all of your educators educating?*” she summarized results of the *Project DEEP (Documenting Effective Educational Practices)* study. For *Project DEEP*, a 24-member research team collected data from more than 2,700 students, faculty and staff on 20 campuses (Kuh et al., 2005). These institutions had higher-than-predicted graduation rates and effective policies and practices for engaging students. Conditions for desired educational outcomes were uncovered.

Two were: a focus on student learning shaped by a “living mission and lived educational philosophy” (Whitt, 2006, p. 9), and a shared responsibility for student success by faculty, staff, and administrators. Clearly marked pathways to student success, educationally enriched environments, and an improvement-oriented ethos were other required conditions.

Members from academic and students affairs professional organizations came together and compiled a set of learning principles in *Powerful Partnerships: A Shared Responsibility for Learning* (AAHE et al., 1998). These authors believe that conditions for effective student learning are best accomplished in an environment where faculty and student affairs collaborate and share responsibility for student learning. Students enhance the learning process by actively searching for meaning, considering new perspectives, and monitoring their own learning. Faculty and student affairs professionals enhance the learning process by creating situations that call for contemplation, cooperative sharing, and critical thinking. An acceptance that learning takes place informally and incidentally is another principle (AAHE et al., 1998). Integrative learning has been promoted in recent years (Newell, 1999; Taylor, 2011) and echo the principles set forth in *Powerful Partnerships* (AAHE et al., 1998). These include:

- the application of knowledge gained from in- and out- of class experiences
- increased student engagement in their own learning through reflection and application
- an understanding throughout the university community that education occurs wherever students are
- buy-in to the idea that educators do not exist only in the classroom

Frameworks and strategies for higher education leaders that take into account the dynamic, integrated, and purposeful conditions required for student-learning have been presented (Kezar & Lester, 2009; Taylor, 2011; Whitt, 2006). Beneath any strategies or attempts at

comprehensive student learning initiatives, are the complex structures of universities (Hirt, 2007; Kezar & Lester, 2009; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1997). Terenzini and Pascarella (1997) recognized and incorporated this idea of the multifarious nature of higher education in their recommendation for effective student learning when they wrote:

Real college impact is likely to come not from pulling any grand, specific policy or programmatic lever – but from pulling a number of smaller, interrelated academic and social levers more often. If a college’s effects are varied and cumulative, then its approaches to enhancing those effects must be varied and cumulative, too, and coordinated. (p. 178)

Kezar and Lester agree with Terenzini and Pascarella’s call for cumulative and coordinated efforts. Based on the notion that collaborative initiatives are imperative for student learning, they also note the importance of a common “educational philosophy” within a college or university (Kezar & Lester, 2009, p. 62). In the *Deep Project* study of universities with high levels of student engagement and persistence, Kuh et al. (2005) found this common value among faculty and student affairs professionals – a shared responsibility for educational quality and student success. In addition, effective partnerships between faculty and student affairs professionals showed evidence of positive attitudes and a collaborative spirit.

### **Summary of the Renewed Focus on Student Learning**

In the light of society’s global, technological, and economic forces, constituents inside and outside of higher education have called upon the academy to refocus and re-evaluate student learning. Defining student learning and its resulting outcomes has been the work of several academic scholars, politicians, business leaders, and others. The literature reviewed exposed common definitions and outcomes. Holistic, integrated learning - engagement from students,

faculty, and staff in a seamless environment focused on specific outcomes - were threads woven throughout the literature. Scholars who investigated successful student learning environments and programs have developed guidelines and principles for others in higher education. Variances in guidelines were seen as some authors focused on institutional changes (Kuh, 1996; Whitt, 2006), while others looked at specific characteristics of effective learning (AAHE et al., 1998; ACPA, 1994).

All of the literature noted the development of a common vision of student learning that highlighted the academic mission. The call for collaboration was also evident. While there are noted risks related to collaboration (Fulop & Couchman, 2006; Magolda, 2005), Kezar and Lester (2009) submit that there is overwhelming evidence of the benefits of collaboration. Terenzini and Pascarella (1997) refer to the need for collaboration when they wrote of education occurring in many different ways, in many different places, and by many different people. In her dissertation about academic and student affairs collaboration, Buyarski (2004) uncovered common ground between student affairs professionals and faculty – educating students. Her call for collaboration is strong. She wrote, “If we are to create holistic learning experiences for students, collaboration between faculty and student affairs staff must become a regular part of the operational landscape of higher education” (Buyarski, 2004, p. 157). These scholars believe collaboration is necessary for integrated student learning to occur. As such, it is important to understand what is known about collaboration between the two groups who have the most interaction with students – faculty and student affairs professionals (Banta & Kuh, 1998).

## **Faculty and Student Affairs Collaboration**

### **Defining Collaboration**

Collaboration between faculty and student affairs professionals has been a topic of consideration in higher education dating back to 1906. That year, a proposal for a residential college at Harvard was debated and defeated (Philpott & Strange, 2003). From its inception, student affairs has been dealing with questions about its relationship with academic affairs (Evans & Reason, 2001). Student affairs was created out of a need to address out-of-classroom issues and free faculty for more academic endeavors (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Hirt, 2006). Although described in several documents and philosophical statements (Evans & Reason, 2001), in-depth research about faculty and student affairs collaboration is recent, having evolved within the last fifteen years (Beodeker, 2006). Research has included efforts to define collaboration, evaluate collaborative efforts, and uncover conditions that strengthen or hinder collaboration. Much of the literature about collaboration in higher education has been anecdotal (Kezar, 2006). Aside from an opinion article by Peter Magolda (2001), this review of literature will focus on findings from research studies.

Collaboration is defined as "...a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible" (Gray, 1989, p. 5). Concepts of collaboration such as sharing, partnerships, interdependency and power are themes that run through research studies (D'Amour, Ferrada-Videla, Rodriguez, & Beaulieu, 2005; Haskins et al., 1998; Kezar & Lester, 2009). Haskins et al. (1998) and D'Amour et al. (2005) reported similar findings when describing characteristics that promote collaboration. Based on a synthesis of over 1,000 pages of transcripts of interviews with over 30 junior and senior professionals from three different

professions, Haskins et al. (1998) concluded that “an ethic of collaboration lies at the core of collaborative success” (p. 34). A sense of calling, genuine care about others, conscientious stewardship, and creative energy are the person-centered attributes reflective of an ethic of collaboration. In their synopsis of literature, D’Amour et al. (2005) found that sharing, partnerships (collaborative undertakings that are characterized by collegial-like relationships), and interdependency were characteristic of effective collaboration. To support and reinforce those attributes, organization leaders must provide a coherent intent (common vision), congruent systems, and capital for relationship building and learning (D’Amour et al., 2005; Haskins et al., 1998).

In higher education, collaboration is defined less by the cooperative problem-solving and relational aspects described above and more by managerial strategies (Gray, 1989; Magolda, 2005). Setting agendas, selecting participants, assigning tasks, and allocating resources have been the focus of collaborative initiatives (Kezar & Lester, 2009; Magolda, 2005). With managerial strategies being the focal point of university partnerships, power and politics come into play. Magolda has experienced the power distribution of subcultures that work together. He noted, “The way collaboration most often works is through hierarchies based on possession of information and role specialization” (Magolda, 2005, p. 19). He sees this as an acceptable outcome of collaboration with different members of the partnership taking on different roles, some being subordinate roles. In contrast, Law (2004) notes that equitable relations result in effective authority and resource sharing to support collaboration.

Although collaboration in higher education is defined primarily by managerial strategies, recent researchers have recommended a change. Mutual understanding, shared values, and a common definition of student learning form the core of these new definitions of collaboration in

higher education (Ahren, 2008; Arcelus, 2008; Kezar & Lester, 2009). Collaboration is said to be a natural result of interpersonal relationships built on trust and respect. In his case study of one institution, Arcelus (2008) interviewed faculty and student affairs professionals to learn more about their perceptions of themselves and each other. Through his study, Arcelus' definition of partnership changed. He wrote, "It is not about developing a program together; partnership is exhibiting mutual understanding and together developing an ethos where people value integrative learning" (Arcelus, 2008, p. 405). Collaborations emerge "from a foundation built of trust, respect, acceptance, and appreciation that allows people across divisions to recognize their common aspirations and operate with a shared purpose" (Arcelus, 2008, p. 406).

After a review of the twenty-four DEEP institutions, Whitt (2009) found "no single blueprint for success" (p. 9). In contrast, Kezar and Lester's (2009) study provided them with enough confidence to outline such a blueprint. The researchers call for the alteration of seven organizational features: (1) mission, vision and educational philosophy, (2) values, (3) social networks, (4) structures (campus systems), (5) rewards, (6) external pressure, and (7) learning. Kezar and Lester outline specific strategies and guidelines for each feature. Furthermore, redesign of these organizational features and creation of new structures to support redesign is put forward. Their recommendations come out of their own research, the work of Mohrman, Cohen, and Mohrman (1995), and research from fields outside of higher education, such as business and government. A case-study analysis of four post-secondary institutions "where collaboration flourished" was completed (Kezar & Lester, 2009, p. 37). Interviews with 30-40 people from each institution were conducted. In addition these researchers conducted site visits, attended meetings, and reviewed documents and websites (Kezar & Lester, 2009).

In the past 10 years, leaders in academic and student affairs have devoted more time, staff and monetary resources to collaborative initiatives. They are generally positive about the partnerships on their campuses (Kezar, 2001). Reasons to collaborate are plentiful. Kezar (2006) wrote, “Although evidence is just emerging about the impact of collaborative initiatives on student learning, the organizational benefits are well documented” (p. 805). Improved organizational functioning like combining staff, resources and talent, and creation of new knowledge are reasons to collaborate. Collaboration can also “reform and transform institutional identities, rules, roles, norms, power and authority relations” while dismantling old policies and practices (Lawson, 2004, p. 233).

In light of this study, collaboration is a process desirable for the promotion of holistic student learning. However, collaboration is not a purely beneficial phenomenon. Concerns and risks related to collaboration are documented in the literature (Fulop & Couchman, 2006; Gray, 2004; Lawson, 2004; Magolda, 2005). Lawson (2004) and Fulop and Couchman (2006) describe risks associated with collaboration. Although stemming from an organizational context of business and industry, Lawson’s list of collaboration risks is worth considering for higher education. The risks include:

1. Strategic risks -loss of new technology or operational techniques
2. Capacity risks - loss of independence
3. Dissemination risks - loss of knowledge resulting in discontinued need for certain employees
4. Resource risks – being taken advantage of for funds, services or supplies
5. Reputation risks - the result of working with people who are viewed to have less reputable images and histories

6. Legitimacy risks - questions about the extent to which the collaboration is legal, ethical, moral and justifiable (Lawson, 2004, p. 232)

Relational risks are another risk of collaboration. Examples of relationship risks are exploitation of others, competition, hidden agendas, withholding information or resources, and lack of commitment. Relational risks are tied to trust. When parties trust one another, they are more likely to accept the relational risks - specifically the risk that their partners may not behave as expected or promised (Fulop & Couchman, 2006).

Why do leaders of colleges and universities promote collaborative initiatives when there are known risks? Magolda (2005) is concerned that institutions are spearheading collaborative efforts “just because,” they are not asking if collaboration is a good idea, but assuming it is just inherently good and required to meet the external pressure to partner (p. 17). Sustained and meaningful partnerships come from a moral, not an administrative or managerial basis. Magolda (2005) provided outcomes of collaborations that he believes arise from a moral perspective. Morally based partnerships (a) illuminate merits and liabilities, (b) reveal hidden cultural differences, (c) expose potential political challenges, and (d) present a clearer picture of the meaning of the collaboration. Similar to Magolda’s contentions, Lawson (2004) believes that collaboration is a “feature of competence and optimal practice” and goes so far as to allege, “The failure to collaborate may be indicative of negligence and malpractice” (p. 225). Viewing collaboration from a managerial perspective, as compared to a moral one, is a way to evaluate partnerships within higher education. Whether higher education leaders view collaboration as a management strategy, a moral imperative, or a recent trend to which they must respond, research about collaboration has expanded.

## **Factors that Strengthen or Inhibit Collaboration**

Uncovering factors that enhance or inhibit collaboration has been central in recent literature. Arcelus (2008), Beodeker (2006), Buyarski (2004), Kezar (2006) and Philpott and Strange (2003) used interviews, observation, and document analysis to conduct case studies. In a commonly referenced work, Kezar (2001) administered a survey to find quantifiable measures related to collaboration. A review of these studies shows that factors that strengthen or inhibit collaboration fall into four categories: (a) factors related to organizational culture, (b) leadership factors, (c) structural or bureaucratic factors, and (d) interpersonal relationships.

**Organizational culture.** Factors related to organizational culture were most crucial for the success or failure of collaborative efforts. They encompass norms and values connected to faculty and student affairs' subcultures, language, history, and individual attitudes and behaviors. When writing about faculty and student affairs collaboration, Bourassa and Kruger (2001) noted, "The obstacles and opportunities are still largely enmeshed in the necessity of each entity to deepen their understanding of the other's culture" (p. 13). A more in-depth explanation of organization culture and related concepts is in the next section.

The idea of a shared vision or common purpose is found in studies about collaboration. Haskins et al. (1998) define an ethic of collaboration. In their synthesis of over 1,000 pages of transcripts of interviews of 300 junior-, and senior-level corporate managers, these scholars found a common sense of calling and coherent intent to be indicative of effective collaboration. Although focused on enhancing collaborative initiatives in the corporate world, the idea of a common sense of calling is evident in higher education. Shared commitments to students and to student learning were prominent enhancers of collaboration (Beodeker, 2006; Buyarski, 2004; Kezar, 2001). Kezar (2006) found that a shared commitment to and a common vision of

collaboration were key to collaborative success. One conclusion she noted in 2006 and reconfirmed with Lester in 2009 was that senior higher education leaders must show a sense of priority related to collaboration. They can do so by aligning collaboration with institutional mission and goals.

Individual faculty members and student affairs professionals exhibit a shared commitment to students, but come at it from different perspectives. The commitment to student learning becomes an inhibitor of collaboration, because faculty and student affairs professionals' interpretation of student learning diverge (Beodeker, 2006; Kezar, 2006; Love & Love, 1995). Faculty define student learning in terms of intellectual development and the acquisition and advancement of knowledge. Student affairs professionals define learning in terms of emotional, spiritual, intellectual, social, and physical development (Love & Love, 1995). Buyarski (2004) found that faculty concentrate more on learning and academic standards, while student affairs professionals concentrate more on the needs of individual students. Consequently, faculty tend to believe that student affairs professionals may "compromise academic standards and learning to meet students' individual circumstances" (Buyarski, 2004, p. 147). Arcelus (2008) found that student affairs professionals agreed that faculty and academics are the core of their institution, but they saw learning in broader terms. They included social/emotional development when describing learning, holding it in the same high regard as intellectual/cognitive development. Prevailing views that the role of student affairs is ancillary to the academic mission and that in-class and out-of-class experiences are of unequal importance add to the disconnection.

Perceptions of self and others' professional roles, lack of respect, and lack of understanding between faculty and student affairs professionals inhibit collaboration. These inhibitors stem from differences between faculty and student affairs subcultures and individual

personality, attitudes, experiences, and values within those subcultures. Some sub-cultural inhibitors include (a) disparate training, histories, and socialization experiences (Komives, et al., 2003; Kuh & Banta, 2000), (b) different languages (Baum, 2006; Philpott & Strange, 2003; Kezar, 2006), (c) lack of knowledge or negative perceptions of the other subculture (Arcelus, 2008; Sousa-Peoples, 2001), (d) few shared values (Beodeker, 2006; Buyarski, 2004; Magolda, 2005; Philpott & Strange, 2003) and (e) limited perceptions of one's own subculture (Arcelus, 2008; Buyarski, 2004; Philpott & Strange, 2003).

Lack of understanding and misperceptions can result in suspicion of motives and misleading assumptions of similarities (Arcelus, 2008; Beodeker, 2006; Kuh & Banta, 2000). For example, Beodeker (2006) found that student affairs professionals, who view themselves as educators, believe their values and experiences to be similar to those of faculty. As a result, they see themselves more alike than different from faculty. Faculty view the role of a student affairs professional as administrative in nature (Beodeker, 2006). Faculty members' distrust of administrators carries over to a distrust of student affairs professionals, causing them to take a cautionary view of collaboration. Some faculty participants in Arcelus' (2008) study viewed student activities as a distraction from academics and saw student affairs as being in direct conflict with academic affairs. Some described student affairs professionals as opponents who take resources, steer agendas, and make administrative decisions that are unsupportive of academics. Arcelus (2011) notes that in order to promote academic programs, faculty content that student affairs should be "reined in" (p. 65). In addition, "simultaneously resent academic affairs staff for isolating themselves and not engaging in an inclusive dialogue about the educational mission of the institution" (Arcelus, 2011, p. 65). Perceptions like these and the

tendency of subcultures to promote and maintain their own values and norms, make intercultural (cross-divisional) communication and interaction difficult (Beodeker, 2006; Schein, 2004).

Lack of understanding of self and lack of confidence are other inhibitors of collaboration (Buyarski, 2004; Magolda, 2005; Woodard et al., 2000). Magolda (2005) contended that self-understanding is necessary for individuals to know what influences their behaviors and their interpretations of others' behaviors. Uncovering mental models (cognitive sense-making schemes [Jaffee, 2001]) and underlying assumptions broadens understanding of self and of one's own subculture (Schein, 2004). Open intergroup dialogue, knowledge of differences, and intra-group dialog enhance collaboration (Arcelus, 2011; Kolins, 1999). Without knowledge of self and others, open discourse is stifled, differences are not discussed, and discomfort is not tolerated. Knowledge of self and others must be present for partnerships to flourish (Magolda, 2005).

Perceptions related to occupational status can effect power dynamics and, in turn, effect collaborative efforts. Buyarski (2004) found that student affairs professionals mentioned feelings of inferiority and a lack of appreciation when discussing their experiences with faculty. The need to feel validated by faculty is evident in other literature. Arcelus (2008) and Beodeker (2006) noted student affairs staff members' frustration and disappointment with the lack of understanding faculty had of their profession. Student affairs professionals' desire for external validation, the need to be recognized as "full and equal partners in fostering student learning," became known during Beodeker's (2006, p. 208) study. Both shared examples of student affairs professionals using terms such as *devalued*, *second-class citizens*, and *ignored* when describing how faculty make them feel. When writing about beliefs that student affairs professionals have of themselves, Woodard et al. (2000) used the terms *helplessness* and *marginalization*. The result

of such beliefs is a profession that has a victim mentality and a sense of powerlessness (Scott, 1977; Sousa-Peoples, 2001; Woodard et al., 2000).

Sousa-Peoples (2001) investigated perceptions of student affairs professionals' roles. By interviewing and surveying faculty and key administrators, Sousa-Peoples noted that faculty and senior administrators never downgraded student affairs and that feelings of being second-class citizens were not validated. However, faculty and key stakeholders did not place student affairs professionals in a role central to the academic mission of the university. Instead, their role was viewed as auxiliary and supportive of the academic mission. Sousa-Peoples concluded that this perception could result in less power for student affairs professionals. Arcelus (2008) concluded that academic affairs is more dominant than student affairs in terms of privilege. He wrote, "This hierarchical barrier brings with it bias, misperceptions, and stereotypes, and increases conflict and polarization . . . moving people away from trust, respect, acceptance, and appreciation" (Arcelus, 2008, p. 407).

Twenty-four years earlier, Scott (1977) shared his thoughts about the marginalization of student affairs and its auxiliary role in higher education. He drew conclusions similar to Sousa-Peoples' (2001) and Arcelus (2008), but used harsher terms. Scott (1977) claimed that power was not found in many student personnel roles because the profession was viewed as "non-productive, self-defeating, neurotic and helpless" (p. 184). Scott also concluded that student personnel workers had very little power and that it was their own choice to have very little power. Members of the profession saw power as negative, which conflicted with the humanistic, positive values of the field. As a result, Scott contended that student personnel workers avoided power and authority in order to maintain their core values and avoid responsibility. Sousa-Peoples' (2001) and Arcelus' (2008) studies were qualitative bringing the generalizability of

results into question. However, their studies included more valid and reliable qualitative methods than Scott's did. Scott drew conclusions from a brief literature review and his own professional experiences.

Despite the view that student affairs is ancillary or complementary to the academic mission (Cheatham & Johnson, 1999), there are those who encourage student affairs professionals to see themselves as equal partners with academic affairs and fight self-marginalization (Arcelus, 2008; Woodard et al., 2000). Hirt (2007) challenged student affairs professionals to advance student learning and collaboration by looking to themselves and not to faculty and academic leaders for validation. She has contended that by learning "to speak the language of academics, they [student affairs professionals] can use that new vernacular to express their professional role on campus" and "reduce the disparity they have long perceived between their world and the faculty world" (Hirt, 2007, p. 260).

An understanding of organizational culture shows us that values often determine the behaviors of group members. Ahren (2008) notes that determining faculty and student affairs values, and understanding how the two groups view the others' values, is important to enhancing collaboration. Moreover, researchers of collaboration have found that individuals' values can strengthen collaboration (Haskins et al., 1998; Kezar & Lester, 2009; Tjosvold & Tsao, 1989). Values shared across subcultures within an organization can promote collaboration. Shared values may include a unified understanding of an institution's mission or a common definition of collaboration. Kezar and Lester (2009) note that shared values create a sense of purpose and perspective for all members. In addition, a sense of trust and common perspectives can result from shared values (p. 86). Values that reinforce collaborative efforts in higher education are student-centeredness, innovation, egalitarianism, efficacy, and capacity-building (Kezar, 2006).

Tjosvold and Tsao (1989) attested to the importance of values. They noted that values related to a common mission, cooperation, and appreciation of others promote collaboration. Although values and their impacts on collaboration have been studied, they should be investigated further (Arcelus, 2008; Beodeker, 2006; Kezar, 2006).

**Leadership factors.** Strong leadership is one of the most effective variables for promoting collaboration. Beodeker (2006) noted that leaders must feel responsible for collaboration, be intentional in their efforts and view collaboration as a process, not a goal. If leaders fail to articulate the rationale behind or benefits of collaboration, or if they do not value collaboration themselves, partnerships will not thrive. Kolins (1999) found that validation of collaboration must come from the top, and successful collaboration includes direct communication between leaders. A common vision for student learning is recommended. Therefore, it is important that senior administrators lead efforts to establish and promote a university-wide vision and definition of student learning (Kuh & Banta, 2000; Philpott & Strange, 2003). In addition, senior administrators who model cooperative behavior promote collaborative cultures (Beodeker, 2006; Kolins, 1999).

The way that faculty and student affairs view their relationship with leaders can also affect collaboration. Student affairs professionals respond quickly to requests from leaders and supervisors. Faculty value deliberation; they are slower to respond to requests (Kuh & Banta, 2000). The willingness to give away decision-making power or accept autocratic leadership also varies between faculty and student affairs staff. Beodeker (2006) used the concept of “power distance” (Hofstede, 2001) to describe this phenomenon. Coming out of the fields of social psychology and cultural anthropology, power distance was first presented by Mauk Mulder. Geert Hofstede has studied it most extensively in the realm of national culture (Hofstede, 1998;

Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Hofstede defines power distance as “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally” (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 46). Power distance is applied to organizational cultures as well (Lee, Pillutla, & Law, 2000). It can shape the nature of people’s relationships with authorities. Where there is small power distance, subordinates have stronger personal connections with authorities and a better understanding of what authorities deal with. Subordinates also have less tendency to defer to power and are inclined to react negatively to institutions or authorities whom they view as treating them unfairly. Where there is a large power distance, there are clearly defined roles and regimented positions. Subordinates are more comfortable with superiors making decisions and acting on their behalf (Lee et al., 2000).

In his study, Beodeker (2006) has contended that faculty have small power distances to university leaders, while student affairs professionals have large power distances to university leaders. This is evident by shared governance among faculty, especially in larger institutions. The flatness and decentralization of the faculty organizational structure versus the tiered, centralized structure of a typical student affairs division reflect differences in power distance. Student affairs organizations are hierarchical in nature. There is a clear chain of command for communication and decision-making. These characteristics reflect larger power distances between leaders and subordinates (Beodeker, 2006; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Lee et al., 2000). These organizational attributes are also evident in the structural and bureaucratic characteristics of higher education.

**Structural and bureaucratic factors.** Structural and bureaucratic characteristics can serve as barriers or promoters of collaboration. The organizational structure of an institution, including positional hierarchies, division of labor, governance practices, campus climate, resource allocation, and even location of offices can affect collaboration. Aligning resources in support of collaborative efforts, clearly stated expectations, and established accountability measures are a few examples of bureaucratic enhancers. In her study, Kezar (2001) surveyed 260 chief student affairs officers to discover attributes that supported or hindered collaboration. (Of those surveyed, 128 responded. Kezar cautioned that the response rate of 49% did not result in statistical significance; therefore, results should be carefully considered.) To enhance collaboration, Kezar (2001) recommended these structural and bureaucratic strategies: working with consultants, systematic orientations, change in promotion and tenure, restructuring, and incentives and reward system alterations. Cultural strategies, including, cross-institutional dialogue, common language development, and generating enthusiasm, were cited more often than structural and bureaucratic strategies as collaboration enhancers (Kezar, 2001).

Like Kezar, Kuh, and Banta (2000) and Schroeder (1999) discussed the misuse of rewards and incentives as collaboration deterrents. Kuh and Banta (2000) noted the lack of rewards for collaboration, and Schroeder (1999) cited the variances in rewards between faculty and student affairs professionals. Dale and Drake (2005) examined collaborations in the community college setting and found several bureaucratic roadblocks. They noted infrequent interactions between faculty and staff, lack of time, the location of offices, and the segregation of professional development seminars and meetings (Dale & Drake, 2005). Philpott and Strange (2003) referred to the relationship roadblocks described by Dale and Drake as the institutional web. Inaccessibility and demands of primary job responsibilities are parts of the web that limited

faculty and student affairs professionals' ability to interact and build relationships. Like Dale and Drake (2005), Kuh and Banta (2000) observed the lack of faculty and student affairs interaction. Specifically, they pointed out how mid- and entry-level student affairs professionals are not represented in the academic arena. This segregation of faculty from student affairs professionals inhibits the development of campus networks and personal relationships –seeds of collaboration.

**Interpersonal relationships.** “Collaboration needs to be understood not only as a professional endeavor, but as a human process” (D’Amour et al., 2005, p. 126). Collaboration arises and expands because of interpersonal relationships and personal connections (Kezar, 2006). Consequently, characteristics of individuals were found to impact the effectiveness of the partnerships in which they were involved. Kezar (2001) noted that a cooperative spirit (a willingness to cooperate) and a positive attitude were indicative of individuals who experienced valuable partnerships. Magolda (2001) and Creamer (2004) describe successful collaborators as individuals who value differences of opinion and encourage open discussion. Referred to as “border-crossers”, because they cross cultural borders to improve collaboration, such individuals understand technical, political, and cultural frameworks, and use that knowledge to help groups (Magolda, 2001).

Positive interpersonal relationships are collaboration enhancers. Arcelus’ (2008) study concluded with recommendations for improving collaboration at one college. His recommendations fell into these focus areas: relationships, communication and understanding, and working together. He wrote, “...developing respect and appreciation for each other’s roles has the potential for enhancing the student educational experience” (Arcelus, 2008, p. 343). In their discussion of relationships and collaboration, Kezar and Lester (2009) use the term “social networks” to describe interpersonal relationships among collaborators. Networks can be

formal or informal. At its core, a successful network fosters trust and allows for open dialogue between members. The benefit to collaborative initiatives is that positive networks foster dedication, decrease isolation, bring together different perspectives, and help move initiatives forward (Kezar & Lester, 2009, p. 101). Beodeker (2006) listed the power of personal relationships as one of the keys to successful collaboration. Established friendships and prior experience working together are two specific indicators of effective personal relationships. In promoting collaboration, Kezar (2006) found positive interpersonal relationships to be second only to having a common vision.

The importance of interpersonal relationships to successful collaborations was verified in a case study about partnerships between student affairs professionals and faculty (Rodems, 2011). Four pairs of educators (one student affairs professional and one faculty member) who were co-teaching a first year seminar together, were studied, to explore how their relationship developed and functioned, and if it affected their collaborative efforts in student learning. Rodems (2011) found that for three of the four pairs a positive relationship and collaboration existed. Common values, goals, expectations, and views of student learning were evident in the three successful partnerships. In addition, a positive previous relationship was at the core of the successful collaborations. The study gives support and credibility to the importance of considering relationships in collaborative partnerships – a key finding being that “relationships impacted collaboration and collaboration impacted relationships” (Rodems, 2011, p. 175). In other words, previous positive relationships between partners enhanced the collaboration and the collaboration itself strengthened the relationships. Zummo (2012) also uncovered a link between relationships, organizational structure and shared mission and vision. A shared understanding of mission supports collaborative efforts. Organizational structure brings faculty and student affairs

professionals together by supporting teamwork, facilitating communication, and integrating curricular and co-curricular learning. Zummo (2010) contends that relationships grow out of organizational structure and shared mission and vision. Zummo (2012) writes, “Relationships should be built on trust and respect, involve formal and informal communication, and include ongoing opportunities to work together (pp. 194-195).

### **Summary of Faculty and Student Affairs Collaboration**

Scholars who have studied cultures and collaboration in higher education are quick to point out that factors that strengthen or inhibit collaboration will vary from campus to campus (Sousa-Peoples, 2001; Tierney, 1988). Collaborative initiatives are undertaken for a variety of reasons, including improvements in efficiency, idea generation, and resource sharing. For the purpose of this study, collaboration is regarded as necessary to achieve integrated student learning. Collaboration is viewed as a product or process, a managerial strategy or a moral imperative, a cultural attribute, or as culture itself (Kezar, 2006; Magolda, 2001). However the term is defined, some researchers believe leaders should take caution when implementing collaborative initiatives.

Factors that inhibit or strengthen collaboration were the focus of this section. They fall into these categories: organizational culture, leadership, structural/bureaucratic elements, and interpersonal relationships. Leadership factors included the involvement of university leaders to set a collaborative mission and model cooperative behavior. Structural and bureaucratic elements were more easily defined items, like allocation of resources, reward systems, available time, location of offices, and job responsibilities. Organizational culture, specifically lack of knowledge about one’s own attitudes and behaviors, and the values and practices of one’s occupational subculture, can be barriers to collaboration. Shared visions of student learning and

collaboration, and a commitment to both, strengthen collaboration. Differences between subcultures, such as occupational status, and values can negatively impact collaboration. The respect student affairs professionals feel and the power available to them is limited due to self-marginalization, professional status, and disagreement of primary roles (educator vs. administrator). Interpersonal relationships and individual attitudes and behaviors can impact collaboration.

Understanding of recent findings related to leadership and structural/bureaucratic factors that inhibit or strength collaboration is important. However, knowledge of cultural dimensions related to the promotion of interpersonal relationships provides a platform from which to build this study. Beliefs and perceptions that individuals have of each other, and of themselves, can impact their ability and willingness to build interpersonal relationships. Beliefs and perceptions are aspects of culture. As such, an understanding of culture, specifically organizational culture and faculty and student affairs subcultures, is necessary.

### **Organizational Culture**

Differences in culture can lead to a lack of respect and understanding that can inhibit collaboration (Kuh & Banta, 2000). Creating a culture of collaboration involves understanding one's own culture and others' cultures. Such ideas are supported by scholars who have studied collaboration between faculty and student affairs professionals, as evidenced in this quote: Both groups must become aware of the cultural boundaries they create and to understand that who they are as individuals and as a subculture influences their actions and interpretations. (Magolda, 2005, p. 20)

When writing about improving collaboration, Bourassa and Kruger (2001) noted, "...the obstacles and opportunities are still largely enmeshed in the necessity of each entity to deepen

their understanding of the other's culture" (p. 13). Based on these prompts, it was clear that understanding organization culture was important for this study. Used as a lens to investigate collaboration between faculty and student affairs professionals, research about organizational culture was studied. Presented here is an overview of culture, approaches to the study of culture, attributes of organizational culture, and subcultures in higher education. Cultural and sub-cultural studies within higher education are presented. Because these studies relate directly to this investigation, recent studies about the student affairs' subculture and collaboration were reviewed. Last, the impacts of institutional and individual outcomes that result from the study of organizational culture are described.

### **Defining Culture and Organizational Culture**

The definition of culture is elusive and studied from many academic, philosophical, and methodological perspectives. Cultural researchers agree that the study of culture provides better understanding of individual and group beliefs, values, norms, and behaviors, thus providing a clearer understanding of the world in which we live. Scholars agree that culture affects what people think and how they behave (Martin, 2002; Schein, 2004). Smircich (1983) described culture as the social or normative glue that holds a group of people together. According to Smircich (1983), the purpose of culture is to (a) convey a sense of identity, (b) facilitate commitment to an entity, (c) enhance the stability of a group's social system, and (d) serve as a sense-making device that guides and shapes behavior (p. 346). Other scholars define culture as shared patterns of thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and values. Culture is a collective, not an individual attribute, can be applied to any social unit, and is not directly visible, but manifested in symbols and behaviors (Hofstede & McRae, 2004; Schein, 2004). Culture is a construct that organizes and maintains social order and assists people with the conceptualization of reality. By reinforcing

a collective identity, culture can result in negative attributes like ethnocentrism and we-versus-they thinking (Adkinson, 2005; Martin, 2002; Smircich, 1983).

Researchers in higher education have sought to define culture with most referring back to the work of Tierney (1988, 2008) and Kuh and Whitt (1988). Culture in higher education is shaped by external factors such as economic and social conditions (Komives et al., 2003). Kuh and Whitt (1988) define culture in higher education as

persistent patterns of norms, values, practices, beliefs and assumptions that shape the behavior of individuals and groups in a college or university and provide a frame of reference within which to interpret the meaning of events and actions on and off the campus (p. 6).

Schein (2004) developed constructs that describe the way in which culture manifests itself. The *Levels of Culture*, defined by Schein (2004), provide a framework by which attributes of culture can be understood. The three levels are artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and basic underlying assumptions. Artifacts are the visible manifestations of culture. Graduation ceremonies, mascots, and architecture are examples of college and university artifacts (Kuh & Whitt, 1988). Espoused beliefs and values are what members within the culture say they believe or hold in esteem, yet may or may not match actual behavior. Mission or vision statements are examples of espoused beliefs and values in higher education. Basic underlying assumptions, believed to be the core of culture and to have the strongest influence on group attitude and behavior, is the third and deepest level of Schein's *Levels of Culture* (Schein, 2004; Marushak, 2006). Schein (2004) explained basic underlying assumptions as shared views and actions that have worked for so long that they are taken for granted. Described as the unconscious dictate of thoughts and behaviors, basic underlying assumptions can be difficult to identify. Concrete

examples in higher education are hard to provide (Kuh & Whitt, 1988). Due to the unconscious nature of basic underlying assumptions and embedded values and beliefs, studies at these levels of culture are said to be difficult and time-consuming (Marushak, 2006).

The culture of a group that has common responsibilities, language, values, and goals are organizational cultures. Schein (2004) defines organizational cultures as:

A pattern of basic assumptions – invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with problems...that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to these problems. (p. 17)

Like culture, organizational culture is complex. It is a result of needs of individuals and groups to assign meaning to experiences and stimuli and make sense of what is happening. This is referred to as “sense-making”. Sense-making is a way that people create order (Trice & Beyer, 1993). In *Sense-making in Organizations*, Weick (1995) notes that “sense-making enables people to comprehend, explain, attribute, extrapolate, and predict information, as a way to give meaning, purpose and direction to an organization” (p. 4). Beliefs, values and perceptions, both individual and collective, are the output or product of sense-making. They form the identity, purpose, and character of an organization. They are the foundation for organizational behavior. They are unconscious or conscious behaviors and actions that guide decisions, define mission and goals, justify past actions, and engender commitment from members. Beliefs, values, and perceptions can “impede innovation or adaptation by giving people reasons to repeat actions even when they are no longer appropriate” (Sproull, 1981, p. 215).

## **Organizational Culture and Higher Education**

Scholars have investigated higher education through the lens of organizational culture, uncovering cultural manifestations (Adkinson, 2005; Berquist, 1992; Hirt, 2006). Organizational culture in higher education varies from the macro-perspective, studying an entire university culture to the micro-perspective, researching subcultures within a university. Just as Schein (2004) and Peterson and Spencer (1990) developed categories of cultural manifestations, Chaffee and Tierney, in their study on academic culture and leadership, developed categories for manifestations of higher education organizational culture. They include:

1. Structural elements, including the formal and informal, pragmatic, fiscal and governance aspects of an organization
2. The environmental context of people, events, demands, and constraints with which the organization operates; and,
3. The values, beliefs, norms and priorities established by the organization. (1988, p. 18-22)

Berquist (1992), Chaffee and Tierney (1988), and Hirt (2006) investigated university culture from a macro-view, focusing on institutional type and mission. Each provided overviews of the differences between various institutions in terms of primary mission and values, structure, environment, faculty responsibilities, student make-up and funding. Studies of higher education culture from macro perspectives provide clearer understanding of the workings of colleges and universities. Investigation of faculty and student affairs' subcultures from a more micro perspective has shed more light on the cultural dynamics at play in higher education. Subcultures' values, beliefs and actions, and their impact on collaboration have been studied (Beodeker, 2006; Buyarski, 2004; Marushak, 2006; Philpott & Strange, 2003).

## **Subcultures in Higher Education**

In large, complex organizations, the existence of multiple subcultures is likely (Schein, 2004). Subcultures within organizations develop from individuals' common connections with similar occupational responsibilities and values (Van Maanen & Barley, 1984). A group representing these three criteria is a subculture: (a) striving for group self-consciousness, (b) shared problems in performing duties, and (c) action based on collective understanding (Van Maanen & Barley, 1985). In higher education, subcultures develop around responsibilities, shared experiences leading to collective sense-making, similar personal characteristics and values, common work tasks or responsibilities, and professional affiliations (Buyarski, 2004). The size, type, and mission of a college or university also affect institutional subcultures (Hirt, 2006). Clearly differentiated subcultures in higher education include faculty, staff, and students (Komives et al., 2003).

Research about subcultures in higher education has covered many topics. Studies about faculty culture are extensive, looking into the overarching faculty culture, common values, and subcultures defined by academic disciplines (Becher, 1987; Beodeker, 2006; Clark, 1984). An example of academic discipline related subcultures would be the subcultures that might develop within an English department. Faculty may align themselves with the subculture that represents their specialty, such as technical writing, creative writing, or literature. Faculty subcultures value teaching, research and service, have stringent cultural norms and values, and tight social structures. Because of pressure to produce for their academic department, some faculty question the legitimacy of collaborative work, asking how it impacts their primary responsibilities. In comparison, student affairs professionals value teamwork and work in a subculture that promotes collaboration (Beodeker, 2006; Buyarski, 2004).

Understanding subcultures can occur when a person leaves one culture and enters another. Student affairs professionals who moved into faculty positions described their experience (McCluskey-Titus & Cawthon, 2004). The unfamiliarity of and transition into the faculty culture was noted as a challenge. The new faculty members described faculty culture as being less open than the student affairs' culture. A higher level of intellectual discussion, difficulty developing relationships, and unproductive, adversarial meetings were descriptions of the faculty culture as provided by those surveyed (McCluskey-Titus & Cawthon, 2004).

Values, beliefs, and definition of roles have been the central themes in literature about the student affairs' subculture. There has been research about the subculture of student affairs related to values and beliefs surrounding collaboration. In his qualitative study of collaborative initiatives, Beodeker (2006) found that faculty and student affairs professionals both have closer ties to their functional areas of specialization than to the overarching profession or their institution. He uncovered themes and characteristics that were uniquely representative of faculty and student affairs subcultures. One component of Beodeker's study was to define the role of student affairs in an effort to align it with a particular subculture.

Since the inception of student affairs, professionals in the field have contemplated their primary role in higher education: Is it to serve as educators, advocates, counselors or administrators? Are student affairs professionals' roles contingent upon responsibilities unique to each position? Or are their roles a conglomeration of several? For example, a Residence Hall Director may define his or her role as including educator, facility manager, event planner, and supervisor. The debate surrounding this question is long standing and has been called role confusion (Scott, 1977). One conclusion made by Beodeker (2006) was that student affairs professionals are part of an administrative subculture. The administrative subculture would

include other university staff members such as business affairs or financial affairs directors. Beodeker (2006) placed student affairs into the administrative subculture, even though some mid-level student affairs professionals described themselves as educators.

This finding was similar to one described by Philpott and Strange (2003). In results from a case study about a faculty and student affairs collaborative initiative, they noted that a student affairs participant wanted to be valued as an educator by the faculty participants, yet faculty saw her as an administrator. Philpott and Strange (2003) phrased the outcome another way by stating that faculty were perceived as thinkers and student affairs professionals as doers. They noted that faculty and student affairs professionals became more aware of each other's cultures during the collaborative initiative, but stayed true to their own, which resulted in limited cultural blending. Cultural blending, a merging of the cultures, was not achieved. Philpott and Strange (2003) believed that faculty and student affairs professionals experienced cultural pluralism, a state where subcultures interact with one another, but maintain their own unique values, beliefs, norms, and behaviors.

Subcultures within colleges and universities have long histories and are deeply embedded in higher education culture. Garland and Grace (1994) contend that a "history of organizational segregation" must be overcome to bring faculty and student affairs together. According to Love and Love (1995), "The activities and behaviors of faculty and student affairs professionals are supported by the cultures that have developed within the academy" (p. 4). There is little research on how the beliefs, values, and perceptions behind behaviors are developed and passed on within the cultures. There is extensive research about faculty subculture, but little research in the realm of student affairs' subculture. Recent studies have added to the body of knowledge about faculty and student affairs' subcultures and collaboration. Scholars have found differences in values,

bureaucratic structures, and responsibilities that have created challenges in bringing the two subcultures together. These scholars recommend future research about student affairs' subculture and how sub-cultural beliefs and perceptions are developed and perpetuated (Arcelus, 2008; Beodeker, 2006; Buyarski, 2004; Philpott & Strange, 2003).

### **The Study of Organizational Culture: Institutional and Individual Outcomes**

Increased knowledge of the workings of an organization, and behaviors and beliefs of individuals within an organization, are two reasons scholars study organizational culture. A fundamental reason for gaining knowledge about an organization is to understand why groups do what they do and why leaders have certain difficulties (Schein, 2004). Minimizing organizational conflict, evaluating perceptions of goals, and improving effectiveness are cited (Schein, 2004; Tierney, 1988). The implications for knowledge of organizational culture in higher education include effective pathways to institutional change and leaders' awareness of cultural dynamics that positively or negatively affect goal achievement or change strategies. Chaffee and Tierney (1988) pointed to recognition of operational contradictions, evaluation of decisions, and the promotion of shared goals as reasons to study college and university cultures. Tierney (1988) wrote, "We frequently find ourselves dealing with organizational culture in an atmosphere of crisis management, instead of reasoned reflections and consensual change" (p. 4). According to these scholars, cultural knowledge will place higher education leaders in a more proactive than reactive mode.

Understanding self and one's own subculture is another reason to study organizational culture. In their observation of collaboration in action, Philpott and Strange (2003) found that "faculty and student affairs professionals didn't realize the control their professional values and divergent expectations had on them" (p. 90). Had participants known more about their

subcultures, collaboration may have occurred more smoothly, and cultural blending may have been the result. Some scholars who focus on the individual aspects of organizational culture believe knowledge of self minimizes conflict and influences motivation and performance (Creamer, 2004; Landis & Bhagat, 1996; Marushak, 2006). Senge (1990) presented the idea of mental models and defined them as “deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action” (p. 8). Most people are unaware of their mental models. Study of organizational culture can assist individuals in uncovering mental models that shape their behaviors and beliefs. Additionally, greater understanding of individual’s thoughts and feelings can lead to stronger cultural synthesis between espoused beliefs and actual practices (Marushak, 2006). Theoretically, self-knowledge will lead to a willingness to understand and accept others’ differences (Landis & Bhagat, 1996).

Knowledge of self, one’s occupational subculture, and the faculty subculture are recommended for intercultural interaction and collaboration (Arcelus, 2008; Creamer, 2004; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Magolda, 2001). Overcoming differences to reach consensus, promote creativity, and develop trust is important for prolonged collaboration. Intercultural sensitivity (openness to and awareness of other’s differences) and intercultural communication are critical to collaboration (Creamer, 2004; Lawson, 2004; Magolda, 2001). Such awareness can disarm the we/they mentality (Martin, 2002) that can exist between subcultures. Magolda (2005) promoted self-knowledge as the first step towards improved collaboration between faculty and student affairs professionals. Conversely, Beodeker (2006) found that study participants thought having a shared goal, like focusing on student learning, was enough to bridge cultural differences. These studies contend that self-knowledge and a common vision can promote intercultural relationships between faculty and student affairs professionals.

Enhanced interpersonal relationships with faculty and the building of social networks are recommended by Kezar and Lester (2009), Rodems (2011), and Engstrom and Tinto (2000) to promote collaboration. References to how this is done are outlined by Kezar and Lester (2009); however, there was a lack of emphasis on faculty and student affairs professionals' relationships in *Becoming Socialized in Student Affairs: A Guide for New Professionals and Their Supervisors* (Tull et al., 2009). The publication did note that student affairs professionals should strive to understand the faculty culture as part of the organizational culture. There were some strategies on how to do so such as, cross-division committee work and informal lunches. With the complexity and specialization of student affairs positions, outlining all student affairs socialization processes would seem to be challenging. Even so, it seems that in a time when collaboration is emphasized in higher education, teaching and promoting ways to build interpersonal relationships and develop intercultural communication skills would be highlighted. It was in an older work that a call to this goal was found. In Evans and Phelps-Tobin (1998), Russ Jablonsky was asked to write about preparation of student affairs professionals from his view as a new professional. The author, an entry-level professional, who was newer to the field than his co-authors, was the one to encourage the need for more professional interactions and understanding between faculty and student affairs professionals. He wrote,

“If the quality and quantity of institutional dialogue is a key factor in becoming more adaptive to change, then student affairs practitioners and faculty need to forge a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the roles each other play on a college campus.” (p. 205)

Faculty and student affairs professionals may bring coinciding cultural assumptions to their interactions with one another. It is the contradictory assumptions that can hinder

collaboration. Ahren (2008) notes differing professional cultures of student affairs and faculty and how those differences have negatively affected communication and collaboration. “Issues of priorities, beliefs, respect, and trust have all proved formidable barriers in that journey” (Ahren, 2008, p. 90). Furthermore, misperceptions, biases, and stereotypes can erect barriers, cause conflict, and increase polarization between groups (Arcelus, 2008). These invisible manifestations impact the actions and behaviors of individuals and the group.

Faculty subcultures have been studied at various vantage points, including common values and academic disciplines (Becher, 1987; Clark 1984). The research on student affairs subcultures is limited, although recent studies by Beodeker (2006) and Buyarski (2004) have added to the body of knowledge. Faculty and student affairs’ subcultures differ in terms of their social structures, values, beliefs about power, views of one another, and professional identity. Since this study will focus on student affairs professionals’ beliefs, values and perceptions about faculty, and the socialization processes involved, further study was done about student affairs.

### **Student Affairs in American Higher Education**

Faculty and student affairs professionals come from two different sub-cultures. Differing values, perceptions, and beliefs result. Such differences can inhibit collaboration, and as a consequence, deter effective student learning (Beodeker, 2006; Dale & Drake, 2005; Hirt, 2007). As noted earlier, several of the values and beliefs of student affairs professionals have been uncovered in recent studies, as have their perceptions about faculty (Beodeker, 2006; Buyarski, 2004; Sousa-Peoples, 2001). Understanding how these perceptions about faculty have been developed and passed on over time is the focus of this study. In order to move forward, it was clear that this researcher had to have a thorough understanding of student affairs as a profession.

This included a review of its history, philosophical underpinnings, values, primary responsibilities, and the development of student affairs professionals.

The historical separation of the formal (in-class) academic curriculum and informal (out-of-class) experiences inhibits collaboration. An overview of this separation, specifically the development of the student affairs profession, provides an understanding as to why current collaborative initiatives between student affairs professionals and faculty prove challenging. The philosophy, values, and functions of student affairs are presented here, including review of important societal factors that have shaped student affairs, student affairs philosophical documents, and contemporary and future issues.

### **The Separation of In-Class and Out-of-Class Responsibilities**

American higher education began in 1636 with colonial colleges, whose missions included training clergy, developing students' character, and teaching the classics. University presidents and faculty were responsible for overseeing all aspects of campus life, serving as teachers, leaders, disciplinarians and librarians (Hirt, 2006). As a result, student behavior was rigidly controlled and a state of *in loco parentis*, with faculty acting in the role of parents, was established. Clearly defined positions in student affairs would not be part of higher education until some 200 years later (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Hirt, 2006; MacKinnon, 2004).

The historical roots of student personnel work show a profession that was an outgrowth of academic affairs and was born out of necessity. In the early 1800s students began to move away from the classical curriculum, creating literary societies in the humanities and social sciences. Some denote this period as the rise of the extra-curriculum (Beodeker, 2006; MacKinnon, 2004). It was also a time where a clear delineation between in-class and out-of-class experiences became evident. Although the exact date of the beginning of student personnel work

is unclear, it is apparent that as colleges grew, faculty could no longer focus on classroom teaching while simultaneously dealing with students' out-of-the classroom needs, behaviors, and extracurricular activities. A solution to this problem was a dean of students. Established in 1890 at Harvard College, the Dean of Students is considered the first student affairs professional position. Deans dealt with student problems, allowing faculty to focus on teaching and advancing knowledge in their disciplines (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Komives et al., 2003). The roles and responsibilities of deans were ancillary to the academic roles and responsibilities of faculty, putting student affairs in a supportive or auxiliary position.

The purpose of American higher education was changing during the mid-1800s with the introduction of the German model (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). Fragmentation and specialization of faculty and student affairs responsibilities and roles grew during this time. The German model focused on research and graduate studies, requiring more specialization about faculty disciplines. Faculty devoted greater attention to the disciplines, affording them less time to devote to students' non-academic needs. As a result, student affairs professionals took on more responsibilities and specialization of student personnel work took hold (Love & Love, 1995). The Morrill Land Grant Acts of 1862 and 1864 increased opportunities for higher education (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). According to MacKinnon (2004), from 1875-1930 the undergraduate student body increased nearly 30-fold. The rise of student personnel work is linked to the secularization of education and the increase in student populations (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; MacKinnon, 2004). Student personnel work focused on providing services. This student-service philosophy has carried on through time, experiencing resurgence in the 1990s when students were viewed as customers and customer service was the focus of many student affairs

departments. Those subscribing to the customer service model used student satisfaction, not student learning, as the criterion for measuring institutional success (Blimling & Whitt, 1998).

### **The Student Personnel Point of View**

As the student personnel profession grew, vision statements composed of declarations about values and guiding principles were developed. In *Guiding Principles: A Review and Analysis of Student Affairs Philosophical Statements*, Evans and Reason (2001) summarized 13 documents that have guided student affairs practice. The first was entitled *The Student Personnel Point of View* (SPPV). Written in 1937 and revised in 1949, it is viewed by many as laying the foundation for student affairs work. The 1937 edition stressed the role of student personnel work as supporting instruction and emphasized collaboration with faculty, parents, and other constituents. The 1939 *SPPV* challenged student personnel workers to base their work in grounded theories and outlined the organization and structure of services (Evans & Reason, 2001). The second *SPPV* was prompted by the influx of students who were taking advantage of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (G.I. Bill). Returning war veterans flooded universities and colleges, causing an increase in enrollment and in the diversity of the student body (Cohen, 1998; Evans & Reason, 2001). The 1949 *SPPV* expanded the 1937 version by adding clauses that reinforced the education of the whole student, recognizing individual differences, and viewing out-of-classroom experiences as intentional educational tools. Democracy and social reconstruction, as a basis for education, enrichment, and facilitation of experiences, also were part of the 1949 *SPPV*. Additionally, standards of conduct were established, with the student seen as responsible for his/her own education (MacKinnon, 2004). The 1937 and 1949 *Student Personnel Points of View* established four touchstones of student personnel work that remain in place: (a) serving as a support to the academic mission of the

university, (b) educating the whole student, (c) valuing differences, and (d) supporting students as they take responsibility for their own growth. The call for collaboration was introduced in the original SPPV of 1937, making collaboration a valued hallmark of the profession.

### **The Student Development Movement: Increasing Focus on the Individual Student**

Student activism was prominent in American colleges and universities during the 1960s and 1970s (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; MacKinnon, 2004). During this time student affairs professionals began to focus less on their role as service providers and more on their roles as educators, counselors, and advocates. The focus turned from supporting academics to supporting the individual student (MacKinnon, 2004). Basing practice in grounded theory, focusing on individual student needs, and moving from reactive to proactive tactics, student affairs professionals turned to student development theories for guidance. Blimling and Whitt (1988) defined student development theory as “the application of human development theories to 18-22 year old college students” (p. 11). Student affairs professionals were encouraged to incorporate understanding of student’s cognitive, emotional, and social development into their work (Beodeker, 2006). In doing so, Blimling and Whitt (1998) wrote that the student development movement “reinforced artificial distinctions between student learning and student development, and between in-class and out-of-class learning environments, thereby moving student affairs work away from the central mission of higher education” (p. 11).

### **Contemporary Student Affairs: Student Learning and Collaboration**

Increased enrollments, a more diverse student body, technological advancements, and more specialized institutions define the contemporary history of higher education. The student affairs profession has responded to issues of accessibility, accountability, and diversity by re-focusing their efforts on student learning (Love & Love, 1995). In 1987, the National

Association of Student Personnel Administrators presented a paper entitled *A Perspective on Student Affairs: A Statement Issued on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Student Personnel Point of View*. The document reinforced student affairs' role as supporting the academic mission of higher education. Educating the whole student, viewing involvement and engagement in out-of-classroom experiences as part of learning, and understanding the impact of the college environment were noted (Evans & Reason, 2001; MacKinnon, 2004). The document centered less on student development and more on promoting and serving academics. In 1994, the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) presented *The Student Learning Imperative: Implications for Student Affairs*. *The Student Learning Imperative* echoed NASPA's 1987 statement, by urging professionals to "change student affairs practice to focus on student learning and personal development" (MacKinnon, 2004, p. 20). Student affairs work was complementary to the academic mission focusing on learning theory, outcomes, assessment, and collaboration. Cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal competencies were included in student learning (Blimling & Whitt, 1998). Universities were challenged to become seamless learning environments (Kuh, 1996).

Collaboration has been a part of the student affairs mission since at least 1937. *The Student Learning Imperative* (ACPA, 1994) noted collaboration, just as the 1937 *Student Personnel Point of View* (Evans & Reason, 2001) had. The call for collaboration was echoed again in 1996, when the presidents of NASPA and ACPA commissioned a committee to develop a statement of student affairs values. Called *The Principles of Good Practice*, the document presented these six guiding values: (a) active learning, (b) high expectations, (c) collaboration, (d) effective resource use, (e) inquiry-based practice, and (f) community (Blimling & Whitt, 1996; MacKinnon, 2004). *Powerful Partnerships* (1998), a statement written by a joint task

force on student learning, provided perhaps the strongest plea for collaboration. It called for the involvement of all stakeholders in the learning process – students, faculty, staff, parents, board members, and community liaisons (AAHE, ACPA & NASPA, 1998).

Today, student affairs continues to focus on the whole student, incorporate an understanding of student development, and provide services that meet basic needs. However, today's predominant philosophy lies not with customer service or student development, but with student learning. Student learning serves as a foundation from which student affairs professionals plan, develop, and assess programs and services. Hirt (1992) believed that the "professional practice in student affairs reflects the social, political, and economic realities of a given era in time, not the ageless, eternal ideals characterized by the profession's policy statements" (p. 519). Others find that a review of key student affairs documents reflects the development of the field. As a conclusion to the review of such statements, Evans and Reason (2001) wrote:

In reviewing these works, we are left with the feeling that the Student Affairs field has known what it has been about since its inception. Student Affairs professionals' responsibility to insure the total development of all students by creating supportive and responsive environments in collaboration with their faculty colleagues remains as vital a goal now as it was in 1937. (p. 374)

### **The Future of Student Affairs**

The call for student affairs to focus on student learning and the academic mission of higher education is clear. Defining what that means and laying out a plan of action is complex (Love & Estranek, 2004; Sandeen & Barr, 2006). By concentrating on core values and areas of expertise, student affairs professionals can adapt to the future. Relying on past skills and learning new ones to address 21<sup>st</sup> century higher education demands are recommended. Common values

help tie the student affairs subculture together. A recent compilation of values included these: (a) individuation, (b) community, (c) equality, (d) justice, (e) caring, (f) service, (g) caring-based ethics, and (h) students caring for society (Komives et al., 2003, p. 98).

Increased accountability for student learning outcomes, and changing student demographics as a result of a more diverse student body, are impacting student affairs today (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). The future calls for reliance on new skills; these include assessment of student learning and development outcomes, technology adaptation, fund-raising, and adapting a global mindset. Futures forecasting, entrepreneurship, and employing multiple frames of reference are others. In *Becoming Socialized in Student Affairs: A Guide for New Professionals and Their Supervisors* Tull et al. (2009) notes that the problems of the greater society are impinging upon campuses, requiring higher education professionals to face the consequences of mental health problems, violence, and parental involvement. In addition, with shifting economic conditions, learning to manage budgets and understanding the impact of the financial crises on students and their families are important. Competencies required for student personnel work in the past - listening, written and oral communication, diversity and multicultural awareness, and conflict and crisis management - continue to be necessary for the future. According to scholars, these competencies and concerns should be part of graduate preparation programs and professional staff development (Komives et al., 2003; Love & Estranek, 2004).

Scholars have written that the future of student affairs requires a re-conceptualization of its work that centers on student learning and the academic mission. In addition, scholars have recommended that validation of the profession come from those working in the profession. The search for outside validation keeps student affairs in a helpless, powerless position. Next, student affairs professionals must move forward with student learning if collaboration does not occur.

This is done by sustaining core values and relying on expertise and learned competencies (Komives et al., 2003; Woodard et al., 2000). To prepare for increased collaboration that includes faculty, intercultural competencies must be learned and developed.

Throughout its history, student affairs has adapted to meet the needs of the individual student, providing services and programs essential to higher education. Although student affairs as a profession may view student learning through a different lens than do faculty, student learning, and development form the core of its mission. To promote student learning, all those serving in academic and student affairs are encouraged to work together more collaboratively. Lack of understanding between the two subcultures does not foster collaboration. The predominant views, beliefs, and perceptions that student affairs members have about faculty do not support positive relationships; hence, they deter collaborative initiatives. Learning how those views, beliefs, and perceptions are developed and passed on is key to understanding ways to change them.

It may be revealed that the beliefs, values, and perceptions of student affairs professionals are passed on through a number of social processes. Sense-making occurs through a variety of social processes. Shared experiences, socialization, conversations, and other social interactions are the most obvious (Trice & Beyer, 1993). Others include processes related to power, influence and leadership, habits and conditioning, negotiation, role-modeling, and exploration. One social process, socialization, includes formal and informal methods used to introduce new professionals to the profession and to train new and experienced staff members. This literature review includes research about socialization to provide the researcher a clearer understanding of the practices involved.

## **Socialization**

### **Defining Socialization**

Socialization has been studied in a variety of organizational settings; however, definitions of socialization present common themes. Socialization is a lifelong learning process. It begins as one enters a new setting and continues as one advances through his or her career. Socialization involves the transmission and internalization of expectations associated with roles, knowledge and skills required for the position, and the cultural norms and values of the organization.

Weidman and Stein (2003) describe socialization as a dynamic, interactive, and permeable developmental process in which the individual accepts, internalizes, and acts as though the norms of the group he is joining have validity for him. Similarly, Tierney (1997) views socialization as a cultural act rather than simply assimilation. He writes, “It is an interpretive process involved in the creation – rather than the transmittal of meaning” (Tierney, 1997, p. 6).

Furthermore, the end product of socialization is the incorporation of the group values and norms into the individual’s self-image – impacting both the self-identity and the professional identity (Bragg, 1976; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Trice and Beyer (1993) note that “the continuity of human cultures is made possible by socialization” by involving social processes in which members are inculcated with the substance of their cultures (p. 172). Inclusion into the culture, through the sharing of characteristics such as organizational secrets, common rhetoric, and norms related to moral conduct, helps people make sense of what is happening cope with challenges and change within the organization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

The study of socialization has resulted in broader understanding of the phenomenon, impressing upon researchers that it is about more than training activities and policy manuals. Van Maanen (1984) presents two analytic archetypes or goals of organizational socialization:

(1) to make sure a new member's conduct conforms to that of other members, and (2) to promote the passing on of attitudes and skills that people have throughout the organization. Socialization is formal and informal. Formal socialization includes specific activities or planned experiences that introduce new members to their responsibilities and the organization. Examples include orientation meetings for new employees or company-wide training about new technology. Formal socialization may also include reading instructional manuals or practicing work-related tasks. Informal socialization involves unofficial experiences that teach the organizational member about nuances of the organization's culture. They occur through interaction with peer groups or role models. Thornton and Nardi (1975) note that informal socialization is "implicit and refers to the attitudinal and cognitive features of role performance" (p. 879). Through informal socialization, members learn organizational subtleties related to skills, values, and perceptions. It teaches people the components of organizational culture related to how to behave, what to hope for, and what it means to succeed or fail (Tierney, 1997, p. 4).

Culture is constantly being re-created; therefore, socialization does not occur in an unchanging context. The ideas, habits, and skills of new and experienced members impact socialization. New members bring with them their experiences, feelings of self-confidence, competence, self-esteem, and self-sufficiency (Trice & Beyer, 1993). Experienced members uphold cultural norms but also experience the organization through their own unique lens. McDermott and Varenne (1995) write:

Life in culture is polyphonous and multivocalic; it is made of the voices of many, each one brought to life and made significant by the other, only sometimes by being the same, more often by being different, more dramatically by being contradictory. Culture is not so

much a product of sharing, as a product of people hammering each other into shape. (p. 326)

### **Socialization of Newcomers**

This study focuses on student affairs professionals who are new to the field. They were interviewed about their beliefs, perceptions, and experiences during their first six months of employment. New student affairs professionals were studied during their first semester because socialization during one's early career is viewed as being the most significant (Trice & Beyer, 1993). Through socialization, newcomers learn the culture of the organization, and the culture influences their behavior and decision-making (Oblander, 1990, p. 17).

The field of organizational socialization yields vast research about formal socialization processes, including evaluations of recruitment techniques, orientation programs, and training workshops. Informal socialization processes, such as personal experiences, conversations, and the impact of peer and mentor relationships, have been understudied (Tierney, 1997). Both formal and informal socialization processes occur throughout one's career. Occupational training, interaction with peers, relationships with mentors, and the impact of role models, and other leaders, encompass socialization that occurs during one's early career.

Relationships and interactions with peers, role models (leaders and supervisors), and mentors are examples of informal socialization. Relationships and communication between student affairs professionals will be uncovered in this ethnographic study; therefore, learning about peer relationships was incorporated. According to Trice and Beyer (1993), peers are the most ubiquitous socializing agents. By going through training with other new recruits, who are often close to the same age, new members bond and "produce a consciousness of kind" (p. 160). Three types of peers develop.

1. Informational peers - There is little trust between new group members and informational peers. There is sharing of information about work and the organization, but neither party puts much into the relationship.
2. Collegial peers – Peers who provide more direct, honest feedback. More trust is built than with an informational peer, and there is increasing self-disclosure between the new member and the collegial peer.
3. Special peers - The bond between a member and a special peer is similar to the bond between two best friends. It is a strong bond, in which personal information about work and family is shared. Members and their special peers are comfortable sharing their personal views and often have similar views.

Mentor relationships are different than peer interactions. Less prevalent than peer bonds, mentor relationships provide a special, intense form of role-modeling. They resemble a parent-child relationship that may continue over a lifetime. Trice and Beyer (1993) see the impact of role models and other leaders as the fourth part of socialization during one's early career. Role models fall into three categories experienced: colleagues, supervisors, and organizational leaders. Organizations use role-modeling by experienced colleagues and supervisors as a way to make sure new members are meeting expectations and not violating norms. The relationship with the supervisor is seen as critical, having long-term consequences related to career and success in the new role. Members may not have much interaction with leaders high up in the organization; however, they do watch them, learn from them, and may emulate them. It is worth noting that not all role models represent the dominant values, norms, or perceptions of the organization. Role models may be projecting differing values of subcultures or countercultures within the larger organization.

## **Socialization in Higher Education**

**Faculty culture and socialization.** Although this research focuses on new student affairs professionals, it was important to understand the socialization of faculty. This provided knowledge by which to compare the experiences of both groups. Beginning with earlier works of Gouldner (1957) and Kerr (1963), there have been several studies completed about faculty culture and socialization (Bogler & Kremer-Hayan, 1999; Tierney, 1997; Tierney, 2008; Tierney & Rhoads, 1994). Because socialization involves the indoctrination of non-members or new members into a work group or subculture, the professorate must be viewed as a subculture. According to Van Maanen and Barley (1984), faculty members exhibit all of the characteristics of an occupational subculture: consciousness of kind (common values), presence of reference groups (peers looking to others for guidance), unusual emotional demands, favorable self-image and social identity (individuals emphasize the social value of their work), extension of non-work life (spend leisure time together), and ethnocentrism (promote an “us” versus “them” mentality and view outsiders with suspicion).

The values, beliefs, and attitudes held by faculty reflect their socialization experience and mirror the faculty subculture. Researchers have studied faculty socialization by trying to understand faculty members' roles and commitments, and by defining the socialization experiences. They ask, (1) how can the work of faculty be defined and categorized? and (2) how do faculty learn to be faculty? One way faculty are defined is by their various roles and commitments. Gouldner (1957) identified faculty based on where they focused their time and energy. Faculty more committed to their discipline by focusing on the advancement of knowledge, involvement with professional organizations, and contribution to scholarly journals were defined as “cosmopolitan.” Faculty more committed to their institution by focusing on

teaching, involvement in institutional committees, and additional service to the institution were defined as “local.” Similarly, Kerr (1963) defined faculty by how they focused their time and energy. He combined Gouldner’s cosmopolitan/local definitions with the definitions of applied/pure knowledge and created a matrix of four typologies: scholar-researcher, consultant, teacher, and demonstrator. Adjusting to the primary faculty roles of teaching, researching, publishing, and service impacts the socialization of new professors (Bogler & Kremer-Hayon, 1999; Tierney, 2008, Tierney & Rhoades, 1994).

In their qualitative study of junior professors, Bogler and Kremer-Hayon (1999) found participants had similar concerns related to the pressure to publish, feelings of unpreparedness, balancing work and home life, building status among peers, and enhancing self-confidence. The development of a professional identity was important to these junior professors. They believed professional identity is contingent upon building a reputation based on recognition granted from those in their discipline. Participants mentioned feelings of isolation and loneliness during the early part of their socialization. This then moved to a clearer understanding of expectations and a more defined professional identity. As they moved closer to tenure, junior professors noted more affiliation with the university and more involvement in university affairs. These findings are mirrored in Tierney’s (2008) work that involved interviews of 300 faculty members. He writes about shared governance when discussing roles of faculty. Tierney (2008) notes that socialization involves faculty coming to terms with the “multiple constituencies, contexts, and socio-cultural environments” in which they work (p. 157).

Tierney and Rhoads (1994) answer the question, “How do faculty learn to be faculty?” in their monograph entitled, *Faculty Socialization as Cultural Process: A Mirror of Institutional Commitment*. The monograph provided an overview of faculty roles, commitments, and the

socialization processes of the day. It was a call to university leaders to evaluate and change the faculty socialization processes, to make them more strategic and effective. In defining the stages of faculty socialization, the authors present the idea that faculty subculture should be viewed from five sociological or cultural perspectives: national, professional, disciplinary, individual, and institutional. They define faculty socialization as occurring in two stages: anticipatory and organizational. For faculty, the anticipatory stage occurs during undergraduate and graduate school. During this stage, soon-to-be faculty learn roles and behaviors by observing and internalizing the behavior and views of their professors. They also learn the norms, values, and language of their discipline through research and study. The organizational stage is divided into two phases: initial entry and role continuance. Initial entry happens in the first two years of a faculty members' career. It includes the experiences that occurred during recruitment, selection, and initial training. This phase is marked by isolation, loneliness, trial and error, lack of collegial support, heavy workloads, and time constraints. A faculty member must learn and relearn his roles throughout the life of his career. This socialization occurs during the organizational phase, called role congruence. During this phase, faculty master academic and cultural skills to gain tenure. They may become more involved with responsibilities in academic leadership and experience socialization associated with those new roles.

**Student affairs culture and socialization.** There is less research about the subculture and socialization of student affairs professionals as compared to that about faculty (Beodeker, 2006). However, the research that does exist mirrors that about faculty socialization by asking the same two questions: (1) how can the work of student affairs professionals be defined and categorized?, and (2) how do student affairs professionals learn how to be student affairs professionals? Like faculty, student affairs is viewed as a subculture in higher education. It meets

the same criteria established by Van Maanen and Barley (1994), including, striving for group self-consciousness, shared problems, and action based on collective understanding. Defining the roles and commitments of student affairs professionals has been addressed by several researchers (Hirt, 2006; MacKinnon, 2004; Whitt; 1997). Like faculty, the roles and commitments of student affairs professionals are varied. They can be defined similarly. For example, is the student affairs professional cosmopolitan or local in terms of commitments? Where a faculty member is connected to his discipline, so might a student affairs professional be to his area of expertise or department. And like a faculty member, a student affairs professional must decide where he will focus his time and energy. Will it be on administrative duties, spending time with students, or planning and implementing programs? The student affairs professional also seeks to define his professional identity. Is he an administrator or an educator? To what does he attribute his *raison d'être*? Is it to support the academic mission of his institution, promote individual student development, provide basic student services, or enhance student learning? Or is it some combination of the four? Both faculty and student affairs subcultures have similar challenges in terms of defining roles and deciding where to focus their energy. The socialization process for both is also similar.

Minimal research has been directed towards the socialization of new student affairs professionals. Oblander (1990) conducted a qualitative case study, interviewing three new student affairs professionals about their socialization process during the first year in a new position. More recently, Tull, Hirt, and Saunders (2009) wrote *Becoming Socialized in Student Affairs Administration* and Henning et al. (2011) wrote *Professional Development Needs for New Residence Life Professionals*. All provided information about the socialization of new student

affairs professionals, but few specifics about student affairs professionals and how they acquire knowledge about faculty were provided.

Oblander (1990) writes, “The learning of an organizational culture by a newcomer is too important to be left to chance” (p. 190). He found that newcomers often learned about the beliefs and norms of their culture through written and verbal information. He noted that socialization processes were sometimes haphazard and unplanned. In addition, he encouraged student affairs leaders to explore whether or not student affairs professionals receive the intended messages about culture, and if intended messages are defined. Oblander’s contentions reinforce the need to understand what messages are sent to new student affairs professionals, and how those messages are sent. Oblander (1990) found that new student affairs professionals learned from a variety of sources and methods. The most common socialization occurred through informal venues. Most evident were conversations that new student affairs professionals had with supervisors and peers. Socialization occurred as new members asked questions of other members and reflected on experiences to explain the new organization. Informal socialization processes tended to focus on cultural knowledge, while formal socialization processes focused on procedural tasks (Oblander, 1990).

An in-depth look at the socialization of new and entry-level student affairs professionals is presented in *Becoming Socialized in Student Affairs Administration: A Guide for New Professionals and Their Supervisor* (Tull et al., 2009). The definition of *socialization* in the book is similar to those discussed previously: interactive acts that involve interpretation by the new professionals - acts that join individuals’ traits, beliefs, and values with cultural norms and practices. The book begins with a look at how most student affairs professionals enter the field.

It includes an overview of how new professionals are socialized. Four stages similar to the two stages presented by Tierney and Rhoads (1994) are presented:

1. Anticipatory. This stage occurs during graduate program and involves learning from faculty.
2. Formal. This stage occurs during the first few months of a new position and involves shifting one's perspective from that of an outsider to that of an insider. It includes formal orientation and training that helps the new member learn about procedures, responsibilities and institutional culture.
3. Informal. This stage also occurs during the first few months of a new position. It results in the development of one's "individual style" (p. 5). It occurs by observing the variation in rules and expectations. Learning is not explicit, but involves watching the behaviors of more experienced members.
4. Personal. This stage occurs within the first year of employment and is defined as the integration or meshing of one's personal and work identities. It is the creation of the professional identity.

Like Oblander (1990), Tull et al. (2009) make a distinction between formal and informal socialization methods. Three ideas related to informal socialization and this study should be highlighted: (1) Informal socialization has been understudied. "In other words, current literature overlooks and obscures more implicit, routine, process-oriented activities that circumscribe how individuals are socialized to an organization" (Tull et al., 2009, p. 154). (2) "Organizational learning is often facilitated through meaningful staff interpersonal interactions and staff-peer relationship" (Tull et al., 2009, p. 155). (3) Finally, interactions that new student affairs

professionals have with colleagues and supervisors also shape their cultural knowledge and understanding of the organization.

A survey of new student affairs professionals begins to uncover their view of socialization by trying to find out the most important training needs/topics and the best method for delivery training (Henning et al., 2011). Survey respondents were new student affairs professionals with less than 5 years of professional experience. They were asked to rank 30 issues from those most important to learn about to least important to learn about. They were also asked about the most successful way to train or teach new professionals about those issues. The authors chose to focus on the results from the residence life professionals and found that mentoring stood out as the preferred method of training. Attending national conferences, learning on one's own and administrative shadowing were other preferred methods. The training issue most closely related to this study – collaborating with faculty to design initiatives for student development – did not rank amongst the top training issues. However, understanding the culture of the college or university where you work did. The other top training issues were: understanding job expectations, enhancing supervision skills, learning how to move up in student affairs, receiving support from supervisor and colleagues, fostering student learning, and developing multicultural competencies (Henning et al., 2011, p. 31).

Understanding institutional culture, including faculty culture, is important for new student affairs professionals (Tull et al., 2009). Authors note that new professionals don't know how to learn about institutional culture. Responsibility for understanding and interpreting institutional culture, including faculty culture, should fall to more experienced colleagues, supervisors, and other campus leaders. There is a lack of research about the socialization of student affairs professionals and a lack of research about how student affairs professionals

acquire knowledge about faculty. This study expands knowledge in both of these areas, focusing on how new student affairs professionals acquire knowledge about faculty. Such knowledge increases understanding of how cultural beliefs and perceptions are acquired.

### **Summary of Literature Review**

This study investigates how individual and sub-cultural beliefs and perceptions about faculty are acquired by new student affairs professionals. The need for better understanding of one's individual and sub-cultural beliefs and perceptions of others to promote interpersonal relationships and collaboration is clear. Socialization processes exist to pass on cultural norms, values, and beliefs. As a result, studying socialization processes to learn more about student affairs professionals' beliefs and perceptions about faculty makes sense. By understanding how individual and sub-cultural beliefs and perceptions are acquired via socialization processes, leaders will have more knowledge in helping them see a blueprint of socialization processes that will promote positive beliefs and perceptions to improve collaboration. This literature review provided a foundation from which further study of these concepts could develop.

To preface this study, a review of literature in several areas was required. First, to understand the need for collaboration, research about present-day student learning concepts and society's demand for accountability was needed. Second, an in-depth study of collaboration - specifically, collaboration in higher education - was completed. Examination of collaboration in higher education supported the notion that differences between members of academic and student affairs can hinder collaboration. Because this study looks at student affairs from a cultural perspective, organizational culture was studied. Characteristics about faculty and student affairs subcultures were described. This study focuses on the socialization processes of student affairs professionals; therefore, inquiry into organizational socialization and an overview of the

student affairs profession were included. Information was gathered to learn about the student affairs profession, including its history, philosophical underpinnings, and present-day issues. Definitions and types of socialization, the socialization of newcomers, and the socialization processes about faculty and student affairs professionals were shared.

Literature about integrated student learning included current definitions, desired outcomes, and a call for collaboration. It is interesting to note that the majority of the literature, pertaining to holistic student learning, was written by scholars whose primary focus and experience has been in student affairs. Even so, integrated student learning has gained renewed attention from constituents inside and outside the academy. Based on the literature, it is clear that to achieve holistic student learning, collaboration is necessary. As a team, faculty and student affairs professionals can weave together in-class and out-of-class experiences to ensure the full benefits of integrated student learning.

Beodeker (2006) wrote, “It has become increasingly clear that collaboration does require faculty and student affairs professionals to cross numerous occupational boundaries and borders” (p. 279). The literature based on faculty and student affairs collaborations is expanding to include more research-oriented findings. Although studies investigating barriers and enhancers of collaboration have been undertaken, more research is warranted. The inception of this study and the need for continued research to promote collaboration came from a review of current research about faculty and student affairs’ collaborations. Researchers of organizational culture and collaboration regard the professorate and student affairs professionals as two different subcultures within higher education. Cultural studies about faculty and student affairs’ subcultures reveal different values and beliefs. Also evident is a lack of research about the student affairs’ subculture. Recent studies uncovered factors that inhibit and strengthen

collaboration and provided an up-to-date look at this field of inquiry. Although labeled and grouped differently by each researcher, most factors that inhibit or strengthen collaboration are clustered into these categories: organizational culture, leadership, structure/bureaucracy, and interpersonal relationships (Arcelus, 2008; Beodeker, 2006; Kezar & Lester, 2009).

Organizational socialization was studied. Understanding the concepts, purposes, and processes of organizational socialization was essential for this study. Socialization processes for new employees were highlighted. Formal and informal socialization processes were described and examples were provided. Understanding organizational socialization in a broad sense, in which concepts can be associated with any organization, was a start. The final piece of this literature review was an investigation into socialization processes about faculty and student affairs professionals. Central to this study are the socialization processes of student affairs professionals. Based on the review of literature, research deficits in two areas were discovered: (1) no research was found about the development and propagation of student affairs professionals' beliefs and perceptions about faculty; and (2) analysis of student affairs' socialization processes was lacking.

The goal of this study is to gather knowledge about student affairs professionals' beliefs and perceptions about faculty and how those beliefs and perceptions are acquired. This type of cultural investigation is a step toward increased knowledge - knowledge that can benefit higher education leaders who wish to move towards more and enhanced collaboration between faculty and student affairs professionals. With the ultimate goal being effective collaboration that promotes positive student learning outcomes.

## **CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Introduction**

This chapter outlines the research orientation and design used for this study including a description of ethnographic research and the reasons for selecting ethnography. The central question and sub-questions of the study are presented. Methods of data collection, site, and participant selection and data analysis are described. Lastly, strategies used to address issues of trustworthiness and credibility are listed.

### **Research Orientation**

This study is about an organizational subculture of student affairs professionals. To discover how new student affairs professionals acquire commonly held beliefs and perceptions about faculty, an ethnographic orientation is being used. There are five reasons undergirding the choice of ethnography as an approach to this study. First, it is an approach used by researchers who see culture as a phenomenon to be understood and interpreted (Martin, 2002; Schein, 2004; Smircich, 1983). Second, Creswell (1998) promotes ethnography as the most appropriate qualitative research method exploring and describing the beliefs, language, and behaviors of a culture-sharing group. It helps researchers search for a pattern among the different underlying assumptions of a group, in order to identify how members of the group perceive and judge situations and relationships (Schein, 2004). Third, it explores events and phenomenon from the participants' subjective perspectives. It consists of studying the recollections and reflections of people's personal beliefs and perceptions within actual real-life contexts. Fourth, it investigates the "microscopic aspects of institutional life" (Tierney, 2008, p. 62) and the "non-rational aspects

of organizations” (Buyarski, 2006, p. 31). Fifth, it provides an avenue where common denominators can be uncovered, understood, and described – consequently, revealing a clearer understanding of a group’s culture.

### **Research Questions**

The central question in this study is: How do new student affairs professionals acquire commonly held beliefs and perceptions about faculty? Through this ethnographic study, data were gathered and analyzed to generate the following:

- Identification of the beliefs and perceptions new student affairs professionals have about faculty.
- A detailed description of how new student affairs professionals acquire beliefs and perceptions about faculty.
- An understanding of how new student affairs professionals’ beliefs and perceptions about faculty are passed on within the student affairs’ subculture.

To generate the outcomes listed above, sub-questions are warranted. Creswell (1998) recommends that ethnographic studies be framed by one central question and several sub-questions. In addition, sub-questions should restate the purpose of the study in more specific terms. The following sub-questions in this study are listed here.

At the beginning of the study:

1. What beliefs and perceptions do experienced student affairs professionals have about faculty?
2. What beliefs and perceptions do new student affairs professionals have about faculty?

3. Do experienced student affairs professionals and new student affairs professionals have the same beliefs and perceptions about faculty? What are the commonly held beliefs and perceptions? What are the differing beliefs and perceptions?

At the end of the study:

4. After one semester of employment, what beliefs and perceptions do new student affairs professionals have about faculty?
5. Have beliefs and perceptions that new student affairs professionals have about faculty changed since the start of their first year of employment? If yes, what has changed?
6. How do the beliefs and perceptions of new student affairs professionals compare to the beliefs and perceptions of experience student affairs professionals that were compiled at the beginning of the study?

Socialization, Relationships, Other Variables That Shaped Beliefs and Perceptions:

7. What was the impact of the buddy relationships on the new student affairs professionals' beliefs and perceptions about faculty?
8. Did opportunities arise for interaction between faculty and new student affairs professionals?
9. What other variables shaped new student affairs professionals' beliefs and perceptions?

The fluid, evolving nature of ethnography may result in re-conceptualization of research questions during the study. Van Maanen (1979) describes the “alterable” and “fluid character” of ethnography where interpretations are “tested, retested and tested again” (p. 114). As a qualitative study evolves with continuous data collection, analysis, and interpretation –

researchers need the flexibility to explore nuances and facts not previously considered. One central question remains a foundation from where the research begins.

## **Research Design**

### **Ethnography**

This study is an ethnography that explores how new student affairs professionals acquire commonly held beliefs and perceptions about faculty. Ethnography was chosen as the qualitative research design because it requires the researcher to describe and interpret the shared and learned values, behaviors, beliefs and language of a culture-sharing group – in this case, the subculture of student affairs.

For this particular study, the Residence Life staff at Cogentia University (CU) was selected as the culture-sharing group to be studied. The members have the same job responsibilities, experience the same socialization processes, and share a common language. Creswell (1998) adds to complete an ethnography the researcher needs to find a “gate-keeper” – someone in the culture-sharing group who allows the researcher to observe and interact with the participants. The Director of Residence Life at CU was the gate-keeper for this group.

Ethnographies are characterized by cultural themes or issues to be studied. The cultural issue of this study is how beliefs and perceptions about faculty are acquired by new student affairs professionals. Ethnographers must commit to fieldwork that includes analyzing documents, observing the group, and interviewing participants over a long period of time. A final criterion of ethnographies requires that the researcher have the desire and ability to write research results that include a complex and holistic picture, analysis of language and words, participants’ quotes, views and feelings, and an interpretation of the data collected (Creswell, 1998; Creswell, 2003).

## Site Selection and Purposeful Sampling

Purposeful sampling, that results in particular participants, settings, and experiences to address the research question, was used for this study (Creswell, 2003). Specifically, this is a homogenous sampling where “the researcher purposefully samples individuals or sites based on membership in a subgroup that has defining characteristics” (Creswell, 2003, p. 216). Cogentia University was chosen as the site for this study. The culture-sharing student affairs subculture that was chosen was the Residence Life professional staff. There were ten participants in this study: the current (experienced) residence life professional staff members, including the Director, one Assistant Director, four returning Residence Life Coordinators (RLCs), and four RLCs who are new to the position at CU. Cogentia University was chosen for the following reasons.

CU is classified as a large, four-year, primarily non-residential institution, making it reflective of most large four-year institutions. According to the U.S. Department of Education’s *National Institute for Education Statistics*, in the fall of 2010, of the 20,550,000 students in post-secondary degree granting institutions, 72.5% will be attending four-year institutions. According to the *Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching* (2011), of large four-year institutions, most were classified as primarily non-residential (2.9%). I felt it important to conduct the study at a university similar to institutions most students in the United States attend.

Because the foundation of this study is collaboration between faculty and student affairs, I wanted to work with an institution where collaboration was promoted at the university level. This institution’s commitment to collaboration was found in CU’s 2010 strategic plan and list of university values. Within the campus of CU, the department of Residence Life in Student Affairs was chosen as the culture-sharing, student affairs subculture to be studied. The professional staff

in Residence Life were chosen as the participants for this study. This selection was based on criteria and information obtained from the institution's website and in an interview with the Director of Residence Life. The division of Student Affairs promotes collaboration with faculty. The Student Affairs vision, mission and values espouse its involvement with student learning and collaboration with faculty. This was noted in the division's 2009 mission and vision statement. The job descriptions of the Residence Life Coordinators (RLCs) include involvement with student learning, the academic mission of the institution, and collaboration with faculty. CU's Residence Life Coordinators' job description notes the following responsibilities: promoting faculty in residence hall programs, facilitating academic initiatives to assist student with their transition, and sharing knowledge of study skills and to support the academic mission of CU . Residence Life professional staff in the department of Residence Life at CU collaborates with faculty to plan, implement, and evaluate programs in the residence halls. Living-learning communities are examples of such programs. The department of Residence Life at CU hired four new RLCs for the upcoming academic year. Within Student Affairs at CU, the Residence Life department hires the most new professionals each year; hence, providing more participants for this study than could other departments. This was the first professional student affairs position for the four new RLCs.

Socialization processes were also considered when selecting the sample. Socialization (training, in-services) for RLCs at CU are planned and held during the new professionals' first year of employment. The most intense training for new RLCs occurs during the first semester of employment. Called the anticipatory stage, the most intense training occurs at the onset of employment in a new position (Thornton & Nardi, 1975). Furthermore, new employees experience formal and informal stages of socialization during their first few months of a new

position (Tierney & Rhoades, 1994; Tull et al., 2009). New RLCs at CU go through the same socialization processes, such as formal training (workshops and review of written procedures) and informal socialization process (peer interaction, meetings with supervisors). One criteria of purposeful sampling of qualitative research is that each participant experience similar phenomenon (Huberman & Miles, 2002). During the informal stages and processes of socialization, new employees learn about organizational culture. During this stage student affairs professionals are socialized by those around them. Learning occurs by observing co-workers, supervisors, and other organizational leaders (Tull et al., 2009). New RLCs at CU are part of a specific informal socialization experience: the peer Buddy Program. New RLCs were matched with experienced RLCs for informal interaction and assistance with the transition to the new position. The selection of CU's Residence Life staff for this study made sense because these experiences existed and produced evidence of the student affairs subculture, specifically how new student affairs professionals acquire commonly held beliefs about faculty. I interviewed the new RLCs, their experienced peers, and their supervisors about these informal socialization experiences.

Two additional elements were taken into consideration when selecting the sample. First, a Living-Learning Community committee exists at CU that includes faculty and Residence Life staff. I was given permission to observe one of the group's meetings. This provided an opportunity to observe interactions between faculty and student affairs staff and collect data pertinent to this study. Second, due to the amount of time required of ethnography (Creswell, 1998) it was important that the institution selected be within driving distance. I considered large, public, four-year institutions within a two hour driving distance. Other institutions were

considered; however, those institutions were classified as primarily residential and thus representative of fewer institutions than CU which is classified as primarily non-residential.

### **Data Collection**

Ethnographers make cultural inferences based on what people say, what people do, and what artifacts they use, or produce. As a result, data collection will come from interviews, observation, and document analysis. Another reason to use multiple data collection methods is triangulation. Triangulation helps the researcher find contradicting and corroborating evidence between the different sources (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998). The data collection plan developed is detailed in the following subsection.

**Permission and confidentiality.** First, the appropriate permission to complete the study through the university's Institutional Research Board was granted (see Appendix A). Next, written permission from the Director of Residence Life to conduct the study with the department was granted. A list of contact information for the new RLCs, their experienced peer mentors, the Assistant Director for Academic Initiatives and the Director of Residence Life was provided to me. Each individual was contacted via email (see Appendix B) and asked to participate in the study. A copy of the "Consent to Participate" (see Appendix C) was sent to those individuals. The purpose of the form and email was to describe the purpose and guidelines of the study. During the first interview the consent to participate was reviewed and signed. Participants were given a copy of the form. Confidentiality is an ethical obligation for the researcher. Issues of confidentiality were discussed with participants. Participants were informed that to protect their identity, a pseudonym was provided for them.

**Interviews.** “Language is the primary means for transmitting culture from one generation to the next” (Spradley, 1979, p. 9). Words, descriptions, and feelings are data samples an ethnographer uses to interpret meaning and “tacit knowledge” (Spradley, 1979). As a result, interviewing was used as the primary tool for gathering evidence for this study. Participants were interviewed separately. Interviews lasted between 30-60 minutes and were held in the participant’s office.

Semi-structured interviews were used to gather data for this study. During semi-structured interviews set questions are developed by the researcher. Wording can be changed and there is no particular order of the questions. This allows for flexibility with the interview, so that the interviewer can change the interview to address the insights and issues presented by the interviewee (Merriam, 1998). The interviews occurred in three phases. The first phase at the beginning of study was conducted in July 2012. All of the participants, except the Assistant Director, were interviewed. During the first set of interviews it was determined that the Assistant Director for Academic Initiatives should be included in the study. Interview questions for the first set of interviews (see Appendix D) were developed to obtain general demographic information, uncover beliefs and perceptions about faculty, and discuss experiences with faculty. General demographic information included age, race, gender, degree attained, and past work experience. The second phase of the study occurred in October 2012. All of the participants were interviewed to discuss experiences with one another and faculty since the start of the semester. They were asked again to describe their beliefs and perceptions about faculty. The core set of interview questions are available (see Appendix E). Additional questions and follow-up questions were asked as was warranted with each participant. The final phase and last set of interviews occurred in December 2012. All of the RLCs were interviewed to discuss experiences

with one another and faculty since the start of the semester. The Assistant Director and Director were unavailable for the final interviews; however, with the focus being on the new RLCs, the exclusion of these participants for the final interview was not a concern. Participants were asked to describe their beliefs and perceptions about faculty again. Additional questions and follow-up questions were asked as was warranted with each participant. The final set of interview questions are available (see Appendix F).

**Direct observation.** Observation was used as another tool to collect data for this study. Observation is used for many reasons - to understand the context in which the participants are involved, to “triangulate emerging findings”, to see and interpret things ‘firsthand,” and to record behaviors and specific incidents as they occur (Merriam, 1998, p. 96). I was able to observe a meeting of the living learning community faculty liaison committee. This committee is chaired by the Assistant Director of Academic Initiatives for Residence Life. Members of the committee include those involved with the living and learning communities from both the student affairs and academic affairs divisions. Faculty from Biology, Nursing, and the Honors College, and staff from the College of Business advising center, Student Wellness, and Residence Life are members. I was given permission to attend the October meeting. The meeting was recorded and transcribed. Notes (see Appendix G) were taken during the meeting and included my thoughts and impressions and descriptions of participants’ non-verbal communication.

One of the challenges of this study was a lack of opportunities to observe group interaction. There are two functioning work groups related to academics and faculty in residence life: the living and learning community faculty liaison committee and the academic initiatives committee. I was unable to observe an academic initiatives committee meeting. Through interviews I was able to find out that this group is made up of Residence Life Coordinators who

are interested implementing academic initiatives in the halls. It is chaired by the Assistant Director of Academic Initiatives. During interviews participants provided mixed information about how the purpose of the group, and when and how often the group met RLCs noted that the chair had other issues that were consuming her time and had been unable to hold many meetings. The confusion surrounding when these meetings occurred and lack of communication from the chair prohibited me from observing this group.

**Documents.** Documents were reviewed and analyzed as part of this study. Documents included those that provided information about CU and the Residence Life department, such as, demographic descriptions, mission statements, and organizational structure. Job descriptions and brochures related to living learning communities are other documents that were reviewed. Such information was gathered from written materials, policy and procedures manuals, and the university's website.

Information gathered from these sources provided me with information about the Residence Life culture. It also provided evidence of values and goals related to interaction with faculty. The value that the department places on supporting academics was also uncovered through written mission statements, department goals, and policies and procedures.

## **Data Analysis**

### **Simultaneous Data Collection and Analysis**

The ultimate goal of simultaneous data collection and analysis was to find the answers to the eight research questions. As is noted in the next section, it was also done to promote trustworthiness and credibility of findings. Merriam (1998) recommends a cyclical approach to qualitative research where data collection, data analysis, and re-evaluation of the study are simultaneous. She notes that the researcher knows the central problem or question at the outset of

the study, but does not know “what will be discovered, what or whom to concentrate on, or what the final analysis will be like” (p. 162). The following process was used after each set of interviews. Interviews were transcribed within a week of each interview. Transcribed interviews were read and key points were highlighted. Key points included responses to the interview questions and comments related specifically to beliefs and perceptions about faculty. Key points from each interview were compiled together and compared to one another. Common themes were found. In addition, unique responses were highlighted. In addition, responses were compared across the participants in two ways. First, the new RLCs responses were compared to their peer mentor’s responses. Second, new RLCs’ responses were compared against the other new RLCs’ responses.

A personal journal was kept as part of the data collection. Journal entries were made after each interview and included my impressions of the participant, non-verbal communication, responses that stood out, and any other thoughts. These impressions were reviewed as the interview data were analyzed. I compared the journal entries to the common themes. This process also provided a way for me to note any follow-up questions for future interviews. After each set of interviews and data analysis, questions for the next set of interviews were created.

Notes taken from the document analysis and living learning community meeting observation were also compared to common themes. This was done to see if there was any connection between the common themes and the department’s written materials. For example, if an RLC noted faculty were not required to be part of their hall programming efforts, this could be verified by reviewing the Residence Life policies and procedures. The audio recording from the living learning community was evaluated in the same way as the interviews. It was transcribed and reviewed. Comments related to how the two groups collaborate and the tone of

the communication between faculty and Residence Life staff were noted. My personal notes from the meeting were also reviewed (see Appendix G). The information compiled from the living learning community meeting was used to support or not support the common themes from the interviews. (It was used the same way that data from the document analysis was used.) For example, new RLCs noted that they did not have any real opportunities for engagement with faculty. A piece of evidence to support this belief was the fact that no new RLCs were invited to attend the living learning community meeting.

### **Storage**

Transcriptions, notes, and documents were stored electronically and password protected. The data were stored and organized by type (interview data, observation data, and document data), by date (when the data were gathered), and by participant. The personal journal was handwritten and then transcribed.

### **Validation of Findings**

Internal validity is seen as a strength of qualitative research (Creswell, 2003). This concept is used to assess if research findings are accurate from the viewpoint of the participants, researcher, and the readers of the study. Qualitative researchers are less likely to use “validity” and more likely to use terms, such as “trustworthiness” and “credibility” when discussing the accurate and authentic account of qualitative research. To ensure credibility or trustworthiness, seven strategies were implemented as part of this study. They are described herein. First a sound, methodological framework was used. Based on the purpose of this study, qualitative research methods, specifically ethnography, was selected. The study has been designed to meet the guidelines of ethnographical studies (Creswell, 1998). The second strategy involved the length of time of the study. To ensure comprehensive data collection and understanding this study will

require that I conduct fieldwork for six months. Although length of time in the field can vary between ethnographic studies, Martin (2002) contends that depth of understanding and how researchers interpret cultural manifestations is most critical for a qualitative, cultural study. She writes, “A cultural researcher should seek deep meanings associated with each type of cultural manifestation” (Martin, 2002, p. 47).

Triangulation and member checks were two other components of this study. Three different methods were used to gather data: interviews, document analysis, and observation. Triangulation is used to ensure that the researcher has gathered enough evidence to support final analyses (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1998). Member checks involved participants’ involvement in reviewing data and analysis. Participants were asked to review analyses to see if they feel that the work accurately reflects their comments, thoughts, and feelings. Participants were sent interview transcriptions and my analysis after the second interview. During the third interview I provided a verbal synopsis of what they had shared with me during the three interviews. They were asked if I had accurately captured their beliefs and perceptions about faculty. In addition, if I needed to verify information at any point during the analysis process, I emailed or called the participant for verbal clarification.

Three other strategies used to ensure the trustworthiness of the study included personal journaling, peer debriefing, and rich, thick description. I kept a journal of field notes throughout the study to identify bias. During the analysis and interpretation phase of the study, journal entries were considered. Being the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam, 1998), I had to be cognizant of my own biases. Clarification of bias and journaling are a form of self-reflection that, according to Creswell (2003), “creates an open and honest narrative that will resonate well with readers” (p. 196). Although my experiences as a student affairs professional

and collaborative partner may foster bias, they have provided me with a strong foundational understanding of student learning, student affairs, and collaboration. In addition to journaling during the research, a sound framework and plan for this study helped protect against the limitation of researcher bias. A peer who understands and has experience working in Student Affairs reviewed data to help me make sense of what I am finding. This peer once served as an Assistant Dean for Residence Life, has been involved in collaborative initiatives between faculty and student affairs professionals, and has experience training and supervising RLCs. In addition, one of the dissertation committee members was selected to serve due to her experience working as a student affairs professional. These individuals provided feedback that will assist in drawing conclusions and keeping my biases in check. This also assisted in verifying that another researcher would come to similar conclusions (Creswell, 2003). Lastly, the final study is written as a rich, thick descriptive narrative. This allows the reader to gain a holistic view of the data analysis, researcher's interpretations, and how conclusions were reached.

### **Summary of Research Method**

The goal of this study is to gain understanding as to how new student affairs professionals acquire commonly held beliefs and perceptions about faculty. Beliefs and perceptions of a particular group are attributes of culture (Schein, 2004). Qualitative research methods, particularly, ethnography is best suited to meet the goal of this study. Ethnographies are socio-cultural interpretations (Merriam, 1998) and require multiple data collection methods, extended fieldwork, and thick descriptive narratives.

This chapter has outlined the research plan for this study including; data collection methods (interviews, document analysis, and observation), site and participant selection, and strategies for data analysis. To address questions of accuracy and validity, strategies that will be

used for this study were presented. They included the use of a sound theoretical framework, length of time conducting fieldwork, triangulation, member-checks, researcher's journaling, peer debriefing, and rich, thick descriptive narratives. The methodology outlined in this chapter follows recommended procedures for qualitative research (Creswell, 1998; Creswell, 2003; Huberman & Miles, 2002; Martin, 2002; Merriam, 1998).

## **CHAPTER IV: RESULTS**

### **Introduction**

Results of this study derived from analysis of the interviews, review of the buddy relationships, observations of the living learning community faculty liaison meeting, and a review of documents. Ten participants were interviewed for this study: four new RLCs, four experienced RLCs, the Director of Residence Life, and the Assistant Director for Academic Initiatives. All RLCs were interviewed three times during the fall semester. Opportunities to meet with the Director and Assistant Director were more limited. The Director was interviewed before and during the fall semester, and the Assistant Director was interviewed once during the middle of the first semester. In this chapter, narratives about each of the new Residence Life Coordinators are shared. Each new RLC has a unique story that sheds light on how they have acquired beliefs and perceptions about faculty. The focus of this study is about how the new RLCs acquire their views about faculty. As a result, narratives about them are more detailed and comprehensive than the narratives about the experienced RLCs and supervisors. Following the individual narratives are descriptions of the buddy relationships, including the experienced RLC narratives. Next are the supervisors' narratives. Analysis of these relationships helped to uncover what, if any, interpersonal socialization processes affected the new RLCs' beliefs and perceptions about faculty. A description of the living learning community faculty liaison meeting observation and information gathered from document reviews are the final pieces of data.

## The Data

### The New Residence Life Coordinators

**Elizabeth.** Elizabeth is the new RLC for Washington Hall, an all-women's residence hall. At 28, she is the oldest of the new RLCs and took the most indirect path to her new career. Elizabeth worked for three years in the field of chemistry, working in a lab before returning to college to earn her master's in student affairs. She had earned a bachelor's in exercise science and was involved in athletics during her undergraduate days. She started college at a small Christian school and had planned to major in dance. She transferred to a larger institution and changed her major, but continued to pursue her love of physical activity by being a member of the volleyball club. While working on her bachelor's degree, Elizabeth had the opportunity to study abroad for a year. That experience and a connection she made with a student affairs professional during that time planted the seed for her future in higher education.

During the first interview, Elizabeth shared how unfulfilled she had been in her chosen career before pursuing student affairs work. "I was in the lab and I wasn't with people," she said. "I felt like what I was doing wasn't making a difference in people's lives." Elizabeth had remembered a student affairs professional who had visited her while she was studying abroad. Their interactions and what Elizabeth learned about student affairs work through their relationship prompted her to consider pursuing that type of career. Although she wasn't sure of the specific position she would have in higher education, Elizabeth set off to earn her master's degree. Leaving her career was a risk. Elizabeth attributes her ability to take on such a challenge to her mother, a single parent who always pushed Elizabeth to take risks, fend for herself, and face problems head on.

Like the other new RLCs in this study, Elizabeth spoke of a mentor in student affairs who helped her through graduate school and served as a role model and guide. While working on a graduate practicum with the First Year Seminar course, Elizabeth met the Assistant Dean of Students. She said, “He saw my passion for helping students and took me on.” His constant contact with Elizabeth helped her stay focused. She still considers him a mentor to this day. Although she considered starting her career in academic advising, she followed her mentor’s advice and decided to begin her career in residence life. Elizabeth also fondly remembered a favorite professor she had in graduate school. She described her favorite professor as open, honest, and down to earth. “You could go to her for anything.”

Unlike the other RLCs, Elizabeth had no experience in residence life or housing before starting her first professional position. As a student, she had not worked as a resident assistant or graduate hall director. In our first meeting Elizabeth mentioned that she was concerned about this lack of experience. However, she was encouraged by the fact that her peer buddy also started in residence life with no previous experience. Elizabeth had moved to Cogentia University just a few days before our first interview in July. Elizabeth spoke quickly and smiled often as we discussed her decision to work as an RLC at Cogentia. Her demeanor and tone revealed a mix of excitement and nervousness as she talked about her new job, her new home, and upcoming training. She was most concerned that she wouldn’t be ready for the arrival of her staff. It was important to her to get settled and prepared before the student staff arrived for their own training. When we met for our third and final time in December, Elizabeth was relaxed and confident. She talked about how much she had learned, some of the challenges she had faced, and how much she was enjoying her position.

During each of their three interviews, the new RLCs were asked to describe their beliefs and perceptions about faculty. Elizabeth's answers remained consistent during all three interviews. Her primary beliefs and perceptions about faculty focused on responsibilities and motivations that are linked directly to their academic interests. This was evident when she compared them to student affairs professionals: "They're driven in different ways. The academic side is what they want, what they strive for. It's what their passion is."

She described faculty as having a different focus than student affairs professionals, one that includes teaching, researching, and writing about their chosen field. Elizabeth described her understanding of the tenure process and some faculty responsibilities that might be considered for tenure such as publishing articles or conducting research. Elizabeth attributes her beliefs and perceptions to a specific course she took in graduate school – Faculty in Higher Education. The textbook for the course was *Rethinking Faculty Work: Higher Education's Strategic Imperative* written by Gappa, Austin, and Trice in 2007. When discussing her graduate courses Elizabeth noted:

In some of my classes, we touched a bit on how important it is to collaborate and how different schools have an academic affairs side and a student affairs side. Then I took an elective course about faculty and what it takes to be a faculty member, and all the work that they do and put into it, and their process, and things you don't really think about. Things that they do and they don't get recognized for. That was eye-opening.

Besides these impressions, Elizabeth noted that faculty at smaller institutions seem to be more focused on teaching and students than those at larger institutions. She based this on a comparison of her own experiences having attended a small school and then transferring to a

larger institution. Although size of institution was mentioned, Elizabeth sees the graduate course about faculty as the primary contributor to shaping her beliefs and perceptions about faculty.

Her views have not changed since she began as a new RLC at Cogentia University. When asked why she thought that was the case, Elizabeth noted that she didn't really have much to compare those beliefs and perceptions to. This led us to a conversation about what she had heard about Cogentia faculty from others on campus. Each new RLC had the opportunity to discuss conversations they had had with others about faculty. These conversations helped shed light on whether the new RLCs' beliefs and perceptions were being influenced by others. Most discussions about faculty occurred between the new RLCs and their resident assistants or their students. Elizabeth shared several examples of RAs and students who had talked with her about challenges they were having with faculty. First-year students would discuss the challenges they were facing, specifically those related to the transition from high school to college. When talking about these conversations, Elizabeth noted that she tries not to form opinions because she doesn't have a personal relationship with faculty.

As you get older, I am not as influenced or as influentially shaped by others. I mean I am and I like to learn new things, but I also like not just believing something just because someone told me that. Am I going to just take that information from an 18-, 19-, or 20-year-old? I think age and experience plays a big part.

At the start of this study, the new RLCs talked about discussions they had about faculty because faculty engagement and working with academic affairs had been topics discussed during training. On-going conversations occurred rarely, if ever. Not one of the RLCs remembered having a discussion with peers about faculty after the beginning of the academic year. Further analysis of the peer buddy influences is included later in this chapter.

We spent time during each interview discussing Elizabeth's interaction with faculty at Cogentia. Like the other new RLCs, Elizabeth had very little interaction with faculty members. She noted one campus event where she was introduced to a faculty member. There was no further contact with that faculty member. Also, like her peers, when we would discuss faculty she would often refer to non-faculty staff who work in academic affairs, such as academic advisors. In other words, her interpretation of "faculty" seemed to include academic advising. Elizabeth attributed her lack of interaction to the need to focus on the main responsibilities of her position and the fact that she did not have a reason to interact with faculty. Learning how to do her new job, focusing on the core components of the position, and addressing urgent issues took up most of Elizabeth's time as a new RLC. During our second interview, she noted that she wasn't expecting the amount of supervision and management issues she had faced. Much of her time was spent addressing issues with resident assistants. Like the other new RLCs, Elizabeth discussed several roles and responsibilities of her new position. Those roles and responsibilities took priority over working with faculty. Moreover, interactions with faculty were not seen as central to the RLC position. When I asked her specifically about her first two months on the job she made this observation:

I've just been trying to figure out my job. I think that dealing with the faculty and building relationships are great, but for me, it's not something that I can handle right now. I need to focus on my core job and do that really, really well. Right now I don't even feel that I have time to concentrate on things like professional development. I feel like if a new coordinator was trying to do all of those other things, I don't think that they would be – that their heart is where it needs to be. You have to do your job first, you have

to care about your students first, and get that relationship down before you can do more.

That's how I feel.

At the end of her first semester, Elizabeth seemed confident in her decision to work in residence life at Cogentia University. She was looking forward to the next semester. She was feeling more comfortable in the position and more knowledgeable about what to expect. In terms of engaging with faculty, she sees that as something she may be able to do during her second year. For now she wants to continue focusing on helping her students and has found working with them and her resident assistants as being the most rewarding parts of her career. Although Elizabeth talked about the value of interacting with faculty, her focus was on other duties. Engaging with faculty seems to be somewhat superfluous to the other responsibilities of the position.

**Nancy.** Adams Hall is one of Cogentia's first year experience (FYE) residence halls. The designation means that all residents are freshmen and that programming efforts in the building focus on helping freshmen make a smooth transition to college. Those efforts include programs that focus on academics and opportunities to engage with faculty. Twenty-five year old Nancy is the new RLC who manages Adams Hall. During her job search, Nancy was drawn to Cogentia specifically because of the FYE program and the possibility that she might be able to serve as an RLC for one of the FYE buildings.

Nancy's first two years in college were at a community college. She was a student athlete, a student scholar, and a physical education/kinesiology major. To stay eligible as an athlete and scholar, Nancy had to focus on academics and manage her time. She laughed when she talked about how other freshmen were able to skip class and not take academics as seriously as she did. As she experienced different courses, Nancy found that she enjoyed classes in

psychology. She changed her major to psychology and continued on in that major when she transferred to a four-year institution to complete her baccalaureate degree. She found an interest in sociology and became a double major. “My faculty in the sociology department were a little bit more lively and exciting in their classes. They seemed easier to approach. So, I made the decision to double major,” she said.

In her early college days, Nancy contemplated careers in education, counseling, and school psychology. She was drawn to careers where she could help and teach others. Nancy had learned about careers in student affairs during her sophomore year when she became an RA. By her senior year, she hadn’t honed in on a specific career, so she decided to go to graduate school and a career in higher education. She was unsure where she would end up in higher education, but knew that earning a master’s degree was the next step. She completed a master’s of science in student affairs. While doing so, she took internships in residence life and academic advising for athletes. As part of her internship with Athletics, she had the opportunity to teach a class on academic skills and learning styles. While working in residence life, she liked being part of a team. The RLC position in one of Cogentia’s FYE halls allowed Nancy to be part of a residence life team and teach a first year seminar course bringing together the work experiences she enjoyed as a graduate intern.

During the first interview, Nancy described two professors who made the greatest impression on her. One was a professor she had during her community college experience. Nancy said, “She and I just connected. She taught me that it was important to carry over what I learned in her class to my other classes.” The other was a professor who taught counseling classes in her master’s program. Nancy used the same words to describe both faculty members. She described them as caring about her life outside of the classroom and spending time with her

outside of class. She has relationships with them and considers them mentors to this day. Nancy believes that the small class sizes she experienced at the community college and in her graduate programs facilitated her ability to get to know her professors well. As a result, she believes that there are more faculty-student connections at smaller colleges and universities.

Of all of the new RLCs, Nancy was the most excited to talk with me about her beliefs and perceptions about faculty.

I believe I am kind of nerdy and into school. My teachers and coaches have always been mentors to me so I look up to people in academics. I like the academic world and academics have always been important to me. So I see myself as kind of veering down that path eventually. When I have not been hesitant to go and create a relationship with a professor it's always been a good experience.

When discussing the role of faculty, Nancy described responsibilities that go beyond teaching and research.

I feel that faculty need to be like student affairs professionals. They're there to educate inside the classroom, but I also think it's important for them to educate outside the classroom when they can. Professors should be involved in service on and off campus and be involved in committees in their department and across campus.

As an RA and graduate intern in residence life, Nancy had experienced successful programs in which faculty were involved and engaged. She met faculty who were engaged with students outside of the classroom. Faculty participated in programs held in the residence and dining halls. As part of these programs, faculty would interact with students through informal conversations or discussions about the program's topic. As a graduate hall director, she was required to invite faculty into the hall to meet students or to join them for meals. She had success

with these programs and as a result believes that many faculty want to support out-of-class programs and want to engage with students around topics outside of their academic discipline.

Nancy described what she believes are typical tasks undertaken by faculty, such as creating syllabi, preparing for upcoming classes, grading student work, serving on committees, attending departmental meetings, conducting research, and writing for publication. She also noted that tenure-track faculty may have community service obligations. Nancy noted that faculty may have some responsibilities now that they didn't in the past, specifically addressing the call for more assessment and dealing with student crises. Nancy formed these impressions from the relationships she has had with faculty, her experience teaching as a graduate student, and discussions in her graduate classes. She specifically mentioned a class about the history of higher education in which students discussed differences between faculty and student affairs. Besides class discussions about the "gap" between faculty and student affairs, Nancy noted that, while she was a graduate student, there seemed to be some negative feelings between the graduate faculty and the students who had student affairs assistantships. She wondered if this led faculty to have negative feelings towards student affair professionals in general, even though they were teaching in a graduate program in student affairs.

My cohort would try to get out of class work to do things for their assistantships in the student affairs departments. I feel like that put a lot of negative attention on things because you're there for academics and some people would use the assistantship and be like, "I don't want to participate in academics" which, in turn, would make those professors pretty angry.

In the first interview, Nancy spoke about her goals related to working with faculty at Cogentia. Although she hadn't given it much thought, she spoke of plans to do things that had

been successful at her past institutions. These included programs like the *Faculty Fellows*, a program linking faculty to particular residence halls, and *Charleston Chews*, an initiative that involved hall directors and RAs sharing on-campus meals with faculty. Nancy feels a sense of responsibility to connect with faculty, but believes she may have to rely on her RAs to make some of those connections.

The RAs have the connections with faculty members. That's the only thing that's going to be hard going from grad to full-time professional. I'm not taking classes anymore, so I don't have that connection. And, you know, I was a little hesitant to connect with faculty while I was in class. I'm a little bit introverted. So, I wouldn't throw myself out there like "Hey, this is who I am." But, I do think that it is important to meet and connect with people if I have an opportunity to do so. I have to be present and visible. One, it's required, but I also see it as part of my job.

Nancy shared that even if she wasn't an RLC in a first year experience hall, she would still strive to connect with faculty, although she isn't sure that it would be a priority.

I need to think about this a little more. I'm going to be more intentional with the relationships with faculty. You know, if I was placed in another hall, I don't know that I would necessarily think about it that much.

Three months after our first interview, Nancy and I met again. She talked about the experiences she had had with students, faculty, and peers at Cogentia and how those had or had not affected her beliefs and perceptions about faculty. Nancy's peer buddy is Joannie. Joannie also manages a first-year experience residence hall, Lincoln Hall. Early in the semester, with the assistance of the Assistant Director of Academic Initiatives, Alice, Joannie and Nancy hosted a program in each of their buildings that involved the participation of faculty members. The

program was designed for faculty to meet student informally over a meal. Faculty could speak to the group of students if they so desired. They were asked to share anything they wanted to, but were encouraged to talk about their expectations of students as they relate to classroom behavior and academic responsibilities. Faculty were invited to attend and were asked to respond if they planned to attend. Several faculty members had committed to attend; however, on the day of the event, Joannie had four faculty members attend and Nancy had two. Those who attended arrived late and some who attended had not let the RLCs know that they were planning to attend.

Although the RLCs and Alice were disappointed in the low faculty participation, Nancy reflected on the positive outcomes and thought about ways to improve the program in the future. Positive outcomes, as defined by Nancy, were that students were able to meet and interact with faculty outside of the classroom environment. Nancy spent time with both of the professors who attended her hall's program. Her hope for the program was that students would begin to see faculty as "normal people" with whom they could relate.

There wasn't a lot of interaction. The guy who came late was really funny, and the residents seemed to like him. He was very personable and talked a little about his family, but mostly he talked about classes. It was really weird. After the students left, I was talking with the other faculty member. When she was talking with the residents, she was just kind of boring and intimidating. When I was talking with her one-on-one, her personality came out. Where was this during the time she was taking with the residents?

Nancy shared that she, Joannie, and Alice had talked about the program and how to improve it in the future. Nancy believed that having a clearer vision of the program goals and sharing those with the faculty could improve faculty participation. She talked about giving faculty a defined outline that talked about the purpose of the program and why their involvement

was important. Nancy said Alice provided insights as to why she thought the program wasn't successful. From Nancy's perspective, Alice described professors at Cogentia as not having the best relationships with students and not really wanting to get involved.

Nancy heard similar thoughts about Cogentia faculty from her RAs and peer buddy. In an effort to connect with faculty at Cogentia, Nancy had asked her RAs to provide her with a list of professors who they thought were student-centered and might be interested in participating in Adams Hall programs. Gathering the list was not easy, and Nancy eventually gave up. When I asked RAs to provide me with names they would say things about their professors like, "They're really busy," "They wouldn't want to do something like that," and "They don't live near campus and won't want to come back at night." Although Nancy saw this experience as a roadblock to her attempts at getting faculty involved, she took a step back and decided that she may be trying to implement change too quickly. As we concluded our conversation about faculty involvement in Adams Hall she said, "I would like to see change here, but at the same time, I need to understand the system first, before I can change things."

During the second interview, Nancy said her beliefs and perceptions about faculty hadn't changed. She still believed that the size of the institution impacts a faculty member's ability to engage in out-of-classroom experiences with students. She believed Cogentia's larger size and the need of faculty to conduct research may contribute to their lack of engagement with students. Overall, she stands by her belief that faculty desire to engage with students in ways that go beyond teaching in the classroom.

I don't think my personal beliefs have changed, because if I can talk to faculty one-on-one and make an effort and make it a priority, I don't know if I'd have those negative interactions. I would have to see that for myself. And I think that's when my personal

beliefs would change. Because, no, I just don't believe that faculty aren't fun-loving people outside of their positions.

Because of her positive past experiences with faculty – both as a student and as a residence life staff member – Nancy is befuddled by the challenges that she is experiencing at Cogentia. She can't understand why getting faculty involved seems to be difficult here, but wasn't at her past institutions.

It's kind of hard for me because I have had really positive experiences. It's hard for me to hear from other staff members and students that it is hard to get faculty involved, because I can't believe it's that hard. I've heard it from full-time staff members here, too. All of these perceptions are kind of laying out there for me as one thing I would like to change about my experience here. It's a bigger school. I understand that, but at the same time, I don't know. I don't know why it's a hard step for us to take. I don't know if we're not hitting up the right people or if we're not recruiting in the right ways. At my past school we would reach out to faculty and nominate them. I wonder if that would work here. I'm on the academic initiatives committee, but we haven't done a whole lot and I feel like I just keep getting the same response that faculty members just aren't that friendly here. I think we can find the friendly faculty members, but I really don't know. I didn't go to class here.

When we met for the last time, Nancy was happy about how her first semester as an RLC had gone and was looking forward to the next one. In terms of participation in this study, and of all of the RLCs, Nancy seemed to be the most personally invested. For example, she talked about how she thought about our discussions outside of our interviews. She saw this experience as an opportunity to learn more about herself. She was able to link her experience at Cogentia with her

beliefs and perceptions about faculty. Specifically, her experience at Cogentia reinforced her belief that faculty should be involved with student learning outside of the classroom. It also reinforced her interest in working with faculty and being more involved with academics in higher education.

I think about these things because I think about the future. When I make a move to another school, I think that it [working with faculty] will be something I will be looking for, because it is something I had and enjoyed. I came here because I think it is something they are striving for. It is something that is valued here, but we just haven't gotten there yet. I think that in my next position I will move to a smaller school because I do think that makes a big difference. I think the desire to work with faculty has been solidified for me. It would be important for me, if I did go the faculty route, to see faculty involvement and work in a place where it is – “Yes! We want to interact with the students.”

Nancy's beliefs and perceptions about faculty were still positive when we met for our last interview. She said she was still optimistic, believes faculty care about student success, and still sees faculty as wanting to help students develop and grow. She attributes the lack of faculty involvement at Cogentia to something that is part of the Cogentia culture. As she had in the two previous interviews, Nancy pointed to the larger size of Cogentia as contributing to the lack of faculty-student engagement. Even though she believes it is challenging to get faculty involved at Cogentia, she feels it can be done.

Nancy believes so strongly in faculty-student engagement, and that faculty want to get involved with students outside of class, that she has not given up on faculty-student programs in Adams Hall. Nancy had not had any other interactions with faculty since our second interview, but she was trying a new strategy. Instead of relying on her RAs and the academic initiatives

committee, she was reaching out to faculty on her own. As Nancy got more involved in the academic initiatives committee, she realized the main focus of the committee was not just about getting faculty involved, but included supporting academics through programs and resources. She could not rely on that group to initiate faculty involvement in her hall because they had other duties and because she felt responsible for what happens in her hall. Nancy decided to connect with someone at Cogentia who was compiling a list of new faculty members. Nancy contacted that person and asked for the list. She plans to email the people on the list personally. Nancy thinks that new Cogentia faculty will be looking for ways to engage with the campus community and build their portfolios – especially if they are tenure-track faculty. At the time of our last interview, Nancy had just started this initiative.

Nancy's actions reflect her belief that RLCs should be responsible for initiating relationships with faculty. She thinks RLCs should be expected to interact with faculty. She described building a network of faculty relationships. She realizes that it could take time; however, she sees networking as a key component for getting faculty involved with residence life. Clear, written expectations, program goals that include faculty, and opportunities to meet faculty are other components that Nancy thinks can promote relationships between faculty and RLCs, and ultimately faculty and students. Nancy mentioned a new dining hall program that has been developed to promote interaction between faculty and RLCs, RAs, and residents. She sees it as an opportunity to meet faculty. It is an example of the type of structured initiative that she believes residence life leadership should promote to enhance faculty engagement.

Even though Nancy had a strong desire to get faculty involved in Adams Hall, just as her peers, she was distracted from doing so. Learning about her new position, organizing her work, and addressing day-to-day responsibilities were the priorities. Nancy mentioned a number of

administrative tasks, student issues, and supervision/management duties as taking up much of her time. Since she was a hall director as a graduate student, she felt confident that she knew how to handle the major components of the position. However, she did have to learn how things are done at Cogentia; for example, the budget system and processes are different. Another new challenge for Nancy was figuring out the best way to use her administrative assistant, a student worker. She also mentioned how unexpected situations could cause a change in priorities and reshape her work plans. Working with hall government or addressing roommate conflicts were examples she provided of duties that could cause a change of focus. When reflecting on her first semester, Nancy sounded like the other new RLCs.

I'm trying to do too much. I think a lot of my time is spent trying to figure out how residence life works as a whole. Sometimes I feel like I'm just trying to stay afloat. I may be working on something and then something else has to take precedence, like ordering T-shirts has become an issue recently.

She reinforced that view during another part of this interview.

I would like to be more involved in promoting faculty involvement, but I just feel like it's not a priority for me right now. I think next year I'm going to be able to do the extra things that I want to do, but this year I feel that it isn't possible. I don't want to take on too much and get myself overwhelmed and then not be doing my responsibilities in the hall.

**Nicholas.** Nicholas is an example of someone whose out-of-class experiences influenced his career after college. Twenty-five year old Nicholas was the new hall director in Truman Hall, a predominantly freshman co-ed residence hall. Nicholas' path to his position as an RLC stemmed from his undergraduate experiences as a student leader. At the start of his college

career, Nicholas attended a small college to play football. He transferred to a mid-sized institution at the end of his first semester. His original career goal was to work for the Federal Bureau of Investigation. His academic major, vocational rehabilitation in criminology, was aligned with that goal. However, his student leadership experiences as an RA, orientation assistant, admission's tour guide, and student desk manager led him to consider a different career. Nicholas started working as an RA during his sophomore year and added the other positions during his remaining college years. In addition to his student employment/leadership experiences, Nicholas played club volleyball. Through these experiences, Nicholas knew he wanted to work with and help people – counseling or coaching were two options he considered. Nicholas took some graduate-level counseling courses his senior year, but he didn't enjoy the program. He began to focus on options aligned with the activities he had enjoyed as a student. Through his residence life colleagues he heard about the Osh Kosh Placement Exchange (OPE), a national placement conference for people looking for graduate assistantships and entry-level positions in residence life and housing. At OPE, Nicholas first learned that a graduate degree was required for most entry-level hall director jobs. He connected with the representatives from a large institution, landed a graduate hall director position, and went on to earn a master's in higher education administration.

Nicholas' beliefs and perceptions about faculty revolve around two concepts: his personal experiences with faculty and his evaluation of the culture of the university. In terms of culture, he specifically noted the effect of institutional size, the importance of tenure, and school spirit. These will be discussed in further detail. First, however, is a review of Nicholas' primary belief that faculty should focus on teaching. When asked what he believes the primary role of

faculty is, he said, “It is to educate the students in their field of study and be able to help them get prepared for the real world.” He compared this to the role of student affairs professionals.

I feel that as housing professionals we are trying to make them (students) be successful for academics because if they are having trouble with roommates, having troubles with their building, like leaking water in their room - we have to help them so that they can progress on and not have to worry about those things. We also teach life skills that you might not learn in class. If you’re a history major, you take a bunch of history classes.

You don’t really touch on life skills. We are kind of there to help with the common sense part of things.

Nicholas’ view about faculty and teaching was shaped by his experiences with two faculty members. When describing one of the professors, Nicholas’ face lit up. This professor let the students call him by his first name – Bob. Nicholas’ respect and affection towards Bob was evident as he talked.

He showed me the ropes. He was kind of old school. You couldn’t wear a hat in his class.

I was thinking about transferring again in my sophomore year. He talked with me and talked me out of transferring. He was really helpful, and I still keep in touch with him.

Another professor earned Nicholas’ respect because of her teaching style and her ability to challenge students to learn. She taught some of the graduate counseling classes that Nicholas took as an undergraduate. He described her style of teaching as including a lot of class discussion, personal introspection, and critical thinking. His experience in her class reinforced his desire to work in a field where he could help others.

Nicholas attributes his relationships with these professors to the fact that he was at an institution smaller than Cogentia. At the time, the school he attended had an undergraduate enrollment of approximately 8,000. Cogentia's undergraduate enrollment is slightly over 21,000.

All of my professors knew my first name. They knew who I was. They knew what I was doing. I would talk to them in more one-on-one settings. I think that's why I did better in class too, because I was never a very good student, but I would go to class and talk with the professor when I was having trouble.

Nicholas compared this to the university he attended for graduate school. He referred to it as a large Division I school with a research focus. He also talked about tenure and the pressure of earning tenure at the larger institutions. His impressions of professors, tenure, and teaching were based on his knowledge and experience with one particular faculty member. He noted that the faculty member became "more strict" once she earned tenure. He was in her class during the semester when she was trying to earn tenure. He described long periods waiting on graded materials to be returned. He remembered that his final project was never returned to him and that he received an "A" in the class, but was unsure as to why. Fellow classmates took the same instructor the following semester and had a different experience than Nicholas.

I think when professors earn tenure they become stricter. The students in the cohort after me thought she was a lot harder when she graded. It depends on where the professor is in her life. I think they teach differently from year to year, depending on if they're tenured, not tenured, or if they're in the process of becoming tenured.

One of Nicholas' goals as a first year RLC was to learn about the culture of Cogentia University. He talked about learning the student culture and the feel of the university. During our second and third interviews, he commented on this goal and what he had learned. His

impressions were that there was less school spirit at Cogentia than he had seen at schools he had attended. He noted students seemed to speak less often about their classes, athletic events, and other school activities than students at his past institutions had. He tied this to students being less serious about their academics and not very proud of attending Cogentia. He noted that he saw this lack of school spirit mostly with first-year students and attributed it to the fact that Cogentia was not the first choice school for many of the students.

Nicholas also noted a disconnection between students' academic lives and lives outside the classroom. He attributes some of this to the size of the college and a lack of interaction between students and faculty.

Faculty at smaller institutions are more ingrained in the university and want to help with things outside of working on research. Faculty were our advisors. They helped us with lots of things. You would see them at sporting events and see them walking on campus. Here I feel like you don't see faculty very much, especially on this end of campus. I don't remember the last time I saw any faculty member down here or going into the dining hall.

Nicholas' beliefs and perceptions about faculty didn't change during his first semester at Cogentia. He continues to believe that faculty at smaller institutions are more student centered and teaching centered. His perceptions of Cogentia's culture, his lack of personal experiences with faculty, and feedback he heard from students about faculty reinforced Nicholas' beliefs and perceptions about faculty. During his first semester, Nicholas hadn't built any relationships with faculty. He attended a campus-wide assessment conference, and was able to introduce himself to some faculty, but there were no opportunities for conversation. Without interaction with faculty, Nicholas did not have the opportunity to test his theories about Cogentia's faculty. The feedback he heard from students about faculty only reinforced his beliefs and perceptions.

I feel like faculty only run on the academic side. They teach their class and then they hold office hours. I only get complaints about faculty from students. You never really hear the good things about them because students don't talk about classes they are getting A's in. So, it is kind of hard when you hear something all the time. It is kind of hard to have a perception of good faculty since all you get are complaints.

Nicholas did not feel that he was being influenced one way or another about faculty from his supervisor or peer mentor. Of the all of the new RLCs he communicated the most often with his peer buddy. (That will be discussed later in this chapter.) Like the other RLCs, he spoke highly of his supervisor, Carol. They developed and presented a time management program to the Truman Hall residents, giving them the opportunity to discuss students' academic lives and work closely together on an initiative supportive of academics; however, the program didn't involve faculty. When discussing faculty, both Nicholas and Carol mentioned this program. This is example of how the residence life staff often linked discussions about faculty back to programs about academics, moving away from specifics about faculty.

In our final conversation about faculty, Nicholas discussed the division between faculty and student affairs.

I think faculty do their job because they want to research. They want to do their job and they don't care about our student affairs side. I think from the student affairs side that we don't really try to connect with them either. They don't care and we –we care, I guess, but we aren't trying to reach out to the faculty and do programs with them, at least as far as I have seen.

Like his new RLC peers, Nicholas found the first semester to be busy with learning about the new position and prioritizing responsibilities. Nicholas noted that supervision issues with his RAs took a lot of his time. He also realized he may have taken on too much his first semester.

I think I got too involved too quickly. I figured I would get involved in as much as possible this semester and I over-extended myself. Next semester, I will have a better sense of my schedule, and I think it will be easier. It's hard to go from graduate school to a professional position, because you think you have more time than you really do. I did a lot of work at night in grad school, as opposed to here. You do all of your work during the day and don't really have the energy to do much at night.

During our final interview, Nicholas' enthusiasm about his new position was as high as it was the first time we met. He still believes the primary role of faculty is teaching. His experience has led him to believe that faculty are less engaged with students at Cogentia than at smaller institutions. He bases this belief on the fact that he hasn't seen any faculty members in the residence or dining halls.

**Tommy.** Tommy is the new RLC for Kennedy Hall, a co-ed residence hall. This is Tommy's first professional position in student affairs since completing a master's in student affairs in higher education. His decision to attend graduate school in student affairs came shortly after he began working in the insurance industry. Tommy's bachelor's degree is in business. Although he enjoyed the team-focused projects he experienced as a business student, he found the business culture to be less team-focused and one in which he was not comfortable.

It was very cut-throat. People weren't willing to collaborate and help each other. Things are better when you are collaborating. That's just what I was used to. It's comfortable. It's an environment that I like.

Within three months of working in business, Tommy started contemplating a career move. As an undergraduate, he had worked as a resident assistant for three years. During his third year, he had spoken with his supervisor about a career in residence life and found out that he would need a master's degree. At that point he decided to move forward with his original plan and began a career in business. Being disheartened by his experience in business caused him to reconsider graduate school and led him to his current position as an RLC.

In addition to his desire to work in a more collaborative environment, Tommy attributes his move to student affairs to the hall director who served as his supervisor. During his third year as an RA, the residence life administrators were contemplating letting Tommy go. Tommy is open with his opinions and straight-forward when expressing his ideas. Openly expressing his ideas had gotten him in trouble with the upper administration. As he put it, "I was running my mouth too much and to the wrong people." Tommy's Resident Director confronted him about his behavior and talked about how Tommy's words had affected others. It was a learning experience for Tommy – one that helped him see himself in a new light and led him to further respect his supervisor.

Two faculty members also stand out in Tommy's memories. One professor taught his statistics course. He described her as "scary at first," but he came to respect her because he learned a lot in her course. He worked as a teaching assistant for the other professor.

She was one of those professors that genuinely cared about the students, like personally as well as academics. She was always interested in what was going on in your life. She was very invested in helping you develop and learn.

Tommy was less willing to make direct comments about his beliefs and perceptions about faculty than the other three new RLCs. He clearly articulated a personal value that pushed him to

see people as individuals. This value kept him from making general comments about faculty as a whole. During each interview, he talked about this value in some way. It was most clearly described during our first meeting.

From a very young age, my father would always stop me when I would generalize. A lot of my values came from my upbringing and talking about them. My dad was always saying to me, don't assume. Don't generalize. He's always pushing me to get to the center of an issue. You know, every person is different. You can group people but even within a grouping, there are variations. And so it's important to me that you get to know the individual themselves. So, I think you've really got to try and figure people out for who they really are.

Although Tommy would not share his beliefs and perceptions about faculty because he saw this as stereotyping, he did say that the key role of faculty is to serve as educators. He also mentioned discussions from his graduate classes about collaboration between student affairs and faculty. He remembered professors and classmates talking about how the two groups "butt heads a lot" and "don't usually try to collaborate because it's very competitive." He remembered a conversation about faculty and student affairs professionals serving as educators, and how faculty sometimes view student affairs professionals "as the ones who just play games with students."

During the second and third interviews, Tommy shared that his beliefs about faculty and, specifically, his value to see them as individuals had not changed. He said, "Everyone is different, and you have to evaluate everyone on an individual basis." We talked about what he had been exposed to in terms of faculty since starting as a new RLC. He shared that he had not met any faculty personally. What he had heard about faculty came from conversations with this

students and information he gathered from peers and his supervisor. Tommy shared that the impressions he had gathered from students reinforced his belief that faculty are all different.

I see the good and the bad. I think it's like any campus. You have your good ones. You have your faculty who are more focused on the research side and the ones that only care about the teaching part of it. Right now the students are complaining a lot about a new way that a math class is being taught. But I tend to not want to believe the students because they're prone to over exaggerate things.

This line of thought was echoed in the next interview.

I think that without sitting in a class and experiencing it, or really talking to them, I don't feel I can form an opinion because all I have is the students. And honestly, usually it is not students talking about good professors. It is always about the bad professors. Like anything else, when you have bad service, you're going to complain about it. When you have good service, you are not necessarily going to tell anyone.

Tommy noted that he tended to believe more of what his RAs, supervisor, or co-workers think about faculty than what the general student population tends to think. However, conversations about faculty with his co-workers rarely occurred. He could only remember two times that he had spoken with another RLC about faculty at Cogentia University. He concluded our conversation about the influence of others on his beliefs and perceptions about faculty by saying, "We hear what we hear from students. We hear what we hear from our people. We don't ever get to the other areas to figure out what is really going on." In clarifying this, Tommy pointed out that individual RLCs are not expected to engage with faculty. Doing so is encouraged, but not required. Even if it was required, Tommy shared other deterrents that prohibit RLCs and faculty collaboration. They are similar to ones mentioned by the other new

RLCs: the challenges of being in a new position and the variety of duties and responsibilities of the position. Tommy noted that much of his time as a new RLC has been spent learning about the job. He also noted that being an RLC has many more components to it than being an RA – something he had underestimated. When I asked him if he had thought about our previous conversations or about faculty since our last meeting he said, “No.” He laughed as he started discussing the many other topics on his mind and the many other tasks he has to do. “You’ve got to start kicking things out of your brain eventually.”

Like other study participants, Tommy would move the conversation from beliefs and perceptions about faculty to other academic-related issues, such as academic programs in the residence halls, the first-year seminar course, or the new course-tracking system. Although not the focus of this study, discussion of these issues showed that the residence life participants do think about academic and student affairs collaboration and believe residence life has a responsibility to engage in collaboration. Although Tommy did not want to commit to defining his beliefs and perceptions about faculty, he had clear opinions about two related issues: the division of student affairs and academic affairs at Cogentia University and that residence life can do more to bridge the gap with faculty.

There is a very strong divide between student affairs and faculty here. It’s just an observation. We don’t talk to faculty. We’re like, oh, faculty should be doing this, but we don’t actually go talk to them, to the faculty.

Tommy shared his impression of what residence life is doing to engage faculty. He spoke of the academic initiatives committee and some of the initiatives they have implemented. To him, more personal connections between faculty and residence life staff are necessary. He identifies the demands of their jobs as contributing to staff’s inability to initiate and implement

more faculty interactions. He shared an example of a program he had hoped to implement – *Faculty Fellows*. Although he has had an opportunity to share the program idea with his supervisor, he hasn't had time to develop the details or begin implementation. When talking about that experience and the academic initiatives committee, Tommy focused on the importance of change.

Everybody's got to get done what they have to get done, but you know, at the same time, if we're always doing the same old thing, nothing is going to get better. We're going to stay stagnant. We're not going to grow. We're not going to change or improve what we deliver to our students.

During our final interview, Tommy noted that the RLCs have a lot of autonomy when it comes to deciding what they want to focus on in their halls. He said nothing keeps him from working more closely with faculty, except that other responsibilities take precedence. He also noted that more direction and guidance from experienced staff would be helpful.

We're very much left open to do what we want in the halls and I just haven't found that opportunity yet to really spearhead the *Faculty Fellows* program. But yeah, it's just – it's not that it's not part of our job, it is just that we are so, I guess left to do whatever we are going to do that we don't necessarily think about it all of the time and what we need to do to get done with the ideas or concepts we have. But, you know, me as a new hall director, I just haven't figured out yet what that might mean. How do I get there?

I think having someone with some experience talk about how they did it, who they talked to – at least that would point you in the right direction. You know, at least that could give you an initial contact.

Tommy is optimistic about the future and is happy about his new career direction and his decision to become an RLC at Cogentia. He feels the RLC position aligns better with his values than his past position in business. He has ideas for ways to collaborate with faculty, but like other new RLCs, has had to focus on other responsibilities. He noted several of the key job components that he has had to address, such as conducting judicial hearings, supervising staff, and working with hall government. He continues to see the value in faculty and student affairs collaboration, but isn't sure what that means for him personally, or if he will have time to give it much thought.

### **The Buddy Relationships**

**Introduction.** A component of this study was to gather information and data to determine if peer relationships or influences impact new RLCs' beliefs and perceptions about faculty. Gathering data about the intragroup dialogue that occurred amongst RLCs supports Magolda's (2005) call for the student affairs culture and the faculty culture to learn more about their own cultural actions, beliefs, and interpretations. Magolda (2005) called such investigations "internal audits" (p. 20). Arcelus (2008) reinforces the need to uncover intragroup dialogue and the messages, values, and norms that are promoted within a culture. Arcelus (2008) writes:

Student affairs intragroup dialogue allows staff to take a step back from their day-to-day work to assess their current approach by asking themselves and each other what theories and philosophies serve as the foundation of their work, how they view student, how they view faculty, how they describe the relationship between their division and academic affairs, and how much student learning is emphasized in their practice (p. 385).

The Buddy Program pairs new RLCs with experienced RLCs. The primary role of the experienced RLCs is to assist the new RLC with the transition to the position, university, and

city. The pairs are assigned before the new RLC arrives on campus. The experienced buddies may choose to communicate with their partner prior to the official start of the new position.

New RLCs and the buddies were interviewed three times during this study. Similar questions were asked of all of the RLCs. To uncover data pertinent to this study, RLCs were asked about their beliefs and perceptions. They were also asked to describe the relationship they have with their buddy and if they think that relationship affected their beliefs and perceptions about faculty. The subsequent narratives will describe the buddy relationships. These narratives include details about the experienced RLCs. Conclusions related to the impact of the partnerships on beliefs and perceptions about faculty are shared.

**Elizabeth and Mary.** Elizabeth and Mary were assigned to one another for the peer buddy program. Elizabeth is the new RLC, and Mary is the experienced RLC. Mary is in her third year as an RLC at Cogentia. She oversees Jefferson Hall, a group of suite-style, apartment-like residences for upper-class students. Elizabeth's building, Washington Hall, is an all-female residence with a mix of upper-class students and freshmen.

One of the main reasons that Mary and Elizabeth were assigned together is that neither had worked in residence life prior to becoming RLCs at Cogentia. This made sense because Elizabeth was concerned about her lack of residence life experience and how that might impact her success as an RLC. Through interviews with her, it became clear that her concerns were unwarranted. She described how she addressed the challenges of the position, for example, confronting uncooperative RAs. The actions Elizabeth took to address supervisory challenges were logical, in line with departmental procedures, and supportive of the RA and hall residents. This is one example that shows how Elizabeth's lack of residence hall experience had not affected her ability to do well as an RLC. She and the other new RLCs experienced similar

challenges. Elizabeth seemed to have no problems acclimating to the position and carrying out her duties effectively. She described learning how to manage a variety of tasks, such as, addressing student concerns and completing administrative duties.

Mary is in her third year as an RLC. Prior to coming to Cogentia, she earned her master's degree in student personnel administration. While doing so, she held a graduate assistantship with Athletics in their student academic support area. Mary's mentors are some of the instructors from her graduate program. She described her mentors as faculty who cared about her outside of the classroom.

During our first meeting, Mary explained how her hall is very different from the others. It is more like an apartment complex than a residence hall. She noted that students tend to stay in their suites. As upper-class students, she described them as busier and not in the building as often as first year students. Mary believes faculty should be involved in out-of-classroom initiatives, but believes that little of that occurs at Cogentia. She shared that programs are held for her residents; however, there is no mandate to involve faculty in the hall events. She did provide examples of hall programs where faculty were involved. To Mary, it is important that students interact with faculty for the opportunity to see them in a "different light." She said, "I think that people get to see that they're human and that they don't just grade papers. It gives faculty a chance to show that they are normal, too."

Mary attributes the lack of faculty participation to the size of the institution. When comparing her experience with faculty at Cogentia to her past, Mary focused on institutional size.

You don't interact with faculty as much here unless you are on a committee. I had a lot more interaction with faculty when I was an undergrad. I don't know if it was the school

size of the culture of the school. It is a difference of 7,000-10,000 students. I feel that at my former institution, I was more connected with faculty than I am here.

At my old school, it was medium-sized, 12,000 students. The culture of the university is that you had interactions with faculty. They encouraged office hours. I feel here sometimes, listening to students that they [faculty] are not accommodating to students.

She also believes faculty are focused on teaching and research, and are not interested in engaging with students outside the classroom. Mary noted a divide between academic and student affairs at Cogentia, but also said new initiatives were helping to close that divide. Mary observed that it is difficult for her to evaluate faculty at Cogentia because she is not a student and therefore isn't attending classes. Mary sees faculty and student affairs as similar: "We're educators, too, because there is a lot more than just what's shared in the classroom."

Of the eight RLCs interviewed, Mary is the only one who took the initiative to establish a relationship with a faculty member. This stood out because Mary is not required to have faculty involved in her residence hall. Yet she did, because she felt it was important to show appreciation to the faculty member and to advance their relationship. As a way to encourage RLCs to dine with faculty, they are given extra funds for meals. The faculty member Mary took to lunch was involved in *Rock the Vote* program in Jefferson Hall. Mary saw this opportunity as a way to get to know more about the faculty member. She was unsure where the relationship would lead after the lunch, but she did enjoy talking with the professor and believes their connection may lead to future collaborations.

As a buddy, Mary sees herself as a mentor. Her main goal with Elizabeth was to encourage her to trust herself and her decisions. She talked about supporting Elizabeth, letting her know it is acceptable to make mistakes. Mary and Elizabeth's partnership was not very close.

They interacted at the start of the semester during the training period, but then disconnected.

Both admitted that they were busy with other things. They also attributed their lack of interaction to distance: their halls are on different parts of campus. Elizabeth said she built relationships with the RLCs in halls closer because it was easier for them to get together. Elizabeth noted that she felt she could go to Mary if she had a problem or question, but it was more convenient to call on the experienced RLCs near her.

Mary and Elizabeth had similar beliefs and perceptions about faculty. Both believe faculty should engage with students outside of the classroom. Both believe faculty dedicate their time and energy to their academic discipline, teaching, and research. Elizabeth seemed to have more defined beliefs and perceptions about faculty, and talked about them in more detail. Elizabeth spoke of specific faculty roles and how their many responsibilities make it challenging for them to engage in out of class experiences with students. Mary's responses to questions about faculty focused more on their involvement in residence hall programs than her specific views of faculty. Mary and Elizabeth did not indicate that they were aware of each other's beliefs and perceptions about faculty; they never talked to one another about them. The lack of interaction, plus the absence of conversation about faculty beliefs and perceptions, leads one to believe that their buddy partnership did not impact those beliefs and perceptions.

**Nicholas and Susan.** Nicholas and Susan were paired together for the Buddy System. Nicholas, a new RLC, was assigned to the residence hall that Susan had previously managed. Susan was familiar with various aspects of Nicholas' hall, including the returning students, the facilities, and the custodial staff. Being buddies allowed Susan to share her knowledge about the hall and assist Nicholas with his transition.

Susan, a third-year RLC, oversees Eisenhower Hall, a predominantly freshmen, co-ed hall. Susan has a bachelor's in business and a master's of education with an emphasis in college student leadership. As an undergraduate she worked as a resident assistant and a statistician for athletics. Susan had a unique experience as an undergraduate. During her sophomore year, her college moved from an urban location, where students were commuters, to a more rural area that provided space for residence halls. With that move, the college had to create an entire residence life department. So, as an RA, Susan was part of starting a program from scratch. As a result, programming models that may have included faculty engagement were not in place. She was not required to promote faculty involvement with her residents. Further, in Susan's opinion, the creation of residence life and other student affairs departments was very separate from academic affairs. She doesn't recall connections between the two.

Faculty was not involved whatsoever with our programming. We didn't have programming until my senior year, so bringing in faculty would never have crossed my mind. We were more focused on getting students connected to each other, to the campus, and then to the academic side. It was a very small school – literally, here's our academic building, some grass, and our residence hall. It would have been very easy for them (faculty) to come into the residence hall, but they did not. We did not ever have any sort of program with them. There was never a negative connotation. It's not that they wouldn't do it. It just never crossed my mind.

One of Susan's favorite professors was a faculty member in the management department. She recalled, "He really didn't care what your major was. He just wanted you to be a good student and to pay attention." Susan appreciated his willingness to "show his personality" and talk about more than management. Although Susan enjoyed some components of business, she

didn't enjoy math. Her father encouraged her to stay with business, even though she never quite saw herself as a career businesswoman. She enjoyed her RA experience and was strongly encouraged by her supervisor and a student activities coordinator to pursue a career in higher education.

Susan believes faculty need to interact with students outside the classroom. She also believes faculty would be well served to learn more about student affairs professionals.

I know their role is definitely to teach and educate today's students, but we do the same. Even though they think we throw pizza parties and give out T-shirts – that is the perception. I think it would help them see that we do more than just that. We do intentional programs. We do diversity programs. We do programs that are heavy on the heart and on the mind.

Susan describes herself as someone who needs to see something in order to believe it. "I'm one of those people who need to see the evidence or I need to see the dirt," she said. Susan implied that "dirt" was evidence that would lead her to have a negative perception of the issue or person involved. In addition, Susan's perceptions are shaped by what she hears from her students. During interviews, she provided several examples of conversations with RAs and residents who spoke with her about concerns they were having with faculty. In two of the cases, students were trying to reach a faculty member to discuss an issue. In both cases, the faculty member was not responding to emails or phone calls. This reinforced Susan's perception that faculty aren't easily accessible. She talked about a student who had a question about a test grade.

I think you would try to be more available to help them see why they get a bad grade or if there was a miscalculation. I know it is stressful for faculty to teach and do everything

else they have to do, but I wish they would just respond. So – but maybe, I’m biased towards my students.

The student conversations supported Susan’s perception that faculty are mostly on campus to teach; however, in one conversation she shared a broader perspective.

I know that they’re here to teach, and I see the goodness. I generally believe they [faculty] are good people. The students they are concerned about, they have a right to be concerned about – students who aren’t prioritizing their classes and who are not doing their homework.

Susan is one of the RLCs who shared that her thinking about faculty had changed since the start of the semester. A personal experience prompted the change. Susan had the desire to help Cogentia start a Women’s Resource Center. She had experience with one at a past institution. Susan set a personal goal to talk with a faculty member who might have a similar interest and desire to create a Women’s Resource Center at Cogentia. During our last meeting, Susan said she had found the name of a faculty member in the Women’s Studies department. She was someone Susan thought would be a good contact. Susan emailed her, but didn’t receive a response. After doing more investigating, Susan found that this person had responsibilities beyond teaching. It made her wonder if faculty are occupied with other duties.

I have contacted this lovely woman in women’s studies, and she’s not getting back to me. Maybe they’re just too busy. That’s kind of how I feel right now. So, I feel like maybe they are overextended and can’t do more to reach out, other than to teach.

Of the buddy pairs, Nicholas and Susan had communicated and interacted most frequently. Both said they talked to one another on a daily basis and saw one another weekly. Their face-to-face interactions went beyond the weekly staff meeting. At the start of the

semester, Susan had prepared resources to assist Nicholas with his transition. She had specific items she planned to review with him including tips related to community guidelines, judicial cases, programming, and upcoming Welcome Week events.

As the semester went on, their discussions moved on to particular situations that Nicholas was dealing with related to supervision and student behavior. Both Susan and Nicholas confirmed that in all of their conversations they never spoke specifically about faculty or their beliefs and perceptions about faculty. They did discuss programs connected to academics, like Nicholas' time management program and Starfish (a software program that allows faculty to notify students about poor class performance). Susan attributed their lack of communication about faculty to their type of residence halls. She said, "We just don't talk about faculty. We have the same type of building. We don't have faculty interaction. We don't have living learning communities."

Nicholas and Susan have similar beliefs and perceptions about faculty. Both view the primary role of faculty to be educating in their academic disciplines. They believe it is important for faculty to be involved with students outside of the classroom; however, they believe other responsibilities interfere with faculty's ability to do so. Nicholas believes smaller institutions promote more collaboration between students, faculty and staff. Susan had a different experience, at her small undergraduate institution, where academic affairs and student affairs were very separate entities. Both have heard negative stories about faculty from their students; however, both concede that they are only hearing one side of those stories and students rarely share positive experiences. Nicholas believes campus culture has an impact on the interaction between faculty, staff, and students. He is still learning about Cogentia's culture and how it impacts the relationships he and his students have with faculty. Both Susan and Nicholas base

some of their beliefs on what they see. Both talked about not seeing faculty on campus and used that as reinforcement of their belief that faculty are not readily accessible to students.

Nicholas described Susan as supportive. Both had positive comments about their buddy experience. By the end of the semester, each referred to the other as a friend and said some of the time they spend together is social and occurs outside of work hours. They have a close relationship that includes frequent interaction and open communication, and seems to be mutually supportive. Of the four RLC buddy pairs, Susan and Nicholas seemed to have the closest relationship with the most communication. Although they had conversations about academic programs (Nicholas' time management program) and Starfish, both said that they never talked about faculty. As a result, it makes sense to draw the conclusion that their interactions with one another did not impact their beliefs and perceptions about faculty. Since they had the closest buddy relationship I wonder how their view about faculty would have been affected if they would have had conversations about faculty.

**Tommy and David.** Tommy and David were paired together for the Buddy Program. Their residence halls sit no more than 50 yards apart, yet are different in structure and function. Kennedy Hall, managed by Tommy, is a traditional hall with predominantly freshman, two-person rooms, and community baths. Roosevelt Hall, managed by David, is a mix of freshmen and upper-class students and is made up of suite-style rooms. Roosevelt Hall houses two living learning communities, one for music and one designated specifically for transfer students. Kennedy Hall has no special designations and caters predominantly to first-year students.

During each interview, the buddy partners were asked to describe their interactions with one another, including whether they had talked about faculty. Tommy and David said the most intense interactions they had together occurred during the first part of the semester, specifically

during RLC training. Their conversations would center on topics being discussed during training. After that, they would interact at departmental meetings and occasionally over meals. They never discussed faculty at Cogentia. Tommy said he had developed relationships with the RLCs in neighboring residence halls. He noted that each seemed to have a difference expertise or viewpoint, and he would ask for assistance from any of his peers if he needed advice or help. Their lack of interaction and the absence of conversation about faculty make it difficult to connect their partnership to their views about faculty. One can conclude that Tommy and David's buddy relationship did not impact their beliefs or perceptions about faculty; however, interviewing David uncovered more data for this study.

David is a fourth-year RLC. Of the RLCs interviewed, he has the most years of experience. He earned his bachelor's in criminology at Cogentia. In addition to his professional residence life experience at Cogentia, he worked as an RA and was a student assistant for the Director of Residence Life, as an undergraduate. The director encouraged David to consider a career in student affairs. After graduating from Cogentia, David went on to graduate school at another institution and earned a master's in counselor education with a concentration in student affairs. He completed three practicum experiences in these areas, recreation services, Greek life, and a bridge program at a community college. David returned to residence life at Cogentia for his first post-graduate professional experience.

"I enjoyed being here as a student and I enjoy being here now as a staff member," David said, "and as far as faculty members, I've had positive relationships as a student and now as an employee." When asked about a faculty member who stood out to him as an undergraduate, David spoke about a professor who served as his academic advisor, not one who was teaching his classes. This person helped him hone in on his major.

She was never a professor or a teacher of mine; she was my advisor. When I came in, I was going to be a music major, but technically I was undeclared. I forget exactly where we met, but we were talking and she was really nice. I was struggling to figure out what I wanted to do and she offered to talk. After that I went to my advisor's office, got my folder, and took it to her. She became my advisor. She helped me figure out what I wanted to do and what I didn't want to do.

David's perspective could be considered unique among RLCs, since he was an undergraduate student at Cogentia. One might assume that he has several connections with faculty from his undergraduate experience; however, he actually has relationships with different faculty that have developed since he became an RLC.

As an RLC in a hall with living learning communities, David worked with faculty. Of the eight RLCs interviewed, he had the most contact with faculty. With the music living learning community he met with faculty because music classes are taught in the residence hall. He sponsored social events between music faculty and students and negotiated with music faculty about purchasing a new piano for the hall. In previous years, David worked with faculty to be part of hall programs; however, negotiating to provide resources for students is a new experience – one he finds challenging.

Besides interacting with the music faculty, David has made connections with faculty from the College of Business. David and Susan, another experienced RLC, had participated in professional development program on personal finances. The program was led by Cogentia business faculty. David connected with three of the presenters and has maintained those relationships. They have since been a part of programs in Roosevelt Hall. David's connections with them helped him connect with another faculty member.

A guy showed up at the front door yesterday. He was an alumnus who had lived here 30 years ago, and he just got hired as the dean of the business department. He was talking, and I told him who I know in the department. I was naming them, and he knew them. It was pretty cool to be able to talk about folks he'll be working with. He is still connected to the other guys who lived in his suite. There were 16 of them. He said one's a lawyer now. One's a doctor. So, we've already started talking about bringing them in to do a panel for students who are considering those careers.

David said his beliefs and perceptions about faculty have been shaped by his own experiences as a student, the relationships he has with faculty, and what he hears from students. Similar to the other RLCs, David highlighted conversations with RAs and students that focused on challenges they had with faculty. Moreover, like the others, he pointed out that students have good experiences with faculty, but rarely share those. In contrast to the other RLCs, David said the most significant variable to shape his beliefs and perceptions was a time-use study he was required to complete as a summer project.

If you would have asked me this a year ago, it would have been – they're jealous of the money we have in our department. They don't play well in the sandbox with us. They don't want to partner because we have events at 7, 8, 9 o'clock. They wouldn't consider being involved. In some cases, that is all still true. From what I hear from students, they can never find a professor. They are always doing research, and they don't want to meet outside the class. They're not helping me.

These were some of David's views before he had the opportunity to complete a time-use study. As part of the study he worked with the Associate Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs for Residence Life and Dining. The study brought together faculty and staff from departments

throughout campus. David helped facilitate discussions about faculty perceptions of student affairs and student affairs perceptions about faculty.

There's not a place for us to sit down and have a conversation. In that setting – at that one event, they [faculty] got to say what they think of housing professionals and student affairs – what their perceptions are of us and then we were able to talk about our perceptions of them. I have a much more positive view of faculty now than I did a year ago.

David noted that attendees were able to share information, clarify beliefs, and confront negative perceptions. “We were able to share what we do on a daily basis,” he said, “and they were able to talk about all they do. I think it ended up helping to bridge that gap and that understanding.” David is unsure if these conversations will continue in this format. He believes the leadership in Student Affairs wants to promote these opportunities for discussion across divisions, but he knows there are other priorities and wonders who has the responsibility for leading such initiatives. David believes that others in student affairs will look to the leadership in residence life to continue these efforts, since they spearheaded the first time-use study. Like the other RLCs, David notes competing job responsibilities as constraining his ability to pursue new initiatives. He also wonders if he is in the appropriate position or at the appropriate level in the institution to lead such initiatives.

It's probably going to have to be initiated by us [staff in Residence Life and Dining]. We haven't done anything in three months. We're just kind of waiting for someone to step up. I'm willing to go and I'm willing to help, but I'm not necessarily at the level that I would even want to be to bring it up. It's definitely something that has to come from the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. If you get invited to something by her, you're going

to go. Is that my role to try to initiate those things beyond what I'm just trying to do for my building? Should I send out those invitations? Is it the role of an entry-level or new professional?

**Nancy and Joannie.** Nancy, a new RLC, and Joannie, a third year RLC, were paired as buddies. Both manage first-year experience residence halls and they co-teach a first-year seminar course together. Their responsibilities require them to spend quite a bit of time together. They communicate almost daily to plan their class and discuss work issues. Both described their relationship in positive terms. Nancy has felt supported by Joannie. Joannie takes her role as a buddy seriously and feels responsible for helping Nancy with her transition to Cogentia and the RLC position. Nancy talked about Joannie and their partnership.

She is a really good work buddy. She is very knowledgeable about the position. She will send me documents I can use. She will call me on Tuesday morning and say, "Hey. What's up?" I forget I am in a new place and I have to be patient with some things, so these ideas I have, I run them by her. I rely a lot on my past experiences and I think she does the same thing. She gives me advice and says, "Here is what I've learned over the past few years."

As RLCs for the first-year experience halls they are required to provide programming that assists freshmen with their transition to college. They are encouraged to involve faculty in their programming efforts. Although this is the case, and both Joannie and Nancy confirm that they talked quite often, they also shared that discussions about faculty were rare. Along with Alice, the Assistant Director for Academic Initiatives, the pair talked about faculty when planning the large social event at the start of the semester. This was the program in which faculty were to interact with students in an informal setting. Two faculty members participated in

Nancy's hall and four in Joannie's. Besides their discussions about faculty in regards to this program, Nancy and Joannie shared that they haven't talked about faculty very much. When asked what they discussed Nancy shared concerns about the challenges RLCs have with getting faculty involved in the residence halls. Joannie, other peers, and Alice have shared with her that faculty are too busy, expect to be paid for additional work, or live too far from campus to return for programs. "These are things I hear from my peers. I think they have tried hard to work with faculty in the past and haven't been successful. I really don't know all of the challenges, because I haven't been involved before." Nancy said. In her own reflection on the faculty program and why faculty might not have attended, Joannie pointed to the different work styles of student affairs and faculty.

In student affairs, I think we're very focused on planning. You know, ten days out. We want everything set in stone. The professors are more like, "Well, let's see. We'll go with the flow." As a department we are into processing. What were the pros? What were the cons? What were the hits? What were the misses? We are planners. I think that is our field as a whole. I think it is more trial and error than the faculty.

She went on to provide an example of how she sees professors making adjustments and "going with the flow". Pretending she was a faculty member, she said, "Okay. Let's read this book. Okay. Didn't like this book. Not going to put that book on the syllabus next year." In contrast to student affairs professionals, she views faculty as making decisions without needing or soliciting input from others.

Like the other RLCs, Joannie's views about faculty are shaped by her own experiences as a student, her experiences as an RLC, and by what she hears from students. However, unlike the others, Joannie has an even more influential component to her life that has shaped her views

about faculty. Joannie's mother is a professor. As a child Joannie was raised in a small town near the small college campus where her mother worked as a professor of dance. Joannie's friends were children of faculty. Joannie often spent time with her mother while she worked and was often asked to participate in college's dance performances. Through these experiences, and the influence of her mother, Joannie began her own college experience with a strong view of who faculty were and what they did. What stood out most to her were conversations she had with her mother about student behavior and respect towards faculty.

I think that I was very privileged to see the university from that side. I think that growing up as a faculty child it was never a question of whether or not I was going to college. This is what you do. I've had the opportunity to see how hard it is for faculty sometimes. I was more gracious when I was in college. I remember my mom talking about students – the good ones and the irritating ones - knowing that there were two paths to take in being a student. Knowing there was an appropriate way to act as a college student.

Where other RLCs believe that smaller institutions promote more faculty, student affairs, and student interaction, Joannie has the opposite belief. We will refer to her mother's institution as Monroe College. Today Monroe College has an enrollment of 2,400 students; the number was less during the years that Joannie and her mother were part of the college community. While she was growing up Joannie didn't know anything about student affairs. With the institution being so small, this was surprising to her. She didn't learn about student affairs until she became an RA at her undergraduate institution. Her mother was unfamiliar with student affairs as well. Joannie had to explain to her what student affairs was and the type of career she would be pursuing. She returned to Monroe one summer to complete an internship while working on her master's degree. Joannie describes an experience she had during her internship.

Monroe is very segregated between student affairs and faculty interactions. I got to stay home for the internship and see the other side [student affairs]. This was interesting because looking back I never saw anything in student affairs. We would go to faculty picnics, but it was never with student affairs people. They may have been there, but my mom just didn't know them and I never remember them.

Growing up Joannie remembers how it seemed like everyone at Monroe knew her mother and how they would be excited to learn that Joannie was her daughter. During her internship, no one knew Joannie or her mom. As a result of internship experience, Joannie doesn't subscribe to the idea that smaller institutions promote more collaboration.

It was a very odd experience because I spent my life growing up on this campus. How could you not know me? Not that I'm so important, but how is it so segregated, when it is just a square block of a campus? Growing up we went to church with the President of Monroe and his family. We spent time at his home and went to different parties and events there. How can I essentially know the President personally and not know that there is this entire entity of practitioners working solely with students and their experiences outside of the classroom?

Since earning her master's in college student affairs leadership and working in residence life for three years, Joannie still subscribes to the belief that faculty and student affairs function separately. She sees a similar separation between faculty and student affairs at Cogentia as she did at Monroe. When asked to describe faculty she used these terms: "academic-minded" and "focused on research". She noted that there are faculty who are willing to work with students outside of the classroom and who care about individual student success. She believes it is important for faculty to be involved with student learning outside of the classroom, but has an

awareness of the other demands placed on them. Not only did she talk about the role of faculty from this big picture perspective, but she talked about them as individuals. She pointed out that they are like student affairs professionals in that they are each driven by individual goals. For example, faculty members may have specific goals related to publishing research articles or books. She supports the idea that faculty should be working on achieving those personal goals. She said, “I think they should go after whatever it is they are seeking.” Joannie’s belief that faculty members have personal career goals included the belief that those goals may or may not include educating students outside of the classroom or collaborating with student affairs.

As part of this study, over the course of the semester, the change in beliefs and perceptions about faculty was discussed. Joannie’s views about faculty were consistent until our last interview. At the end of the semester she explained that she had become more sympathetic towards faculty and some of the challenges they face with students. She had a student who had missed the final in her class after Joannie had provided the students with several reminders about the exam.

Now that I’m done teaching and we’ve come to the end of the semester it reminded me of what faculty deal with. I know that sense of when you feel like you’re putting so much energy into something and it doesn’t matter. I just don’t understand how students could miss a final when they have been reminded, when it is on the syllabus.

I think about times when students come back to me and talk about how a professor was so mean because he didn’t grant an exception. I want to be compassionate from the student affairs side. We are trained to take the students side, but when you’re on the other side of it you understand why faculty have to maintain a level of consistency.

As Joannie contemplated the experiences and people who have shaped her views about faculty, she concluded that her more recent experiences as an RLC have been most impactful. She contends that the ability to reflect upon and analyze all of her experiences, as well as the ability to consider all sides of an issue, shaped her current views.

I think that obviously growing up a faculty child has an impact on your life. But I think as I get older and have more experiences in the college realm, it definitely is more my personal experiences as opposed to maybe those perceived notions of when I was growing up, or even when I was in undergrad or grad school, that influence my beliefs, because now I see both sides. You weigh ideas a little bit more. It's about balancing it all out, seeing it from all sides simultaneously, and figuring it out.

Nancy and Joannie view collaboration with faculty as important, however both can point to issues that inhibit collaboration, such as busy faculty schedules. Nancy's past experience has provided her with evidence that faculty can and do want to be engaged with students outside of the classroom. Joannie's experience with faculty at Cogentia has reinforced some of her views that faculty are focused on many different tasks and are not as readily available to assist with out-of-classroom initiatives. As buddies, Nancy and Joannie talk and interact with one another quite often. They have discussed faculty at Cogentia on occasion. Although conversations about faculty are rare, Nancy has heard messages about faculty from Joannie and Alice that have made her question some of her earlier views about faculty. One of the specific messages was related to faculty's lack of willingness to participate in programs because they have to return to campus in the evenings or because they are not being compensated for participating. This message was reinforced when so few faculty attended the first faculty program in the FYE halls. Nancy still has positive views about faculty, seeing them as supportive of out of classroom learning and

willing to collaborative with student affairs. She thinks that some of the perceptions she has gained this semester may be indicative of Cogentia. She also thinks that new and different strategies should be tried at Cogentia in order to find “friendly faculty” who will participate in residence hall programs. Based on a review of Joannie and Nancy, one could conclude that the interaction between peers can influence beliefs and perceptions. It is important to note, however, that Nancy’s slight change in perception was also caused in part by messages she heard from her RAs, other staff in residence life, and her own interaction with faculty at Cogentia.

**Summary.** The RLCs in the Buddy Program and their interactions were studied to see if interactions between new and experienced RLCs had any influence over beliefs and perceptions about faculty. There is a small amount of evidence that interaction between an experienced RLC and a new RLC may result in the new RLC changing their views about faculty. The Buddy Program is one component of the socialization that occurs for new RLCs as they acclimate to their new position, department, and university. Socialization involves the passing on of cultural messages from experienced members of a group to new members of a group. In this study the cultural messages being examined were those related to thoughts, feelings, and opinions about faculty.

Of the four buddy pairs, only one, Nancy and Joannie, showed evidence that messages about faculty were shared. The messages were about lack of faculty involvement in a residence hall program and why that occurred. Nancy said she had a slight change in her beliefs and perceptions about faculty, but attributed it only in part to messages she heard from Joannie. Those messages were reinforced by her RAs and Nancy’s own experience at Cogentia. Although Joannie’s opinions may have affected Nancy’s, they were not the sole cause of Nancy’s expanded perceptions. Two other pairs -- Tommy and David, and Elizabeth and Mary -- had

much less one-on-one conversation and none discussed faculty. The final pair, Nicholas and Susan, had the closest buddy relationship with the most interaction and communication, but they also never discussed faculty.

### **The Supervisors**

**Carol.** Carol is the Director of Residence Life. She has over twenty-six years of experience in residence life and has been working at Cogentia since 1994. She is responsible for overseeing all components of residence life, including the RLCs, RAs, and neighborhood service desks. Her goal is to promote an environment where students can reach their academic and personal goals. Initiatives under her purview include academic programs, staff selection and training, programming, hall government, student conduct, living learning communities, and more. The new RLCs report directly to Carol.

The rationale for interviewing Carol for this study was two-fold: 1. to learn about her beliefs and perceptions about faculty and how she obtained those and, 2. to learn more about the department's initiatives in terms of working with faculty. Carol found her way into student affairs after serving as a Community Advisor during her undergraduate experience. Although she graduated with a degree in elementary education, she enjoyed being a CA so much that she decided to pursue opportunities as a housing professional. This led her to the Osh Kosh Placement Exchange where she selected her graduate program and obtained a position as a graduate hall director.

As a graduate hall director, Carol remembers that faculty programs were a part of residence life's mission. We talked about faculty engagement at that institution.

I don't know that it was necessarily required, but I would say it was highly encouraged.

The university focused a lot on value-added experiences. It was a lot about academics

and adding value to your degree. So, we did have interaction with faculty. I was in charge of getting different faculty to come into the hall and do presentations. It was about getting to know faculty as people, outside of classroom instruction – to show students that they were people and to help build that connection.

Carol's early experiences with faculty have stayed with her. She continues to see student affairs as supporting the academic mission of the university.

Our main role is to support the academic side of the university. The faculty set that. They have standards, curriculum, and learning outcomes to achieve. Their main job is to teach the student what they need to know in their respective discipline. I do think that the role of faculty, just like the role of everyone else, has expanded.

Many of the examples that Carol shared had to do with the relationships between a faculty member and an individual student. When talking about the value of those relationships, Carol sees a benefit for both the professor and the student.

I think it is an addition for both of them. The rewards are strong. They [the professor] have a protégé. The student gets to work closely with someone and may even get to work on a research project. Sometimes that relationship opens up their eyes. They learn about each other's lives.

Carol sees the possible, positive outcomes that can occur between a faculty member and a student; however, she is also aware of challenges posed by roles and authority. She described how a faculty member must think about the persona they wish to have in their role as teacher, how they wish to be viewed by their students, and the responsibility that they have in terms of grading and evaluating work. She said, "They have the ability to give students a grade, to change their life, and determine whether they are moving on to the next class or not." A faculty

member's awareness of their role as an authority figure and a desire to maintain clear boundaries with students may prohibit faculty from wanting to engage with students beyond the classroom. Carol wonders if encouraging faculty to interact with students, outside the classroom, isn't stifled by students wanting time apart from faculty. When thinking about faculty in the residence hall, from the student's perspective, she wondered, "That's my professor. I'm learning a lot from him and I'm a little intimidated by him. What is he doing in my living room?"

In almost all cases, when talking about faculty, the RLCs discussed faculty involvement in residence hall programming or interpersonal conflicts between students and faculty. Carol's view of the role of faculty and their interaction with student affairs was much broader. Not only did she talk about faculty engagement in programs and learning communities, but she touched on a topic not mentioned by the others: student well-being and behavior. Carol believes relationships between faculty and student affairs are critical so that information sharing about individual students occurs. In more recent years, she has noticed how student affairs has tried to reach out to faculty as a resource. Carol doesn't feel it is solely the faculty member's responsibility to address a student problem – that student affairs has the resources, skills, and staff to address student issues. She said, "Everybody's got more of a responsibility along those lines." She referenced recent high profile incidents – a shooting incident at Virginia Tech and a sexual misconduct incident at Penn State -- and then shared the following.

I think those situations heighten people's awareness. If you know of anything that could materialize and you're not sure what to do, better to err on the conservative side and let somebody know. You might have the piece of the puzzle that puts everything together. If a faculty member sees a student come to class intoxicated or having a big behavioral change - for example, at the beginning of the year the student is excited about class and

doing their work, now all of the sudden they aren't - the faculty member should let someone know.

She talked about faculty needing to be knowledgeable about the support services provided by student affairs and her desire that faculty will call on residence life should they have concerns about students.

I'm not expecting them [faculty] to be the one that listens to the students and solves the problem, but they should let someone know, or ask the student where they live, and encourage them to talk to a staff member in the hall. Faculty have called to let us know and say they are worried about a student. I've seen this happen more frequently. We need to let faculty know when and how to do that, when to draw the line, and when something might be a behavioral concern.

In addition, Carol believes that residence life staff members have a role in shaping student behavior in the classroom and addressing students' academic concerns. *Behind Closed Doors* is role-play training for RAs. Each new RA is faced with a situation and has to confront it. Examples of typical situations include dealing with intoxicated students or roommate conflicts. This year, Cogentia added some academic scenarios. RAs had to deal with scenarios in which students might be talking negatively about a professor or might be struggling with preparing for an exam. Carol believes that by adding these scenarios, and preparing RAs with positive strategies for addressing students' academic concerns, residence life has found another way to support the academic mission of Cogentia.

Besides the increased efforts to address concerns about student behavior, Carol has seen other changes that have advanced collaboration between faculty and student affairs. She shared increased interest in collaboration from upper administrators and a call from them to develop

initiatives that promote retention, make the best use of resources, and result in student learning outcomes. Increasing the number of living learning communities, recognizing student scholars, and involving faculty in programs were examples she gave. The addition of the Assistant Director of Academic Initiatives position, the academic initiatives committee, and first-year experience halls are others. Carol noted that RLCs in the first-year and living learning community halls tend to be the ones who work with faculty; however, all RLCs are strongly encouraged to do so.

In comparison to the RLCs, Carol has many more interactions with faculty. She sees faculty at meetings, works with them on committees and projects, and considers several to be friends. She believes that her connections with faculty are the result of three things: the length of time she has been at Cogentia, interpersonal relationships she has built with faculty through her community and family life, and the opportunities, resources, and support she can provide them by virtue of her position. Over time Carol has met and interacted with faculty for a variety of reasons. Serving on search committees, working with them to address student concerns, and meeting at university events are examples of how Carol has met faculty. Carol was even part of an “Academic Buddy” program that linked student affairs leaders with faculty members. Carol has also met faculty through community involvement and activities in which her children participate. She considers those faculty to be her friends and, as a result, people she can collaborate with at Cogentia.

When talking about the difference between working with faculty as a graduate hall director and working with them now, Carol discussed changes in her and in the authority of her position. Carol deems her ability to work with faculty as easier today than it was when she was a hall director. She attributes this to her experiences and her position.

It is so much easier now – just due to the experiences and the different connection points, and the understanding I have gained. It is easier for me to talk to faculty and approach them. It is easier for me to ask them to do something. I think when you are at this level, you can also give back more. When you're a hall director, you don't always have as much.

When discussing what she can “give” to faculty, Carol was referring to a variety of items, such as asking faculty to serve on committees, supporting faculty initiatives by sharing resources or facilities, and recognizing faculty involvement with university leaders. Her position power and authority give her the ability to offer support and opportunities to faculty. Conversely, the lack of years of experience and lack of authority make it more challenging for RLCs to engage with faculty.

Like the RLCs, discussions about faculty, with Carol, would move from discussing faculty to discussing any program or service geared towards academic support. Her responses echo the mission and vision of student affairs and residence life - to support and promote academics. Carol's perspectives about faculty, and how faculty and residence life should collaborate, were broader than those of the RLCs. She sees opportunities for collaboration beyond inviting faculty to residence hall programs, such as faculty communicating concerns about individual students and residence life providing living learning communities. She is aware that her years of experience, position power and authority, and connections in the community make it easier for her to meet and create relationships with faculty.

**Alice.** Alice serves as the Assistant Director for Academic Initiatives in residence life. She has worked in residence life at Cogentia since 1980 and has more than 30 years of experience in residence life. Her bachelor's and master's degrees are in criminology. The

majority of Alice's experience has been working with student behavior and crisis management. She moved into academic support programs, supervision, and assessment in recent years. Alice supervises some of the experienced RLCs, chairs the academic initiatives committee, and oversees the living learning communities. Through my conversations with the RLCs, I learned that Alice is the go-to leader for RLCs facing challenges related to academics. For example, Susan struggled while trying to connect with a faculty member in the Women's Center; she looked to Alice for advice and direction. Also, when several RLCs received negative student feedback about a math class, they shared this information with Alice and looked to her to take the information to the math department. Alice is busy. In addition, during the semester that this research was completed, she was involved heavily with assessment projects. We were able to complete only one interview. Alice also invited me to attend the living learning community faculty liaison meeting, where I could observe her and the participants.

Like several of the RLCs, Alice believes the role of faculty should extend beyond the classroom. She sees their primary role as teaching, but believes mentoring and supporting students to help students achieve their goals are also important. When talking about memories of her favorite faculty, Alice described them as "great mentors," people who cared about students, and who were not "possessive about their particular field."

They were just so very helpful with whatever you were doing. They were very supportive. They didn't care if you wandered around in other fields. It just mattered that you got a good education. One was the motherly type of faculty member. She published and did all this other stuff. I also had some good experiences in large classes, which other students did not. I had about 300-400 people in my botany class. The faculty member in that particular class took pictures of you and learned your name in a matter of weeks.

That class wasn't even required for my major, but I really enjoyed it because of the professor. There is now a building named after him on that campus.

Alice said her perceptions about faculty have changed over the years. She said, "As a young professional, I was just awed by faculty, simply because of the good faculty I had as an undergraduate student." The positive beliefs and perceptions Alice had about faculty from her undergraduate experience have provided her with an understanding of what faculty can do and can be. Alice had some less positive experiences with faculty in her graduate program. She felt some of those professors treated students as if each was a number. She described some of her graduate professors as unsupportive and unkind. Looking back, Alice has positive and negative perceptions and interactions with faculty that have stayed with her over the years. Some of these impressions are based on her own experiences, either as a student or student affairs professional. Some of these impressions are based on what she hears from students. She calls her experience with faculty "a mixed bag." She described faculty who did not seem to care about students and were sometimes even mean to them. She shared several examples of students who have had challenging situations with faculty. "I hear more sad stories than I do good ones," she said. On the other hand, she described Cogentia faculty who "mentor, reach out to students, feel responsible for students, and are really hands-on."

I took the opportunity to ask about her thoughts on faculty and student affairs collaboration. Alice said she has noticed increased conversations and efforts focused on collaboration over time. She noted an increased push from administration to collaborate as evidenced by requests for more collaborative programs with academics and more resources (staff time and funds) put towards such collaborations. Examples include: Alice's position, tutoring in the residence halls, and the establishment of living learning communities. Alice believes the

increased focus on collaboration is triggered by two factors. First, campus leaders are hearing about the positive results of collaboration on other campuses and are bringing those ideas back to their home institutions. Second, limited financial resources cause faculty and student affairs to depend on each other. To create, implement, and sustain initiatives, faculty have the ability to generate grant funding, and auxiliary services, like residence life, can contribute departmental revenue. From our conversation about faculty and student affairs collaboration:

When I was young, there was none. Faculty here, student affairs there, and never the twain shall meet. But I am seeing more of it now because it is something that is seen as positive. A Provost or a Chancellor goes to a conference, and they say we should be doing this. So we do it on our campus. My hope is that it will continue.

Alice spoke positively about academic initiatives implemented through residence life. There have been some challenges, but she believes they have created positive relationships with several faculty, particularly those involved with the living learning communities. Her positive comments about the faculty she works with were reinforced by what I observed at the living learning faculty liaison meeting.

Regarding the future of academic initiatives at Cogentia, some of the new RLCs mentioned that clearer expectations about their involvement with faculty, opportunities to meet faculty, and more training or tips about faculty engagement might be helpful. Alice said these were good ideas she might consider for the future.

### **Living Learning Community Faculty Liaison Meeting Observation**

The living learning community faculty liaison meeting is held once a month. The meeting observed for this study was held on October 30, 2013. The following people were present from residence life: Alice, the Assistant Director for Academic Initiatives, the Assistant Director for

Programming and Staff Training and Selection, an experienced RLC, and an administrative assistant. The RLC in attendance was not part of the Buddy Program and as a result was not interviewed for this study. Alice facilitated the meeting and created the agenda. Three faculty members representing nursing, biology, and honors, an academic advisor from business, and two graduate students from wellness (a student affairs department) were also present. The non-residence life attendees represent the departments that sponsor the living learning communities.

Observing this meeting allowed me to see how some residence life staff and faculty interact. To analyze this observation the meeting was recorded and transcribed. Notes were taken during the meeting about the demeanor of individual attendees, non-verbal cues, and thoughts I was having during the experience. The transcription and notes were reviewed and highlights were compared to data uncovered through interviews and the review of documents. Key observations included positive communication amongst all parties, the ease with which the group came to consensus, a sense of a common mission or goal (the promotion of the living learning communities), and fully engaged, supportive participation by the faculty members. Evidence that reinforced my perceptions of the positive communication between members includes non-verbal cues such as direct eye contact between members, nodding, and smiling. There were times when the group was laughing. There were no disagreements or raised voices during the meeting. My presence at the meeting may have had an effect on the behaviors of participants, causing them to be more cooperative than is typical. I did ask Alice whether this meeting and the interactions between members were similar to past meetings, and she said it was.

This group had met several times previously. Some members had recently attended a conference together. Members of this group seemed at ease with one another. The start of the meeting was very casual. New attendees were greeted cordially and several side conversations

were occurring. Joannie, the experienced RLC who manages one of the FYE halls, interrupted the start of the meeting to notify Alice that a “drug bust” was occurring in another residence hall. She offered to address the situation and hence had to miss the meeting. This episode is an example of how unexpected situations in residence life can distract RLCs from other responsibilities. It mirrors the experience RLCs have in their day to day responsibilities when they want to spend time connecting with faculty but due to other responsibilities cannot.

There were several agenda items. Three will be discussed here. First, a report was given about those who had attended a recent housing conference. There was discussion about the Cogentia living learning groups needing to use a “common language” when marketing and discussing the purpose for the living learning communities. The person giving the report compared Cogentia’s living learning communities to information shared about living learning communities from other institutions. She said, “I think we realized how young we are. I feel very luck that student affairs and faculty are really meshing here.” This comment reflected her belief that the relationships between student affairs and faculty on this committee are collaborative and cooperative.

The second agenda item was an announcement of the RA selection and recruitment process. The residence life staff shared information about the process. The faculty present had several questions about the process; for example, what criteria must a student meet to apply and how many RAs are needed. The group became most animated and talkative when faculty were asked if they wanted to give input about the RA candidates. The faculty were very interested in doing so. They were informed that up to 200 students might apply. Faculty would be asked to review each name and provide feedback on any student they knew. Faculty were willing to assist

in any way and offered to do whatever residence life needed. One faculty member said, “It’s in good hands. You are in charge. We trust you.”

The final agenda item to be highlighted was about living learning communities and assessment. Carol led that discussion and presented the group with justification as to why they need to develop an assessment plan. The group was supportive of Carol’s request and agreed to attend a retreat about assessment. One of the residence life staff members seemed to think that the faculty didn’t realize that the retreat would occur before the official start of the semester. She confirmed with the faculty that they would be available and willing to attend before classes resumed in January. This interaction made me think that the residence life staff member assumed that faculty would not attend the retreat if it was held on a day outside of the academic calendar. All of the faculty agreed to participate and one faculty member said, “Let’s have a full day retreat. Housing can afford it.” The entire group laughed at this comment and no one disputed it. This comment stood out because in some interviews RLCs had mentioned how faculty views student affairs as having excess money. For example, David spoke of that when he discussed his negotiations with the music department to purchase a new piano. When this comment about finances came up it did not seem to upset the residence life staff. It seemed to be accepted as an assumption that residence life would fund the retreat.

These three agenda items were highlighted because all group members participated in these conversations. These discussions also represent collaboration because all parties committed to future actions which would advance the work they were doing with living learning communities. Several examples of collaboration were evident during the meeting. All agreed to participate in a future assessment retreat showing the groups’ willingness to continue working together. The conference report highlighted a joint experience between the faculty and residence

life staff who attended. The RA selection and recruitment report showed how information is shared and clarified through joint conversation. The faculty promised to review and provide feedback about RA applications.

What was observed during this meeting did not reflect what I was hearing from RLCs during interviews. Specifically, these faculty members were supportive of the residence life initiatives, willing to work “after hours”, and willing and excited to work with students outside the classroom. Several questions arose as I reviewed data from this observation. Was the collaborative and cooperative behaviors and communication of these faculty members representative of all faculty at Cogentia? Would the new RLCs, who view faculty as being uninterested in working with student outside of class, feel differently if they knew these particular faculty members? Do the new RLCs have an opportunity to come to these meetings and meet these faculty members? Observing this meeting was important to this study. Had I not done so, impressions and perceptions would have come solely from the interviews and would not have reflected the faculty engagement and collaboration witnessed during the meeting. However, it is important to be skeptical and not assume that all interactions between student affairs and faculty would result in the same impressions that were gathered from this one meeting.

### **Document Analysis**

Documents were reviewed for this study to uncover any written evidence of a connection between residence life and faculty. The following documents were reviewed: the university’s student affairs and residence life websites, the *Student Affairs 2012 Annual Report*, and residence life documents, including the student *Move-In Guide*, *The Resident Handbook*, and the *Residence Life Staff Manual*. Any mention about faculty or academics found in the documents was noted. The items were then compared against the information gathered during interviews and

observation to see if the items supported or contradicted what was learned from study participants.

The mission, vision, and values of the student affairs division and the residence life department mentioned providing programs and services that promote student learning and fostering environments in which students can achieve academic and personal goals. Involvement of faculty in these overarching statements was not evident. However, the mission and vision statements did match comments from the informants. Participants would discuss the role of residence life in supporting the academic mission of the institution and providing programs to support students' academic skills. Within the *Student Affairs 2012 Annual Report*, under a list of accomplishments for residence life, collaborations with the university tutoring center and academic advisors were noted. There was no mention of specific faculty involvement. This reflects comments from participants verifying the lack of faculty involvement in residence hall programming. The report did note, however, an increase in living learning communities that included collaborating with faculty.

The review of documents provided evidence that the student affairs division and the residence life department strive to support academics. The way "support" is represented in documents is broad and involves more than faculty collaboration. For example, in the RA work contracts, RAs are required to produce programs that promote residence learning and develop residents' academic and out-of-class activities. Examples of programs, such as time management skills, selecting a major, and setting priorities, were mentioned in interviews. Another example is related to RAs role modeling positive student behavior. Mandatory requirements related to maintaining grade point averages of 2.5 or above are written in descriptions of the RA position and the formal RA work contracts.

Through document analysis it was confirmed that there was one written expectation for RLCs related to faculty collaboration. It was found in the staff manual and is a direct quote from the *Association of Colleges and University Housing Officers – International* (ACUHO-I), the professional organization with which Cogentia’s residence life department is affiliated. The *ACUHO-I Standards and Ethical Principles* (2010) state:

The housing professional is obliged to understand the educational goals of the institution and to aid in support and realization of those goals through residence hall programming, leadership training, student governance, faculty involvement, and sound fiscal management. (p. 15)

This was the only reference to faculty involvement found that was geared towards RLCs. The informants in the study verbally confirmed this. The Assistant Director of Academic Initiatives stated that there were no written expectations specifically related to faculty and that it was something she had not considered until now. According to two of the new RLCs, Nancy and Tommy, having written expectations related to their involvement with faculty may have prompted them to put more effort into doing so. However, both recognized that such additional responsibilities would be challenging for a first year RLC who is managing and learning about many other duties.

One specific mention of faculty involvement and RA responsibilities was found in the *First-Year Experience RA Contract Addendum*. RAs who work in the First-Year Experience halls are required to sign a contract addendum. It outlines additional duties not required of RAs in other halls. These duties are noted under a heading entitled *Academic Requirements*, and include actions that support academics, such as attending class, organizing study groups, and

marketing tutoring services. These RAs must also promote positive relationships with Cogentia faculty by inviting them to hall activities and present programs.

In summary, the review of documents uncovered mission and vision statements supporting the promotion of academics and students' academic success. Components of some documents provided examples of how residence life supports academics. The mention of faculty involvement or collaboration was found in two statements: one in *ACUHO-I Standards and Ethical Principles* for housing professionals and the other in the *First-Year Experience RA Contract Addendum*. No specifics related to RLCs' duties and faculty collaboration was found. Nothing found in the document review was contradicted by data gathered from interviews and observation.

### **Summary of Data**

Interviews, observation, and document analysis were methods used to compile data for this study. Through conversations with the informants much was uncovered about their beliefs and perceptions about faculty and how they obtained those beliefs and perceptions. By conducting interviews with the RLCs, I was able to learn about them, uncover changes that occurred over the course of a semester, and compare their views with the others'. Data about their buddy relationships were used to explore the idea of socialization within a culture; specifically if messages about the views about faculty are passed on from experienced RLCs to new RLCs. The observation component of this study uncovered behaviors by faculty that did not match those described in interviews. This contradictory evidence adds data that may have otherwise been overlooked. Finally, document analysis supported data gathered from interviews in three specific cases. Informants and documents concur that part of residence life's mission is to support academics and promote students' academic success. Second, supporting academics is

not defined solely by collaboration with faculty. It includes other initiatives, such as time management programs and living learning communities. Third, there are no written expectations for RLCs in regards to collaborating with faculty.

The data compiled for this study have been analyzed to discover how new student affairs professionals acquire their beliefs and perceptions about faculty. Chapter V outlines conclusions drawn from the data and concepts linked to previous research. Chapter VI includes implications for practice, limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

## **CHAPTER V: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Introduction**

Findings from this study provide a clearer understanding of the beliefs and perceptions student affairs professionals have about faculty and how those views are acquired. Chapter IV provided an overview of the data for each participant, the buddy relationships, the meeting observation, and documents. Comprehensive findings uncovered through analysis and synthesis of the data are presented in Chapter V. Beliefs and perceptions new student affairs professionals have about faculty, descriptions of how new student affairs professionals acquire those beliefs and perceptions, and explanations of how new student affairs professionals beliefs and perceptions about faculty are circulated within the student affairs' subculture are presented.

### **Comprehensive Findings and Discussion**

#### **Beliefs and Perceptions: At the Beginning of the Study**

This section provides an overview of the beliefs and perceptions of new and experienced residence life staff as they emerged at the beginning of the study. First, common beliefs and perceptions of the new RLCs and experienced residence life staff will be shared. Then divergent beliefs are presented. The views of the two groups were compared to find commonalities and differences. A summary of results is presented (see Table 1).

**Common Beliefs and Perceptions: At the Beginning of the Study.** Discussion of roles, such as defining roles and role boundaries, was commonplace in this study. All participants believed that the primary role of faculty is to serve as educators, with the focus of teaching being to teach about their academic discipline or area of specialty. When discussing faculty and teaching, Carol said, "It is their number one mission." The respondents view teaching as the primary mission of faculty. In addition, all believe the role of teaching should include teaching

Table 1

*Student Affairs Beliefs and Perceptions About Faculty: At the Beginning of the Study*

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Category	Beliefs and Perceptions
Common Beliefs and Perceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Faculty are educators.</li> <li>Primary focus of teaching is teaching about one's academic discipline</li> <li>Teaching beyond their academic discipline</li> <li>Educating students in the residence halls</li> <li>Students are more engaged in learning than they are in a classroom</li> <li>Students see faculty as "real people."</li> <li>Faculty prefer to maintain an authoritarian role</li> <li>Faculty are researchers.</li> <li>How faculty spend their time is varied and flexible.</li> <li>New and non-tenured faculty are more likely to collaborate with student affairs.</li> </ul>
Divergent Beliefs and Perceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effects of institutional size on faculty's interaction with students and staff</li> <li>Compensation and schedules impact faculty's willingness to collaborate</li> <li>Faculty are unique individuals and should not be stereotyped.</li> </ul>

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outside of the classroom. Teaching outside of the classroom was not defined merely as teaching students in a location outside of a traditional classroom, such as a residence hall lobby. It was defined as educating students during other interactions, such as one-on-one meetings during a faculty member's office hours, at campus events, service learning outings, or study abroad experiences. All participants believed that faculty should educate students about more than the faculty member's academic discipline. Nicholas described this expanded definition of teaching as "educating students in their field of study and getting them prepared for the real world." Helping students decide on majors and careers, teaching them how to make decisions, and providing them opportunities to improve interpersonal and communication skills were examples of topics faculty could teach.

Findings from this study match those from previous studies. Arcelus (2008) and Beodeker (2006) found that student affairs professionals view faculty as educators. In addition, Arcelus (2008) and Beodeker (2006) found that faculty agree and see their primary role as teaching. However, their perception is that faculty expand the role to include scholarship (research and publication).

Participants' responses about the role of faculty matched descriptions the informants gave about their favorite professors. Each was asked to talk about their favorite undergraduate and graduate instructor. Participants talked about faculty who had interacted with them outside of the classroom and whose teaching went beyond course subject matter. Some of the common phrases used to describe favorite faculty were "cared about me as a person," "made time for me outside of class," "talked with me about my life," and "helped me decide on my major." The residence Life staff define the role of educator, for faculty, in the same way they describe the faculty who have most positively affected their lives.

Comments about faculty and their role as educators were pervasive throughout the study. David, Joannie, Susan, Mary, and Nicholas talked about faculty coming into the halls to educate students about their academic discipline. Each believes faculty, who teach in the residence hall, provide an experience in which students are more engaged with the learning process. They talked about faculty being more “entertaining” with students in the hall and how this matches the preferred learning styles of today’s students. Joannie gave an example of a chemistry professor coming in to “play with liquid nitrogen” as part of a residence hall program. She compared this to a 50 minute lecture given in a classroom.

Students get a better knowledge of it because it’s not in an intimidating lecture hall and it connects to something fun. From that experience they may connect to the faculty member and will see him, and possibly other faculty members, in a more positive light.

The belief that “teaching” in the residence halls is more engaging than traditional classroom lectures has been noted in other studies (Arcelus, 2008; Kuh et al., 2010). Whereas some informants of this study believe educational experiences with faculty in the residence halls promote more engaged learning, faculty from other studies do not concur. Arcelus (2008) learned that some faculty believe programs outside of the classroom, particularly those sponsored by student affairs, take away from the academic mission of an institution. Moreover, some faculty are uncomfortable engaging with students outside of the classroom.

Participants in this study believe it is important for students to see faculty in a “different light.” This was another emerging theme of this study. Respondents believe some faculty project personas that make them seem unapproachable to students. There were mixed opinions as to whether faculty are unapproachable, or if they are playing a role, to maintain a separation between themselves and students. The majority of study participants talked about this issue.

They believe it is important for students to see faculty as “normal people,” “real people,” and “not scary.” Elizabeth talked about breaking down a stereotype.

I think a lot of times when you talk about faculty to a student, they think about the 1950s bald guy with glasses - a white male. That’s not true anymore. I think an important part is students seeing that they are just people, like we are.

Nancy had an opportunity to talk with a faculty member after a hall program. She was surprised at how different the professor was with her. Nancy described the professor as very serious during her interaction with the students, but “like a real person” when she talked with Nancy. Nancy’s wish was that the professor would have shown that side of herself to the students. Carol, the Director of Residence Life, has a more complex view as to why this happens. When discussing this topic, she talked about the various roles that faculty and student affairs professionals play. She proposed that faculty may need to take on more authoritarian roles because of the power position in which they are placed. In other words, being somewhat distant from students may support an instructor’s ability to uphold classroom behavior and ensure that they aren’t seen as showing favoritism. On the other hand, Carol sees positive outcomes when faculty allow themselves to be more open with students.

I think faculty don’t always realize the kind of unique role they get to play in students’ lives. They didn’t enter into the teacher-student relationship thinking, “I’ve learned a lot about them and they’ve made me think about my life.” They might receive more than the student. Sometimes though, students don’t know where the line is. Sometimes the faculty don’t know where the line is, but there are a lot of good things that can come out of those relationships.

What do faculty think about the idea of students seeing them in a “different light?” Do

they believe they should maintain a certain role when interacting with students? Arcelus (2008) uncovered mixed responses to these questions. In his study, the majority of faculty strive to maintain clear roles with students, in which they teach and students learn. Cited reasons included, not being able to relate to the students, feeling disconnected from the student culture, defining students' personal lives and "personal", and feeling unprepared to deal with issues that might arise. Faculty also noted a lack of expectations from leadership to engage with students beyond the classroom and a belief that it is student affairs' job to do student development work. Divergent beliefs were expressed. Some faculty saw a value in engaging with students outside of the classroom, noting that students could see them as less intimidating. Arcelus (2008) wrote about one faculty member saying, "attending student events helped students see him as a regular person which helps make intellectual life more accessible" (p. 168).

It is important to reiterate how findings related to faculty roles connect to this study. Perceptions about roles and their connection to collaboration between student affairs professionals and faculty have been discussed in previous studies (Arcelus, 2008; Beodeker, 2006). The views about faculty roles rose prominently in this study. Teaching and research could be viewed by many as obvious faculty roles. The results from this study concur. All of the participants view the role of student affairs professionals to be that of educators. Other researchers have uncovered similar findings, documenting student affairs professionals' belief that they are educators and, in turn, similar to faculty (Arcelus, 2008; Beodeker, 2006; Buyarski, 2004). In this study, informants view faculty and student affairs professionals as alike because both groups educate students. Tommy said, "They're educators and we're educating too, just in a different way." The participants see both groups having a common goal. Joannie described that goal as "getting students to a better place." When considering both groups, the participants see

some differences in what student affairs professionals teach and how they teach. All of the respondents spoke of educational programs that occur in the residence halls, such as presentations about study strategies and choosing a major. Participants also talked about educating students through conversations related to supervision issues, inappropriate behavior, or roommate conflicts. Nancy elaborated on this idea.

Faculty are like student affairs professionals. They're there to educate inside the classroom, but I also think it's important for them to educate outside the classroom when they can. A big part of student affairs work is educating students. I feel like no matter what office you are in, you have to take an educational approach when talking to students. I think in that we are similar to professors.

Second to teaching, research was mentioned as an important faculty responsibility. Again, this supports the results of other studies about perceptions and collaboration between faculty and student affairs professionals. The majority of informants believe some faculty members work in higher education in order to conduct research. Teaching is seen as a means to support research. One informant noted that there could be too much emphasis placed on research as compared to teaching. The others who discussed faculty and research felt there is a balance that can be struck between research and teaching. Three of the participants discussed publishing and service as other faculty roles. When asked to describe faculty, Joannie had this to say about research.

Academic is the word that comes to mind. The second is research. Those who research are very academically-minded. It [research] is something they are driven by. Some faculty are completely fulfilled by teaching. For others, teaching may be a way for them to get funding for their research.

Joannie infers a connection between research and being “academically minded.” This seems to indicate a belief by Joannie that inquiry or experimentation in a particular field of study makes one academically minded. Moreover, those who are academically minded are more likely to teach to support their research. A next step in this line of thinking could be that those who teach to support research may not place the same value on teaching as those who see teaching as their primary role or mission.

How time is spent was another common theme of this study and has presented itself in other works (Dale & Drake, 2005). Most participants believe that faculty have flexible schedules with few set obligations. When discussing a faculty member’s typical week, several participants envisioned a week that revolved around teaching responsibilities, such as preparing lessons, grading papers, and reviewing course content. On the whole, informants believe that the only set time commitments for faculty are when they have to teach. Half of the respondents noted faculty obligations outside of teaching, such as attending meetings or serving on committees. Elizabeth and Nancy outlined the most comprehensive pictures of how faculty spend their time. Elizabeth attributes her understanding about faculty responsibilities to the course she took in graduate school. Nancy attributes her knowledge to discussions in her graduate classes and one-on-one conversations with faculty. Participants speculated about how faculty view student affairs professionals’ schedules. Through his experience with a time use study, David said that faculty questioned how residence life coordinators spend their time. “They see our jobs as more relaxed,” he said, “They don’t realize that we have committee meetings and sometimes deal with things at 3a.m.” Faculty and student affairs professionals who participated in the study were able to share how they spend their time. David found conversations about work responsibilities and time to be helpful in promoting understanding between the two groups. Increased understanding

about cultural norms, like occupational differences related to work structures and responsibilities, can enhance collaboration (Creamer 2004; Martin, 2002; Tierney, 1988).

Another recurrent theme was the perception that new and non-tenured faculty are more likely to be involved with student affairs collaborations. There were no specific interview questions about this topic; it was introduced spontaneously by several respondents and emerged as a theme over the course of the study. The perception is that new faculty take on additional responsibilities during their first few years in the new job. New faculty and those trying to obtain tenure are looking for service opportunities and committee work. This uncovers another belief of some participants that service is required to obtain tenure and that collaboration with student affairs could be considered as service. Questions arise. What weight does service play in tenure decisions? How do faculty view service? Do they see it as supporting their efforts to achieve tenure or deterring them from working on other components of tenure, like publishing and research? There is a perception that more experienced and tenured faculty are established in terms of their responsibilities – not wanting to take on new duties. Three RLCs discussed the challenge of getting tenured faculty involved, and one believes that new faculty are negatively affected by the views of more experienced faculty. Conversely, participants believe new faculty are open to working with students outside of class. Carol's words are similar to other informants'.

I think it works better with new faculty or ones that have been here a year. I think it means a lot to them to have students who are interested in their work and invite them to speak in the residence hall. We don't have a lot of perks to offer faculty, but that [residence hall program] might count towards service for tenure.

Do non-tenured faculty or faculty who are new to an institution have a higher tendency to support student affairs programs? Besides completing service for tenure, could there be other reasons why new faculty seem to be more engaged and involved with student affairs initiatives? This emergent theme related to new faculty and their perceived willingness to be involved with campus events outside of the classroom deserves more investigation.

**Divergent beliefs and perceptions: At the beginning of the study.** When comparing beliefs and perceptions, at the beginning of the study, some differences were revealed. Three divergent themes were found: the impact of institutional size on faculty engagement, the impact of time and compensation on faculty engagement, and a personal value that rebuffs stereotyping. Four of the participants believe that faculty who work at smaller institutions are more likely to be engaged with students outside of the classroom and are more likely to know and collaborate with student affairs professionals. The term “small” was not formally defined. Participants used the word to define institutions with less enrollment than Cogentia. Some spoke of institutions with 2,000-5,000 students, while others referred to universities with 10,000-12,000 students. Regardless of size, Mary, Nicholas, Tommy, and Nancy believe that faculty at smaller colleges are more engaged and collaborative. They based this perception on their personal experiences, as students, at institutions smaller than Cogentia, which has an enrollment around 23,000 students. “I had a lot more interaction with faculty at my old school,” Mary said, “It’s 12,000 students. The culture of the university is that you had interactions with faculty. It was encouraged.” Nicholas had a similar thought.

I think this is a large university. It’s different at a smaller university because faculty at a smaller university are more ingrained in the university and want to help with things other

than research. They will be more into helping students. Here I think it is more about academics and research.

Susan and Joannie have different perceptions. Based on their personal experiences, their viewpoint does not support the idea that faculty at small institutions are more engaged or collaborative than those at larger schools. On the small campus where Joannie grew up, there was little interaction between faculty and student affairs professionals. When referring to her childhood experience, Joannie did not evaluate faculty's involvement with students, but she did note that she and her mother did not interact with student affairs professionals. They were, however, engaged community members and as such Joannie questioned why they had never met any staff from student affairs. Susan served as an RA at a small institution where faculty and student affairs did not interact. She disclosed that faculty were not involved in residence hall activities. Based on this study, the data are divided; some believe faculty at small institutions are more likely to collaborate with student affairs, whereas others do not. Scholars have found cultural differences in the size and type of institutions (Hirt, 2007; Kuh & Whitt, 1988). When highlighting characteristics of small liberal arts institutions, Hirt described faculty as caring about students, but not necessarily about student affairs. Learning tends to be focused on holistic development, and faculty focus on teaching at liberal arts colleges. At larger comprehensive institutions, more faculty work part-time, there is an increasing focus on research, and faculty are expected to understand the role of student affairs professionals. At large research universities, there is little collaboration between student affairs and faculty, faculty teach fewer classes, and research productivity is expected (Hirt, 2007, pp. 187-190). In addition, Beodeker (2006) and Gouldner (1957) discuss the impact of institutional size on faculty members' bent towards "localism" (focusing on institutional efforts and teaching) or "globalism" (focusing on

advancement of knowledge through research and publishing). In Beodeker's study, faculty who described themselves as more aligned with localism tended to be involved in campus events and committees and saw their main role as being an educator. Those defined as more aligned with globalism were more involved with professional associations and more focused on advancing knowledge in their discipline (Beodeker, 2006).

Some experienced staff made comments about faculty's willingness to collaborate as it relates to time and compensation. None of the new RLCs discussed this topic. Experienced RLCs said that faculty were not willing to participate in residence life events because they occur after 5:00pm. The hesitancy of faculty to participate in events that occur during days when classes aren't in session was also mentioned. This idea was reaffirmed at the living learning community faculty liaison meeting when faculty were asked several times to confirm that they would attend a retreat before the start of the spring semester. Another perception is that faculty are unwilling to participate in activities in which they are not paid. A participant had acquired this perception from information she heard from other staff. She heard faculty were unwilling to teach the first year seminar course because instructors of the course were not paid. Experienced residence life staff see after hours work and work without compensation as barriers to faculty collaboration. It is unclear as to why they have these perceptions and new RLCs do not. Past studies support the views of these experienced RLCs. Disputes related to the lack of incentives and release time have been tagged as inhibitors of collaboration (Johnson & Cheatham, 1999; Kuh & Banta, 2000; Schroeder, 1999). In more recent works, scholars are encouraging higher education leaders to review and restructure rewards to support collaborative efforts (Kezar & Lester, 2009; Lester, 2011).

An outlier at the beginning of this study was Tommy. Tommy's personal belief that people are individuals, and should be treated as such, kept him from making definitive comments about faculty. He was not comfortable making generalizations. Holding true to the value that people should not be stereotyped was very important to him. This value was passed down from his father. Tommy did share his beliefs about the roles of faculty in higher education, agreeing with the others that education and research are key roles. Tommy did share more thoughts related to faculty as the study progressed, using examples from what he had heard from students. His rejection of stereotyping was a distinctive view that held steady throughout the study.

**Summary of belief and perceptions: At the beginning of the study.** Common beliefs and perceptions about faculty were found through this study. First, the primary role of faculty is to serve as educators. This includes faculty educating students about their academic discipline, but also educating students about broader issues related to personal development. Participants described their view of faculty as educators. They view teaching as the primary role of faculty. Views about faculty roles and further understanding of those views echo the findings of other studies about culture perceptions and collaboration in higher education (Arcelus, 2008; Beodeker, 2006; Kezar & Lester, 2009). Participants held similar views about the value of faculty "teaching" in the residence halls, including more engaged student learning and students seeing faculty in a "different light." After serving as educators, conducting research was believed to be the second most important role of faculty. Another recurrent theme was the perception that faculty schedules are varied and flexible. The belief that new and non-tenured faculty are more likely to collaborate with student affairs professionals than are more experienced, tenured faculty was revealed as the last common theme.

Three concepts represented divergent themes amongst the participants. First, informants had different views on the impact of institutional size on faculty's willingness to collaborate. Second, several experienced residence life staff perceive that faculty are reluctant to participate in out of classroom activities, because of two things: working after hours and working for no compensation. Third was Tommy's strong personal value in regards to viewing faculty as individuals.

### **Beliefs and Perceptions: At the End of the Study**

Beliefs and perceptions of new and experienced residence life staff were compiled to see whether views had changed, and if so, how (see Table 2). In this section I highlight differences or changes in views since the beginning of the study. Half of the RLCs in the study articulated that their beliefs and perceptions about faculty had changed since the start of the study. Changes in views were described as small. Some said they had experienced something that had reinforced beliefs they already had. Of those who experienced a change or reinforcement of beliefs, two were new RLCs and two were experienced RLCs.

**Nancy.** At the beginning of the study, Nancy was optimistic about the prospect of working with faculty and getting them involved in her residence hall. She had positive experiences working with faculty as an RA and graduate hall director. Her experiences as a student and student employee had reinforced her belief that faculty want to be involved with students outside of the classroom. Over the course of the semester, Nancy had several experiences that have made her question those beliefs. A lack of faculty involvement at a hall event, comments from staff in residence life, and comments from her RAs caused her to reevaluate her views. Nancy believes the lack of faculty involvement has to do with their busy schedules and living far from campus – reasons she had heard from others. She does not want to

Table 2

*Changes in Beliefs and Perceptions: At the End of the Study*

Reported Change		Description	Attributes Change To
New Residence Life Coordinators	Nancy	Belief that faculty want to be engaged outside of the classroom has been challenged	Experience with faculty program in her hall Conversations with RAs Conversations with buddy Conversations with members of academic initiatives committee
	Nicholas	Belief that faculty want to be engaged outside of the classroom has been challenged	Personal impression – has not seen faculty in residence or dining halls
Experienced Residence Life Coordinators	Joannie	Empathy for faculty enhanced	Personal experience teaching a class
	Joannie	Belief that faculty don't want to be engaged outside of classroom reinforced	Experience with faculty program in her residence hall
	Susan	Understanding about faculty roles and responsibilities expanded	Personal experience trying to initiate communication with faculty member

believe faculty are not involved because they don't care about students. Nancy is still optimistic about getting faculty involved, but feels it may be more challenging than she originally anticipated.

I am still optimistic, but there is a part of me that is like, well, this is how this university is and it's not going to be all that easy to get faculty involved. I was pretty positive about faculty at the beginning of the semester, and I think I still am, but faculty members are kind of a different breed here than the faculty members I'm used to. I don't think I have a negative perception of faculty, but more of a realistic one. I just think we have to find the right ones.

Nancy's mental model (Senge, 1990), or underlying generalization, about faculty has been altered slightly since she began working at Cogentia. She has attributed this to her own experiences, but also notes the influence of others. This socialization experience is indicative of peer influence (Weidman & Stein, 2003). It shows how the individual values of group members can impact those of a new member, causing the new member to assimilate others' beliefs into their own (Kramer, 2010; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

**Nicholas.** Nicholas' perception about faculty's willingness to be involved with students changed as well. Like Nancy, he has noticed that faculty don't seem willing to interact with students outside of class. This perception is based on his experience. By not witnessing faculty in the residence or dining halls, he thinks they are less involved with students at Cogentia than at his last institution. He said, "I feel like they [faculty] really stay on the academic side. I can't remember when I've seen any faculty members go to the dining hall." Nicholas believes this has also prohibited him from meeting faculty. His experience mirrors a finding from Dale and Drake (2005). They found a lack of contact between faculty and student affairs professionals saying,

“casual or spontaneous interaction is infrequent” (Dale & Drake, 2005, p. 58). This lack of interaction inhibited collaboration and resulted in their call for more places and events to promote communication and contact.

Nicholas also bases his belief on what he has heard from students. When discussing concerns he hears about faculty he said, “When you hear something all the time, it is kind of hard to have a good perception of faculty, since you get all of the complaints.” Like Nancy’s, Nicholas’ experience also reveals how messages he hears from others impact his mental model or image about faculty.

**Joannie.** Joannie voiced how some of her perceptions about faculty had been reinforced, this semester. She talked about how her empathy towards them expanded. First, Joannie’s view that faculty are unwilling or unable to participate in residence hall programs was reinforced when only a few faculty members attended a hall program. Joannie was disappointed in the low number of faculty who participated, that they were late, and that several were to attend and did not. Although Joannie had that experience she feels the supervisors in residence life are supportive of efforts to engage faculty. Their encouragement motivates her to keep trying to involve faculty in her residence hall. She spoke of Alice’s support.

She was very helpful in finding people who are available and supportive. She knows the importance of these programs and that it’s positive. We might not have gotten a good turnout, but I still felt a lot of encouragement.

Joannie had an experience that increased her respect for faculty. Joannie taught a course and was faced with issues faculty face. She talked about students asking her to make exceptions and students who were not doing what was expected of them. She said this reminded her of what her mother faced as a professor. She feels more sympathetic towards faculty. “They have a lot on

their plates,” she said, “I see the difficulties they face.” During this study, Joannie had experiences that both reinforced some of her negative views about faculty and expanded her ability to see them in a more positive, empathetic light. In the background is the encouragement of Alice, helping Joannie overlook her critical view about faculty, and find new ways to engage faculty in her residence hall.

**Susan.** Susan’s view about faculty responsibilities expanded during the course of this study. In the first interview, she described her perception about faculty, noting how they are rarely on campus and are unavailable to students. She based this belief on the fact that she rarely saw faculty. She taught a class in an academic building and remarked that she didn’t see faculty there. Susan’s perception changed when she tried to reach out to a faculty member to discuss the creation of a women’s center. Susan never connected with the professor; however, during the time she attempted to contact her, Susan learned more about her. She found the professor had several duties beyond teaching. Susan said this knowledge made her think about other faculty members who may also be too busy to commit to additional responsibilities.

At the beginning I thought they come in. They teach. They leave. That was my perception. Maybe after class is over, they have office hours and leave. But now I think they are asked to do a lot of things. That’s why they are overextended and too busy. Now I think they teach and have other responsibilities, some that aren’t even in their department or area of study.

Susan’s change in perception wasn’t attributed to messages from others, but to her own interpretation of the experience. She had new information she incorporated into her mental model about faculty. She expanded her definition of how faculty may be spending their time, even though she wasn’t actually seeing how they were spending their time. During each of the

interviews, Susan would comment on how the information she was sharing wasn't really helping the study. Although she said she wasn't thinking about the study outside of our meetings, one wonders if involvement in the study, and her desire to help enhance the research, didn't contribute to her self-reflection and reconsideration about faculty beliefs.

In conclusion, out of the eight, four RLCs verbalized no change in beliefs or perceptions. Four of the RLCs verbalized a change in their beliefs or perceptions since the beginning of the study. These changes were described in two ways. Some described change as a reinforcement of previous beliefs, like Joannie's perception that faculty are not interested in attending hall programs. Some described beliefs different from previous ones, like Nancy's view that encouraging faculty to participate at Cogentia may be more challenging than at her last institutions. These changes were attributed to different variables including personal experiences, conversations with residence life staff, and conversations with students.

### **Socialization, Relationships, and Other Variables that Shaped Beliefs and Perceptions**

This section outlines the findings related to how the residence life staff acquired their beliefs and perceptions about faculty. These are summarized (see Table 3). During each interview participants were asked to describe how they developed their views. Data were compared to determine if there were common variables. By coding the common themes several categories emerged. The categories have been divided into three groups: socialization as a result of the Buddy Program, personal interaction with faculty, and other variables. From the start of this study, the Buddy Program and possible outcomes from the buddy relationships were considered. Personal interaction with faculty was uncovered through interviews and represents how some residence life staff members developed their views through direct communication and

Table 3

*Socialization, Relationships, and Other Variables that Shaped Beliefs and Perceptions about*

*Faculty*

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Category	Experiences that Shaped Beliefs and Perceptions
Socialization	Buddy Program No discussion about faculty with three pairs Slight effect with one pair
Interactions with Faculty	Growing up as a faculty child Positive and negative experiences as a student Interaction with faculty on the job
Other Variables	Personal values Influence of RAs and other students Undergraduate and graduate work experience Graduate classes, projects, and discussions

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experiences with faculty. Other variables include items that may have been unique to one participant or do not fall into the Buddy Program or personal interactions with faculty categories.

**Socialization and the Buddy Program.** There was no overwhelming evidence that the Buddy Program, specifically the interaction and communication between the new RLCs and their buddies, affected the new RLCs' views about faculty. Of the four buddy pairs, Nicholas and Susan communicated the most and spent the most time together; however, they never discussed faculty. The other two pairs had limited conversations after the beginning of the semester and never talked about faculty. The lack of communication about faculty between the buddies is worth noting. It makes sense to assume that because all of the RLCs see value in involving faculty in their residence halls that they would talk about this with each other. However, that was not the case. Although collaboration with faculty may be seen as valuable by members of this subculture, there is little direct evidence showing how this value is put into action within the Buddy Program. Also, worth noting is the communication about faculty between Nancy and Joannie. Nancy said comments from Joannie and other residence life staff, in conjunction with her own experiences, and comments from RAs have caused her to question her beliefs about faculty. In particular, comments about the unwillingness of Cogentia's faculty to participate in residence hall programs reinforced what Nancy experienced when only two faculty attended a hall program. As a result, Nancy now believes involving faculty in her hall activities will be more difficult than she had anticipated. Based on previous experiences she was not expecting to face this challenge. However, she is still optimistic and believes faculty want to interact with students outside of the classroom.

Socialization, in the informal stage, which occurs during the first few months of a new position and emphasizes peer interaction, shapes views of new employees (Tierney & Rhoades,

1994). Peer relationships, like those between the experienced RLCs and their inexperienced buddy, trigger the passing on of attitudes and skills. Experienced peers also serve as a source for validating and interpreting information (Bragg 1976; Kramer, 2010). This study has not uncovered outcomes of the Buddy Program and it was not the purpose of this study to do so. Because the pairs were not instructed to discuss faculty and because all but one pair never discussed faculty, one cannot determine, with certainty, that the peer interaction affected views about faculty. However, in the case of Nancy and Joannie, views about faculty were discussed and may have had an impact on Nancy's perception of Cogentia faculty.

Scholars encourage individuals to learn about their own and others' cultures in order to better collaborate across cultures (Landis & Bhagat, 1996; Magolda, 2005; Marushak, 2006). Exploration of beliefs results in learning and questioning of one's own beliefs. That, in turn, can lead to an ability to work more effectively with others. Talking about faculty with one another is one way student affairs professionals can learn about their own beliefs and the other culture. Asking the buddy pairs about the content of their conversations uncovered a lack of communication about faculty. RLCs who were expected to involve faculty in their residence halls talked about faculty. Those who were not expected to involve faculty did not discuss faculty. Based on this finding, one cannot assume student affairs professionals will discuss or explore their own and others' beliefs about faculty. Having a reason to discuss faculty, or a clear expectation from a leader to do so, may induce conversations about faculty.

**Interaction with faculty.** Personal experiences with faculty were identified by all of the participants as having helped shape their views about faculty. These experiences are categorized into three groups: growing up as a faculty child, experiences as a student, and on the job experiences (see Table 4). Joannie's experience as the daughter of a faculty member helped mold

Table 4

*Residence Life Staff and Faculty Interaction/Communication*

Name	Years of Professional Experience	Wants to Engage with Faculty	Casual Introductions or One Conversation (no on-going relationships)	Initiated Communication with Faculty	Had Social or Work Meeting with Faculty	Has On-Going Relationship with Faculty	Currently Working with Faculty on a Program or Initiative
Elizabeth	0	X	X				
Nancy	0	X	X	X			
Nicholas	0	X	X				
Tommy	0	X					
Joannie	3	X	X	X			
Mary	3	X		X	X		
Susan	3	X		X			
David	4	X		X	X	X	X
Alice	30+	X		X	X	X	X
Carol	30+	X		X	X	X	X

her views about faculty. The values Joannie learned from her mother, including the experiences she had growing up as part of a small college community, are part of her make-up. In part, Joannie attributes her current beliefs and perceptions to her mother. She credits her personal experiences, as a child, student, and RLC, as further developing and honing her views. Joannie sees herself as someone who can “balance out” all she has experienced and heard, to draw conclusions and solidify her beliefs.

Each participant was asked to describe two of their favorite faculty members. Information participants shared about their favorite professors was evaluated to see if experiences with favorite faculty helped shape views about faculty. Personal experiences with faculty, even those from several years ago, have helped shaped participants’ perceptions. Alice recalled her favorite faculty members from over 30 years ago. She commends them with setting the bar in terms of how she feels faculty should interact with students. “I know what faculty can do,” she said. Alice elaborated on this when she described helping some students at Cogentia who were having difficulties with their professors. She feels there are faculty at Cogentia like those from her college experiences who care about the success of individual students. As a fourth year RLC and graduate of Cogentia, David recalled how the positive experiences he had with faculty, as an undergraduate student, affected his decision to return to Cogentia as a professional. Nancy stays in contact with one of the professors from her freshmen year. She considers her a mentor and remarked about the time they spent together outside of class. Nicholas’ favorite faculty member challenged him not to transfer and exposed him to the idea that faculty can help students make big life decisions. Tommy shared his respect for a professor who challenged him to think and not accept ideas at face value. These are a few examples of the impact faculty had on the study participants. When asked to define the role of faculty, participants’ responses were similar to the

descriptions of their favorite instructors. The fact that these impressions were formed in the past and are imprinted as positive memories leads to the conclusion that faculty/student relationships affect the student's view about the faculty member. The views that result from such relationships may be long-lasting and affect how students perceive other faculty.

The experiences informants had with faculty, while working as student affairs professionals, have also shaped their views. Table 4 is a chart of the experiences each person had with faculty. These data show that everyone desires to engage with faculty. The RLCs defined "engaging with faculty" as having faculty participate in hall programs. This might involve RLCs finding faculty who are interested in presenting in the residence halls, meeting with faculty to plan the program, and interacting with them at the event. The Director and Assistant Director have more expanded versions of faculty engagement which include having faculty lead a living learning community, serving on committees, and encouraging faculty to share concerns about student behavior. It is evident from this study that those with more years of experience than the experienced residence life staff had, at a minimum, initiated communication with at least one faculty member. Mary had invited a faculty member to lunch. She is unsure where the relationship will go, but feels confident that she could call on this professor to help with hall programs in the future. David has meetings with faculty members, works with them on an on-going basis, and is currently working with them on collaborative initiatives. His increased engagement may be a result of previously established relationships or managing a living learning hall. Carol and Alice have the most years of experience and the most engagement with faculty. As David, Carol, and Alice talked, it was clear their views about faculty had been shaped by experiences they had with faculty on the job. They provided examples of working with faculty on committees, interacting at professional development programs, and implementing hall

programs together. Counter to that, besides Nancy, new RLCs had no meaningful experiences with Cogentia faculty. Thus far, what they have learned about faculty at Cogentia is what they have heard from others.

The study provides evidence that interaction between residence life staff and faculty can shape beliefs and perceptions. Whether it is the unique experience of growing up with a mother who is a professor, connecting with a particular graduate instructor, or working with faculty on a committee, these interactions affect people's perceptions. Evidence from this study shows residence life staff with more experience have more interaction with faculty. It also shows more experienced residence life staff have on-going relationships with faculty. This evidence is supported in other scholarly works (Kezar, 2006; Rodems, 2011; Zummo, 2012). Opportunities for interaction between faculty and student affairs professionals promote relationship building, which can enhance collaboration. Rodems (2011) found that previous relationships helped collaboration and the collaboration itself strengthened the relationship and birthed new initiatives and partnerships. In addition, opportunities for networking to promote and strengthen relationships for collaboration are recommended (Kezar & Lester, 2009; Zummo, 2012).

**Other variables.** There were four other factors attributed to shaping participants' views about faculty: deep-rooted personal values, conversations with RAs and other students, undergraduate and graduate work experience, and graduate coursework (see Appendix H). The impact of deep-rooted personal values has been discussed. Personal values - in this case, values that were passed down from a parent - can affect one's beliefs and perceptions about faculty. Tommy's belief in seeing people as individuals is so ingrained that it compels him to veer away from assigning perceptions to faculty as a group. Tommy held true to this value over the course of the study.

I am one of those people who believe in the good in everybody. I usually take people at their word. I believe what they tell me and I am very trusting. I still think professors generally are here for the right reasons and that they do want to teach students and want them to be good citizens.

He talked about hearing negative comments from students about faculty. He felt some students were exaggerating and he wasn't hearing from students who had good things to say. He said, "I think without sitting in a class and experiencing it, or really talking to them [faculty]. I don't feel like I can really form an opinion because all I have is the students."

During the course of this study, all of the RLCs had one or more conversations with RAs and other students about faculty. All of the conversations were about a concern the student had with one of their professors. Concerns centered on class policies, grading, or professors' expectations. Several students were frustrated, feeling their professor was not responding to them in a timely manner. Some talked about challenges they were having with course content or not being able to connect with the professor's teaching style. Overall, the RLCs described how they would listen to the students and give them advice on how to address the situation. In some cases, they described role-playing with a student to practice ways to approach the faculty member. In other cases, the RLC challenged the students' thinking, encouraging them to look at the situation from the professor's point of view. RLCs would be asked if these conversations affected their views about faculty. All said they did not, stating how students "exaggerate," "don't share the good things that happen," or "have unrealistic expectations." Although RLCs stated conversations with students did not impact their views about faculty, several made follow-up comments, leading one to believe student perspectives may influence RLCs' views. Examples of such comments are: "It's hard not to believe it when you hear it so often," and "I know I'm

biased and really believe my RA.” Like peers and supervisors, students may influence RLC’s views about faculty, further extending knowledge about the ways in which beliefs and perceptions about faculty are acquired.

Four respondents had worked as RAs or graduate hall directors. Components of undergraduate and graduate work of the participants are charted (see Appendix H). Their job responsibilities included working with faculty. They all had positive experiences doing so. They described programs that required faculty to meet with students after hours in the residence or dining halls. They verbalized how those positive encounters shaped their view about faculty. Those experiences laid the groundwork for a basic belief that faculty want to collaborate with student affairs, engage with students outside of class, and support residence life initiatives. In Nancy’s case, she was so influenced by her experience that she searched for a first professional experience that included faculty engagement. Tommy’s positive experience with a faculty program led him to talk with Carol in the hopes of emulating it at Cogentia. These, and other RLCs, attribute some of their views about faculty directly to their work experience as a student.

Graduate classes, projects, and discussions were revealed as other experiences that have shaped the participants’ views about faculty. The RLCs in this study have master’s degrees in various programs related to higher education and college student development. The specific areas include higher education administration, college student personnel, student affairs, and counselor education with a concentration in student affairs. Seven of the eight RLCs remember taking at least one course where the following topics were included: organizational culture, student affairs and academic affairs subcultures, faculty and student affairs collaboration, faculty and student affairs roles or teaching college students. Worth noting is the “faculty in higher education” course taken by Elizabeth. She attributes the course curriculum, including the

material presented and class discussions, as being the most significant mechanism in shaping her beliefs and perceptions about faculty. Participants were asked if any graduate courses included content or discussions about faculty or academic and student affairs collaboration. Seven of the eight remembered class discussions or projects that touched on organizational culture, the role of student affairs and faculty, or the history of higher education. Nancy specifically remembered a class where the university's Provost facilitated a discussion about academic and student affairs collaboration. Susan and David remember creating comprehensive class projects in which they had to create a student affairs department and explain how the department was connected to academic affairs. When considering the course titles, class projects, and discussions no common themes were found, except that all participants remember at least one course, project, or discussion about academic affairs and student affairs. Aside from Elizabeth and Nancy, who also shared some concrete memories from her classes, specific memories of what they learned or what was said were very vague. In other words, respondents remembered the topic of academics and student affairs collaboration was part of their graduate program, but they could not articulate specifically what they had learned. Elizabeth's and Nancy's class experiences had a role in shaping their beliefs about faculty, but the others seemed to be less affected by graduate work.

Although not all participants attributed their graduate work (courses or assistantships) with shaping their views about faculty, some did. Those who did felt their graduate work greatly influenced their views. This provides evidence that working with faculty prior to one's first professional position, and the curriculum and discussions in graduate programs, may shape student affairs professionals views about faculty. In line with these findings is a call from others for graduate program directors to incorporate such opportunities (Evans & Tobin, 1998; Sandeen & Barr, 2006; Tull et al., 2009). These scholars contend that graduate programs in student

affairs, college student personnel, and higher education administration should include opportunities for graduate students to learn about the faculty culture in higher education. Other recommendations included class discussions about student learning and experiences working closely with faculty, such as serving as a teaching assistant.

### **Summary of Comprehensive Findings**

This study uncovered several mechanisms that shaped or influenced participants' views about faculty. The influence of experienced RLCs with new RLCs in the Buddy Program as part of the informal socialization process was explored. Nancy and Joannie were the only peer buddies to discuss faculty. Their conversations may have shaped their views about faculty. The other pairs did not discuss faculty, and hence, provided no evidence that socialization of new RLCS with experienced peers influenced their views about faculty. Interactions with faculty were found to shape beliefs and perceptions and included growing up as a faculty child, negative and positive experiences as a student, and on the job interactions with faculty. There were mechanisms that affected the views of some, but not all, of the participants. They are worth noting and include; a strong personal value that prohibits stereotyping, conversations with RAs and other students, work experiences as an RA or graduate hall director, and graduate coursework.

## **CHAPTER VI: RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

### **Introduction**

Better understanding of faculty and student affairs professionals' cultures and their perceptions of self and each other can lead to enhanced collaboration (Arcelus, 2008; Beodeker, 2006; Zummo, 2012). In turn, those involved in collaboration may experience enhanced understanding and change in perceptions about the others involved (Rodems, 2011). By exploring how new student affairs professionals acquire their beliefs and perceptions about faculty, information has been added to enhance our cultural understanding of the student affairs subculture. This study has expanded the body of knowledge about the student affairs subculture by identifying experiences and interactions that have shaped perceptions. Conditions, encounters, and relationships that influenced or affected beliefs are varied. They include guidance and persuasion from parents, past professors, peers, supervisors, and students. They include personal discovery through working with faculty, teaching, and questioning one's own beliefs. They include learning that occurred during student employment opportunities and graduate course work. Participants cited experiences during childhood, undergraduate and graduate years, and in the thirtieth year of their professional career that contributed to their views about faculty. Conditions that influenced views about faculty also varied in intensity. For example, both Nancy and Elizabeth attributed some of their perceptions about faculty to a course they had in graduate school. Elizabeth believed the course had a more profound impact on her beliefs about faculty, while Nancy attributed acquisition of her views to a variety of factors, including personal experiences with faculty and interactions with faculty that were required as part of her RA and graduate hall director positions.

In this chapter implications for practices in higher education and recommendations for practice that promote relationship building and enhanced collaboration are shared. Proposals highlight opportunities for increased understanding and appreciation of faculty by student affairs professionals and increased interaction between student affairs professionals and faculty. Implications for future research, including recommendations and lessons learned from this study, are included.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

Beliefs and perceptions about faculty are shaped in many ways throughout one's life. With this in mind, implications for practice are multifarious. They are presented in three categories: gaining knowledge of roles, defining and implementing socialization processes, and establishing goals and expectations. The categories are linked by two foundational ideas. First, a goal of all recommendations for practice is to increase relationship building in order to enhance collaboration. This is accomplished by increasing understanding and appreciation of faculty by student affairs professionals, and vice-versa, and by increasing opportunities for interaction between the two groups. Second, recommendations for practice require action and commitment from campus leaders but may also be initiated at the grassroots level by individual staff or faculty members (Kezar & Lester, 2011). Leaders may be chancellors, provosts, vice chancellors, directors of student affairs departments, deans of academic colleges, or chairs of graduate programs. To be impactful, some recommendations require support and directives from people who can set goals, direct implementation, and earmark resources. Grassroots initiatives by those at faculty and staff who work directly with students may create needed changes, improve relationships, advance student learning, and model alternative forms of leadership (Kezar & Lester, 2011, p. 15).

The first recommendation is to promote opportunities for student affairs professionals and faculty to learn about and discuss roles. The way the two subcultures view themselves and each other promotes understanding. Opportunities for both groups to uncover their own views, share their beliefs with others, and confront misunderstandings are encouraged. Campus leaders choosing to promote venues where faculty and staff can come together and discuss how they view one another's roles and responsibilities, and their vision of student learning and what that means on their campus, may find increased collaboration across divisional lines. Ideas include discussion groups, open forums and meetings around topics like student learning and university mission. Orientation sessions for new faculty and staff provide other opportunities for learning. Faculty members and student affairs staff who take the initiative to meet socially or to discuss campus issues are taking steps that promote understanding and build relationships, as well. This could include meeting together over meals or asking to attend departmental meetings. Residence life staff could attend academic department meetings to share information about their roles, offer to serve as a resource for faculty dealing with students' emotional or behavioral issues, and open a dialogue about ways to work together. Learning about another's daily challenges related to work obligations and boundary issues with students may increase empathy and help faculty and staff adjust their expectations of one another.

Second, the development and implementation of socialization strategies that promote understanding and increase opportunities for interaction are recommended. These strategies begin in the anticipatory socialization stage (years prior to the start of the first professional position), through the formal and informal stages (the first year of employment), and beyond. During the anticipatory stage of socialization, undergraduate work and student leadership experiences could include opportunities for students to work closely with faculty. For some

participants in this study, mentoring relationships developed while they were undergraduates. Also, several respondents working as RAs found that involving faculty in hall programs shaped their beliefs about faculty. Graduate work is another component of the anticipatory socialization stage. Graduate work includes course curriculum, assistantships, faculty interaction/mentorship, and internships or practicum. Faculty who lead graduate programs could ensure that students have opportunities to learn about organizational culture, the roles and responsibilities of faculty, and college student learning. Similar recommendations have been made by other higher education scholars (Evans & Tobin, 1998; Sandeen & Barr, 2006; Tull et al., 2011). Students in student affairs master's programs would be well served by having a practicum experience in teaching, in addition to traditional student services assistantships or internships (Evans & Tobin, 1998). Sandeen and Barr (2009) recommend "joint degree programs between student affairs and other academic disciplines, such as law, curriculum development and business" (p. 40). Tull et al. (2011) note that much of what student affairs professionals learn about faculty is learned from one another. Findings from this study support that premise. However, positive beliefs about faculty seemed to result from encounters in which the RLC learned about faculty from a faculty member. As a result, graduate work that promotes relationship building between students and faculty is recommended.

Similar to the first recommendation, socialization processes can be affected by campus leaders and by those working directly with students. Leaders, such as department chairs and graduate program directors, have direct influence over graduate curriculum. They can ensure that opportunities for learning about campus subcultures and collaboration are incorporated into graduate programs. At the grassroots level, graduate students may initiate out-of-class

conversations with faculty or attend faculty senate meetings to learn more about the faculty culture.

During the formal and informal socialization stages, opportunities for new staff members to learn about and interact with faculty could be promoted. Formal socialization opportunities might include attending faculty senate meetings, going to faculty lectures and presentations about their research, or observing departmental meetings. One strategy might be to offer a training session on a topic of relevance to both faculty and student affairs professionals. An example of a training session from this study is the presentation of the results from David's time use study. Another idea comes from this study. The experienced peer buddies could have been required to discuss faculty and collaboration with faculty as part of training with the new RLCs. Campus leaders are encouraged to be engaged in the informal socialization process that occurs between themselves and new staff and between peers and new staff. Providing time for experienced and new staff to interact, as well as, providing ideas for discussion topics is one idea. This recommendation comes from study participants who shared that more focused direction and expectations from supervisors about working with faculty, including opportunities to hear about leaders and peers own experiences with faculty, would be helpful. The leader's awareness of his or hers views about faculty is important. What the leader thinks about faculty, and how he or she is communicating those thoughts, may impact what the staff member thinks about faculty.

One finding of this study was the low number of interactions between new RLCs and Cogentia faculty. Only one new RLC had one conversation with one faculty member. The new RLCs in this study believe that their supervisors could serve as a connecting link between them and faculty. If campus leaders want their new staff to engage with faculty, they could assist by

introducing new staff to faculty. Taking new staff to meetings or events where the leader knows faculty is one idea. Introducing new staff to faculty members who are known to the leader exposes new staff to faculty members who are approachable and connected to the department. Staff members are encouraged to look for opportunities to meet faculty. In this study, Mary was not required to dine with a faculty member, yet she did. Nancy was not required to find and connect with new Cogentia faculty members, yet she did. Without knowing the outcomes of their actions both are motivated to step out of their expected roles to advance collaboration with faculty.

Beyond the first year of employment, campus leaders could find opportunities for employees to extend their interactions with faculty and build their network of relationships. This may include assigning them to committees in which faculty and student affairs professionals serve. Other examples include assigning them to tasks involving collaboration with faculty or, like David's experience with the time-use study, requiring them to complete a professional development project or presentation to promote increased awareness between faculty and staff. David's experience expanded his and others' understanding of faculty and student affairs roles and responsibilities. His experience was one assigned to him by a campus leader. What he does next, as it relates to the time use study, could fall to him. Does he wait for more direction or does he act on his own? He could reconnect with faculty he met during the experience. He could expand the study and present findings to other faculty and staff. This is a good example of an initiative that was directed by a campus leader, and one that could be further developed by a student affairs professional, who is at the beginning of his career.

The third recommendation for practice is that campus leaders consider setting clear goals and expectations related to faculty interaction and collaboration. "People use cultural norms to

define what they should work on, work for, in what way, and with what consequences...” (McDermott & Varenne, 1995, p. 331). Campus leaders can create a cultural map to assist staff with faculty engagement by outlining a vision of collaboration, proposed outcomes of collaboration, and strategies for interaction amongst subcultures. Without a clear understanding of why interacting with faculty is important and when it has occurred, it is difficult for staff to know how to proceed. Campus leaders can help those who need more guidance with faculty engagement. Leaders can provide goals, expectations, guidelines, and support. There are questions they must first ask: Why do we want to collaborate with faculty? What goal are we trying to achieve? Can we afford the resources and efforts necessary for collaborative initiatives? Answers to these questions will help student affairs leaders decide if collaborating with faculty is a priority. It may help them define who is best able to engage with faculty. Who is in the best position in terms of influence and networking? Who has the desire, the skills, or the time? Based on time, knowledge, and other duties, is it appropriate for new student affairs professional to be responsible for initiating collaborative initiatives with faculty? By answering these questions, campus leaders can shape desired outcomes, expectations, and training and assessment protocols providing a foundation for staff to engage with faculty.

Mid-level managers and experienced peers can also assist in shaping cultural expectations and passing on messages that relate to collaboration between faculty and student affairs staff. Sharing their own positive experiences and providing others with successful strategies for engaging with faculty are ways to do so. Bringing new staff into an existing collaborative network, by simply introducing them to other faculty and staff in the network, is another example. How different would the experience of the new RLCs in this study have been if their peer mentors or supervisors had introduced them to some Cogentia faculty members?

Would they feel more comfortable reaching out to Cogentia faculty if they had previous interactions with some? Would they feel more confident about engaging with faculty if they saw established relationships between their peers and faculty?

### **Implications for Future Research**

#### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Knowledge about how new student affairs professionals acquire their beliefs and perceptions about faculty can be further expanded. The following recommendations for future research are made based on the findings of this study. Several specific areas of investigation come to light. First, a similar study that expands the sample size and looks at other areas in student affairs could add to the data and conclusions drawn from this study. This study involved ten student affairs professionals (eight RLCs and two supervisors) at one university. The study focused on residence life professionals. Conclusions drawn in this study may or may not be transferable to different contexts such as different institutional types or sizes or different student affairs departments. Expanded studies could verify transferability of the results from this study to another group or institution.

Second, some evidence revealed how views are affected by conversations and experiences with other individuals. Kramer (2010) discusses the value of the “collective work group” and how those groups “powerfully influence newcomers” (p. 133). This study did not focus on conversations and experiences within a particular work group, such as the academic initiatives committee or the living learning communities faculty liaison committee. However, study participants referenced conversations within these groups, and interactions between faculty and residence life staff were observed at one meeting. A case study of a collective work group,

which may uncover more information about how beliefs and perceptions are shaped, is recommended.

Third, although not the focus of this study, the beliefs and perceptions of the two most experienced student affairs professionals were uncovered. Both experienced residence life leaders noted a change in their views about faculty over the span of their careers. They said that changes in views were due to increased relationships with faculty and increased functions in their positions, which required them to engage more closely with faculty. Studies focusing on how beliefs and perceptions of student affairs professionals in mid-level and upper-level positions are acquired, or how views change over the life of one's career, are recommended. Carol clearly articulated how her position as Director afforded her more clout, access to resources, and opportunities to work with faculty. As a result, research about the impact of roles and authority of particular positions, and how roles and authority impact collaboration, should be considered. A caveat to this would be to explore the feasibility and level at which new student affairs professionals should be involved with initiating collaborations with faculty. The data gained from Carol and Alice raises this question: should faculty collaboration be the responsibility of middle and upper managers in student affairs? Do new professionals have the connections, networking opportunities, and/or authority needed to engage faculty in collaborative initiatives?

Fourth, some participants pointed to graduate coursework as influencing their views about faculty. Further exploration of this idea is recommended. A study looking at graduate programs or courses to determine the curricular presence of topics such as faculty roles and responsibilities, student learning, collaboration, or organizational culture is worth consideration. Further, review of assistantships or practicums, which allow graduate students in student affairs programs to work closely with faculty, would be informative.

Other suggestions for further research should be considered. One of the inconclusive findings of this study was the belief that size of institution impacts a faculty member's willingness to be engaged with students and collaborate with student affairs. Conducting a study to explore this topic might clarify those findings. Next, all of the new RLCs in this study talked about the demands on their time, conflicting priorities, and the challenges of learning a new position. Questions arise: Should collaborations with faculty be the responsibility of a new residence life coordinator? If so, to what extent? A comprehensive look at responsibilities, use of time, and expectations may shed light on those questions. Lastly, some participants believe that non-tenured faculty, or faculty new to an institution, are more likely to support student affairs initiatives. A study that explores this hypothesis is recommended.

### **Lessons Learned from this Study**

While conducting interviews for this study, two reoccurring phenomena were exposed. Researchers choosing to extend knowledge in this area of study may find information about them helpful. Awareness of these themes may help shape future studies. The first phenomenon is related to the level of reasoning and language used by the participants in the study. The majority of participants used very distinct words to describe faculty, such as "good" or "bad" and "positive" or "negative". Follow-up questions were used to expand their descriptions; however, several continued to use descriptors that reflected dualistic thinking. Conversely, some participants used broader terms to describe faculty. They depicted faculty as more multi-dimensional and complex. A suggestion for future researchers is to consider the cognitive development or level of reasoning of study participants. Researchers might study how various levels of development potentially impact the focus of the research or the methodology. For

example, does one's cognitive development influence their willingness to collaborate with someone from the other subculture?

Second, it was clear after interviewing a few participants that staying focused on faculty was going to be a challenge. For this study "faculty" is defined as those members of the university community whose primary role is teaching, research, and scholarship. When asked to describe faculty or share their memories about faculty, participants' answers were in line with that definition. However, when asked to talk about interactions or experiences with faculty, the conversations would often move to anything else related to academics. For example, the question would be, "Have you interacted with any faculty since our last meeting?" The response would be, "No, but we had a time management program," or "No, but some academic advisors are coming to do a presentation." A conscious decision was made to let the informants continue to talk about these academic initiatives in lieu of redirecting the interviews. I felt it important to see if this was a common thread throughout the study, and it was. I believe this tendency to veer the conversation to academics shows how these student affairs professionals have defined their collaborations with academic affairs, which is different from collaborations with faculty. To them, collaboration is more than faculty engagement with students. It includes programming and initiatives that include other components of academic affairs such as advising, library and technological resources, and tutoring. Veering the conversation towards other components of the institution instead of faculty is reflective of the lack of interaction between the RLCs and faculty. RLCs articulated more about faculty from their undergraduate and graduate student experiences than they could from their professional work experiences. Future researchers should keep in mind how student affairs professionals view of collaborative initiatives with faculty. Their views

may encompass anything related to academics or academic support, not purely initiatives involving faculty members.

### **Conclusion**

Higher education leaders are looking to collaboration as a way to address increasing societal demands for enhanced student learning outcomes, improved retention and graduation rates, and budgetary accountability. Emphasis has been placed on initiatives involving collaboration between faculty and student affairs professionals. This study originated as a result of connecting these tenets: a call for collaboration to enhance student learning; the link between organizational culture, beliefs, and perceptions; and the propagation of beliefs and perceptions through socialization. Increased understanding of student affairs professionals' acquisition of beliefs and perceptions about faculty may lead to more and enhanced collaboration. The guiding question of this study was, "How do student affairs professionals acquire commonly held beliefs and perceptions about faculty?" The goal of this study was not to prove or disprove a hypothesis, but rather to gain understanding and to stimulate self-reflection and discussion among study participants and readers of this study.

Uncovering and interpreting meaning behind behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs was required if this subculture of student affairs professionals was to be understood; thus, an ethnographic research method was proposed for this study. New Residence Life Coordinators, their experienced peers, and supervisors -- all from a large, public, research university -- were interviewed to learn about their beliefs and perceptions about faculty and how those beliefs and perceptions are acquired. Data about the new RLCs, the buddy pairs, and the supervisors were presented in the narrative form. A meeting in which faculty and residence life staff interacted was observed and documented. Written materials from the residence life department and division

of student affairs were analyzed and presented. At the onset of this study, it was my intention to observe several group interactions. I was particularly interested in observing the academic initiatives committee and more meetings of the living learning committee. Communication between me and the person in charge of these meetings was limited as she was very busy and had to spend some time away from campus during the study. Although my time observing group interaction was limited, the methods used for gathering data still reflect the tenets of ethnography. Those include exploring and describing beliefs and language related to cultural phenomena, being able to find patterns and common denominators in perceptions and judgments, and studying personal views about real-life contexts (Creswell, 1998; Martin, 2002; Schein, 2004). The interviews, meeting observation, and document analysis also provided opportunities to investigate the “microscopic aspects of institutional life” (Tierney, 2008, p. 62) and the “non-rational aspects of organizations” (Buyarski, 2006, p. 31).

The ways in which student affairs professionals acquire their beliefs and perceptions about faculty are multifarious. As with other beliefs and perceptions, views are shaped by a conglomeration of factors, such as experiences, influence from others, and learning. A central finding in this study is how some factors that shape views occur during one’s higher education experience. Notably, interactions with faculty, whether as a student, student employee, or professional, shape one’s views about faculty. Interactions vary from one-time meetings to working together as part of a team to life-long mentoring relationships. This study has also shown how undergraduate and graduate work experiences, student leadership experiences, and graduate course work can influence beliefs. Another finding uncovered an increase in the number and type of interactions with faculty for those student affairs professionals with the most years of experience. To address these findings, leaders in higher education are encouraged to provide on-

going opportunities for faculty-student and faculty-staff interactions. Not only do these interactions shape and challenge one's beliefs about faculty, but they promote relationships. Interactions promote relationships that can lead to collaboration, and enhanced collaboration can lead to deeper relationships and expanded networks (Kezar & Lester, 2009; Rodems, 2011). It is important to note that collaboration can also negatively affect relationships. Competition, lack of commitment, and withholding information or resources are components of collaboration that can negatively affect trust and prohibit relationship building (Fulop & Couchman, 2006).

Views of supervisors, peers, and students impact views held by others. This is consistent with the way in which cultures function (Martin, 2002; Tierney, 1997). Evidence from this study showed a culture in which there are shared meanings and messages passed through social interaction and common experiences. Awareness of common beliefs and messages within the student affairs' culture heighten members' understanding and may prompt them to question the status quo. Awareness of one's own culture may also lead to enhanced appreciation and understanding of others (Magolda, 2005). Student affairs professionals are encouraged to talk with others in their subculture to uncover underlying beliefs and values that may be positively or negatively impacting their views about faculty. Consistent with previous research, this study revealed common beliefs surrounding faculty roles and views of student learning. Conversations focusing on those topics may provide the subculture with common understandings. They are also encouraged to share and dissect messages heard from students. How are those messages shaping their personal beliefs about faculty?

By learning more about views student affairs members have of faculty, and how those views are acquired, the body of knowledge about the student affairs subculture is expanded. Findings also expand the body of knowledge about socialization in the student affairs'

subculture. They provide understanding to assist higher education leaders as they plan and implement student learning programs and services and as they lead and train staff members. They provide points for consideration and reflection for faculty, staff, and administrators.

Lastly, the findings remind us that, although part of a culture, student affairs professionals and faculty are individuals. Each new staff member or professor brings with them pre-established views of the other. As they become part of a new college or university community, through conversations, experiences, and training, they begin to learn about their new culture. Their learning includes assessing and evaluating cultural messages and sometimes integrating cultural beliefs and values with their own. Negative cultural beliefs and values that student affairs staff and faculty may have of each other inhibit relationship building and collaboration. Divergent beliefs related to roles and student learning are additional barriers to successful collaboration.

Those working in higher education are advised to take time to learn about their subculture and others. Strategies for doing so may include getting to know someone who isn't in one's own subculture or having meaningful conversations about roles and student learning. Leaders in higher education are encouraged to evaluate the cultural messages of their institutions. As new members enter an institution what cultural messages do they learn? Is their new culture one that embraces interaction and collaboration? Is it one that promotes understanding, relationship building, and open conversations about beliefs, perceptions, and values?

This study reinforces the idea that our views are influenced by others, but it also sheds light on our ability to shape our own views. Several participants remind us that we can question, change, or hold fast to our beliefs. Collaboration calls us to work together. It is a group endeavor. However, the individuals who make up that group, and the beliefs they bring with them, may

affect the success of the collaboration. Therefore, I believe meaningful, successful collaborative initiatives call for individuals who are committed to working with people who have beliefs and values different from their own. They call for individuals who are open to dialogue with others. They call for individuals who are willing to see, appreciate, and try to understand opposing viewpoints. And finally, they call for individuals who, if so inclined, are willing to modify their own beliefs.

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## APPENDIX A: APPROVAL FROM INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board Office

4N-70 Brody Medical Sciences Building· Mail Stop 682

600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834

Office 252-744-2914 · Fax 252-744-2284 · [www.ecu.edu/irb](http://www.ecu.edu/irb)

Notification of Initial Approval: Expedited

From: Social/Behavioral IRB

To: [Michele Myers](#)

CC: [David Siegel](#)

Date: 7/2/2012

[UMCIRB 12-000871](#)

Re: The Acquisition of New Student Affairs Professionals' Beliefs and Perceptions of Faculty

I am pleased to inform you that your Expedited Application was approved. Approval of the study and any consent form(s) is for the period of 6/30/2012 to 6/29/2013. The research study is eligible for review under expedited category #6, 7. The Chairperson (or designee) deemed this study no more than minimal risk.

Changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must submit a continuing review/closure application to the UMCIRB prior to the date of study expiration. The Investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

The approval includes the following items:

Name	Description
<a href="#">Informed Consent MyersM   History</a>	Consent Forms
<a href="#">Myers Dissertation Proposal   History</a>	Study Protocol or Grant Application
<a href="#">Myers Interview Protocol Semi-structures   History</a>	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

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IRB00000705 East Carolina U IRB #1 (Biomedical) IORG0000418

IRB00003781 East Carolina U IRB #2 (Behavioral/SS) IORG0000418 IRB00004973

## APPENDIX B: INITIAL EMAIL TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Your name was provided to me by XXXXXX. I am working on my dissertation research to complete the EdD in Higher Education Leadership at East Carolina University. The research is about how new student affairs professionals acquire their beliefs and perceptions of faculty.

Attached is a *Consent to Participate* form that details the study, but the basics are these:

- New hall directors, their peer “buddies” and their supervisor(s) will be interviewed.
- Interviews will occur three times before February 2013 (in July, in October and in December/January)
- The interviews will be 30-45 minutes in length.
- Interviews will be held in the participant’s office, the library or student center.
- All participants will be kept confidential and pseudonyms will be used in the dissertation.

You have been selected as a possible participant because you are either a new hall director or a peer mentor (buddy) at XXXX. I am very excited about the possibility of having you as part of the study. If after reading the consent form, you are interested, please let me know which of the times below work for you. I will be working with the other interviewees to try to schedule you all this week. Please respond to this request by Monday at 5:00pm. You are not obligated to participate, so just let me know if you choose not to.

### Interview slots (select all times that you would be available)

Thursday, July 19	Friday, July 20	Saturday, July 21
6-6:45pm	1-1:45pm	9-9:45am
7-7:45pm	2-2:45pm	10-10:45am
8-8:45pm	3-3:45pm	11-11:45am
9-9:45pm	4-4:45pm	Noon-12:45pm

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Shelly Myers  
910-962-XXXX

## APPENDIX C: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE FORM



Information to consider before taking part in research that has no more than minimal risk.

Title of Research Study: The Acquisition of Student Affairs Professionals' Beliefs and Perceptions of Faculty

Principal Investigator: Michele Myers

Institution/Department or Division: Educational Leadership – Higher Education Administration

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Researchers at East Carolina University (ECU) study problems in society, health problems, environmental problems, behavior problems and the human condition. Our goal is to try to find ways to improve the lives of you and others. To do this, we need the help of volunteers who are willing to take part in research.

**Why is this research being done?** The purpose of this research is to better understand how new student affairs professionals acquire their beliefs and perceptions of faculty. The decision to take part in this research is yours to make. By doing this research, I hope to learn what beliefs and perceptions student affairs professionals have of faculty and how they acquire those beliefs and perceptions. Current research shows that the beliefs and perceptions student affairs professionals and faculty have of one another, and of their own group, affects their willingness and ability to collaborate. As universities are being called to produce positive student learning outcomes, with limited resources, collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs is becoming more important. Understanding and knowledge obtained through this study may lead to enhanced collaboration between the two groups.

**Why am I being invited to take part in this research?** You are being invited to take part in this research because you are either a student affairs professional in a new position or an experienced student affairs professional who supervises or mentors new professionals. If you volunteer to take part in this research, you will be one of 7-20 people to do so.

**Are there reasons I should not take part in this research?** You should not participate in this study if you are uncomfortable about sharing your beliefs, perceptions, thoughts and feelings about faculty or if you cannot commit to the time required.

**What other choices do I have if I do not take part in this research?** You can choose not to participate.

**Where is the research going to take place and how long will it last?** The research procedures will be conducted at East Carolina University. Interviews will be held in your office, in a study room in Randall Library, or a conference room in Mendenhall Student Center. You will need to come to the site 2-3 times during the study. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is 45-60 minutes for 2-3 interviews and 45-60 minutes to review notes and conclusions that are an outcome of the interviews. Interviews will occur between June 2012-January 2013. In addition to interviews you may be observed during staff meetings, training sessions, and professional development in-services.

**What will I be asked to do?** Semi-structured interviews will be used to gather data for this study. During semi-structured interviews set questions are developed by the researcher. Wording can be changed and there is no particular order of the questions. This allows for flexibility with the interview, so that the interviewer can change the interview to address the insights and issues presented by you. The interviews will occur in three phases:

1. Beginning of study – All of the participants will be interviewed to obtain general demographic information, uncover beliefs and perceptions of faculty, and discuss experiences with faculty. General demographic information would include age, race, gender, degree attained, and past work experience. This will provide background information about the study participants.
2. Middle of the study – All of the participants will be interviewed to discuss experiences with one another and faculty since the start of the semester.
3. End of the study – New Residence Life Coordinators will be interviewed to discuss their experiences since the start of the semester and to uncover their beliefs and perceptions of faculty.

Beliefs and perceptions are influenced by many factors including past experiences, memories, and feelings. Over the course of all three phases, these are the types of questions that will be asked to uncover beliefs and perceptions:

1. How would you describe faculty members?
2. How would you describe the role of faculty members?
3. What do you think is important to faculty members?
4. Describe a memory that you have about a faculty member. Has that memory influenced, or not influenced, how you view faculty? If it has, how?
5. Describe an experience that you have had with a faculty member when you were a student. Has that memory influenced, or not influenced, how you view faculty? If it has, how?
6. Describe an experience that you have had with a faculty member while you have been working in Student Affairs. Has that memory influenced, or not influenced, how you view faculty? If it has, how?

Phase 2 and Phase 3 interviews would include additional questions, like these:

1. Have you had conversations with your “buddy”/supervisor/other residence life staff about faculty since the beginning of the semester? Have those conversations changed how you view faculty?

2. What experiences have you had with faculty members since our last interview? Did those experiences change your view of faculty?
3. What are your beliefs and perceptions of faculty?

**What possible harms or discomforts might I experience if I take part in the research?** It has been determined that the risks associated with this research are no more than what you would experience in everyday life.

**What are the possible benefits I may experience from taking part in this research?** I do not know if you will get any benefits by taking part in this study. This research might help us learn more about the beliefs and perceptions you have of faculty and how you have acquired them. This research may make you more self-aware of your own beliefs and perceptions. It may validate your current beliefs and perceptions about faculty or it may prompt you to change them. There may be no personal benefit from your participation but the information gained by doing this research may help others in the future.

**Will I be paid for taking part in this research?** We will not pay you for the time you volunteer while being in this study.

**What will it cost me to take part in this research?** It will not cost you any money to be part of the research.

**Who will know that I took part in this research and learn personal information about me?** To do this research, ECU and the people and organizations listed below may know that you took part in this research and may see information about you that is normally kept private. With your permission, these people may use your private information to do this research:

- Any agency of the federal, state, or local government that regulates human research. This includes the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the North Carolina Department of Health, and the Office for Human Research Protections
- The University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) and its staff, who have responsibility for overseeing your welfare during this research, and other ECU staff who oversee this research.

**How will you keep the information you collect about me secure? How long will you keep it?** Interviews will be recorded. Written transcripts will be created from the interviews. The researcher will also take notes during observational experiences. In addition, the researcher will keep a personal journal of thoughts and impressions during the research period. All data will be electronic and saved in Pirate Drive, ECU's electronic server. Information will be kept for up to 5 years after the completion of the study.

**What if I decide I do not want to continue in this research?** If you decide you no longer want to be in this research after it has already started, you may stop at any time. You will not be penalized or criticized for stopping. You will not lose any benefits that you should normally receive.

**Who should I contact if I have questions?** As the Principal Investigator of this study, I, Michele (Shelly) Myers will be available to answer any questions concerning this research, now

or in the future. You may contact me at 252-341-8400 (evenings and weekends) or 910-962-7902 (9am-6pm, Mondays-Fridays).

If you have questions about your rights as someone taking part in research, you may call the Office for Human Research Integrity (OHRI) at phone number 252-744-2914 (days, 8:00 am-5:00 pm). If you would like to report a complaint or concern about this research study, you may call the Director of the OHRI, at 252-744-1971.

**I have decided I want to take part in this research. What should I do now?**

The person obtaining informed consent will ask you to read the following and if you agree, you should sign this form:

- I have read (or had read to me) all of the above information.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions about things in this research I did not understand and have received satisfactory answers.
- I know that I can stop taking part in this study at any time.
- By signing this informed consent form, I am not giving up any of my rights.
- I have been given a copy of this consent document, and it is mine to keep.

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**Participant's Name (PRINT)**

**Signature**

**Date**

**Person Obtaining Informed Consent:** I have conducted the initial informed consent process. I have orally reviewed the contents of the consent document with the person who has signed above, and answered all of the person's questions about the research.

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**Person Obtaining Consent (PRINT)**

**Signature**

**Date**

## APPENDIX D: FIRST INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Review purpose of study and plan for study.
- Review and have person sign “Consent to Participate” form
- Gather demographic information
- Background - undergraduate institution(s), majors, involvements/work during undergraduate experience, graduate institution, graduate degree, graduate assistantships/work
- How did they become an RLC? For supervisor staff – career history?
- What are some beliefs and perceptions you have about faculty?
- Where do you think those beliefs and perceptions come from?
- Have you always had those beliefs or have they changed over time? If yes, how? Why?
- What do you think is the primary role of faculty? Describe what faculty members do? What is a typical week in the life of a faculty member?
- What do you think is the primary role of student affairs professionals?
- Think of your favorite professor during undergraduate experience (graduate experience). Describe him or her. What was your experience with him or her? Why does s/he stand out to you?
- Describe a positive experience with a faculty member. Describe a negative experience.
- Describe an experience you have had working with a faculty member? What did you work on? How would you describe that person? What did you think about that person? Did you learn anything from that experience?
- Since you started working at Cogentia have you met in faculty? Where? What are your impressions of them? Do you see yourself talking with that person again?
- What opportunities have you had to work with faculty at Cogentia University? What has that been like? What are your perceptions of that person? Will you try to continue that relationship?
- (For experienced staff) Describe some experiences when you have worked with Cogentia faculty? How often do you work with faculty? Have you continued any of the relationships with faculty that you have worked with in the past? Why?
- Since starting at Cogentia
  - Has your supervisor talked with you about faculty?
  - (For new RLCs) Has your buddy.
  - Have your peers?
  - Have your RAs?
  - Have your residents?
- When you think about working on a program or project with a professor, how does that make you feel? What do you think it will be like?
- What strategies will you use to meet faculty and get them involved with your residence hall?
- (For supervisors) Are there expectations for the RLCs about working with faculty? If yes, are those expectations in writing? If yes, do you provide training?

## APPENDIX E: SECOND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

October 2012

Describe your semester so far. What has been happening in your hall? How have you been spending your time and energy?

Do you think your beliefs or perceptions about faculty have changed since July? How have they changed? Why did they change?

Have you thought about this topic since we met in July?

Have you had any opportunities to meet any faculty members this fall? What experiences have you had with faculty in your residence hall?

How many new faculty members have you met so far this year? Where did you meet? How did you meet? Are these on-going relationships?

(For experienced RLCs) – How you seen faculty this fall that you have known previously?

When? What was your interaction? Do you have an on-going working or social relationship with them?

Have you developed any relationships with faculty that you would consider to be on-going relationships – working or social?

Have you incorporated any expectations for working with faculty with your RAs?

Have you talked with your RAs about faculty or experiences with faculty?

Have you talked with your students about faculty or experiences with faculty?

Have you talked with your peers about faculty or experiences with faculty?

Have you had the opportunity to serve on any committees/task forces with faculty?

Have you been in any professional development experiences with faculty?

What experiences have you had with your buddy?

Have you talked with your buddy about faculty? If yes, what have you discussed?

Have you talked with your supervisor about any faculty involvement or individual faculty members?

Is there anything else you would like to share with me about this topic?

## APPENDIX F: THIRD INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

For all

- Reflections on the fall. Describe the semester. Where did you expend most of their time and energy?
- Have you thought about faculty interactions since we met?
- Have you had any faculty interactions since we met?
- Have you talked with buddy, peers, students, or supervisor about faculty? If yes, what have you discussed?
- What are their beliefs and perceptions about faculty?
- Have your beliefs and perceptions about faculty changed since July or Oct? If yes, how? If yes, why do they think they changed?
- Looking back on the fall, what would you have done differently?
- What are your goals for the spring?
- Do any of your goals relate to working with or getting to know faculty?
- Do you think any of these groups beliefs and perceptions about faculty influences your beliefs and perceptions about faculty?
  - Students/RAs
  - Peers
  - Buddy
  - Department leaders (Director, Assistant Directors, etc.) Who and how?

Tommy

- Did he get to talk to supervisor about *Faculty Fellows*? If yes, what happened? If no, why not?

David

- Any movement on business program? Any other discussions/collaborations with business faculty?
- Any involvement from music faculty?
- Any more discussion in student affairs about faculty time-use study?

Susan

- Has she had success meeting with someone from Women's Studies?

Nicholas

- Did he attend Assessment Conference? Did he meet any faculty? Any on-going conversations? Thoughts about those interactions?

Nancy

- Any other faculty programs for her first-year experience hall?
- Has work load changed since we met last? Found time to concentrate of working with faculty?
- What has the academic initiatives committee been doing? What are her thoughts about the committee?

Joannie

- Any other faculty programs for her first-year experience hall?
- What has the academic initiatives committee been doing? What are her thoughts about the committee?

Mary

- How did lunch go with Sociology professor? What happened? And future collaborations?

Elizabeth

- Has work load changed since we met last? Has she found time to concentrate of working with faculty?

At end of each interview

- Share a synopsis with each RLC about what I have learned. Have I captured their beliefs and perceptions about faculty? Am I covering main points? Is there anything they want to clarify?

## APPENDIX G: NOTES FROM LIVING LEARNING COMMUNITY

### FACULTY LIAISON MEETING

Observation for dissertation

Oct. 30, 2012

- Met at XXXX Hall classroom

Present:

- 2 Asst. Dir of Residence Life, 1 RLC (not one that I am interviewing), 1 admin asst from Residence Life, 2 faculty members (1 NSG, 1 BIO), 1 AD for Honors College, 1 academic advisor for BUS, 1 staff member and 2 GAs from Wellness (a student affairs dept)

Before meeting:

- Very cordial laughing
- Waiting for others – RLC came in and said that there is a “pot smoker” in one of the buildings – which one of us should miss the meeting to take care of it. She did.
- A few discussed work issues before meeting, what they are dealing with currently

Meeting:

- AD (not AD of Aca. Init.) gave update on ACUHO conference – faculty and staff attended conf on LCs – interaction on Cogentia team was good gave them a chance to interact
- talked about having a “common language” about LCs so fac and staff at Cogentia give the same message to students and outside constituents
- AD (not AD of Aca. Init.): “realized how young we are” “feel very lucky that at Cogentia SA and fac are meshing here” all have the common goal of helping the students succeed & graduate. She was very positive.
- AD of Academic Initiatives talked about future conference ideas
- Group was all very engaged at this point. All positive non-verbals, listening intently
- So far the meeting has been all info giving from Res Life ADs, little discussion
- Next agenda item was RA selection and recruitment – RLC explained it
  - Faculty had several questions: Do you have shortage of RAs? Can FR apply?
  - Res Life is notifying faculty of RA selection earlier than they ever have.
  - Fac member concerned that students in LC who apply may think they will get to stay in their current hall.
  - Reaching out to FYE instructors to go in and talk to FR classes about RA position

*Most animated they've been has been around how they (fac) get to give input about RA candidates – conversation around giving feedback about student applicants who may not be in their current LCs – RLC was willing to have all liaisons look at all of the applicants. -they worked through a problem by compromising*

- RLC was going to give them a short list to “make it easier for you all” – He had assumed they would be too busy and not interested in reviewing all of the applicants. AD of Aca. Init. kept saying...understand, it may be 200 or more students on the list—fac were still willing to review the entire list of applicants
- Fac members said “It’s in good hands. Your guy is in charge of it.” – talking to AD of Aca. Init. about how faculty will be notified of applicants

NOTE TO SELF: This group is pretty engaged and positive – are these the “friendly faculty” – are they different from the ones the RLCs are talking about when we interview?

- Issue from NSG faculty member – marketing for NSGLC can only take 40 students, but 500 pre-nursing students start at Cogentia. BIO fac member talked to NSG fac member about how to manage numbers of applicants. Shared about what BIO does to marked their LC and deadlines, etc.
- All meeting members seemed engaged in the discussion about recruitment.

Discussion about increased enrollment for fall 2013 – challenge when XXX hall goes down for renovations

- Fac had questions about how housing plans for increased enrollment. This was another example of the information sharing that was occurring in this meeting. Faculty learning nitty-gritty about housing that they otherwise wouldn’t.
- The RL staff and fac were very cordial and talked a lot. The academic advisor (from BUS) and staff/GAs from Wellness hall didn’t talk.
- Discussed new LCs for next year..BIO fac said “her colleagues” in CHM are very interested, but want to start with 16 students. She was able to share CHM plans since she is in closer contact with CHM and other science faculty.
- They seemed to have a common issue that they were upset about – that being increased enrollment

Last agenda item: Assessment

- Mixed issues with assessment.
- Two LC liaisons asked for help to create assessments – others were willing to share what they currently use – AD of Aca. Init. referred them to the SA Assessment person, but BUS advisor said that person never got back to her.
- Looking at creating some common questions for their assessments, the some special questions based on the individual LCs.
- Before creating survey – What are we trying to assess? Faculty members suggested bringing in IPRE to help them with that.
- AD of Acad. Init. recommended a day long retreat

- Fac member – “Let’s have a full day retreat. Housing can pay for it.”...all laughed. All seemed in agreement about that comment. No one in housing disputed it or disagreed.
- Discussion about doing it earlier – Jan. break – AD had to confirm that fac will be on campus then – they all said they would. No one was negative about having an all-day retreat at the start of spring semester...This surprised me!
- Positive = fac involved in this were able to talk about specific students in the LCs – i.e., who is moving in spring, etc.

End of meeting:

- What they will be talked about at next mtg?...Group kept talking. Didn’t seem to want to end the meeting. AD kept it at an hour.
- Discussion about students in current LCs who want to continue to the soph year.
- Questions from fac about how assignments are done w/current students.
- Fac member shared that there are discussions at higher levels about where LCs are housed.
  - “Don’t want academic departments fighting over locations.”
  - “The bosses are talking about LCs.”
  - Group agreed that they need to get upper levels involved in their plans and conversations.
  - All very positive and interested in discussion.
  - Fac had discussion about location of buildings – one (BIO fac) thinks living on hill is not a problem if students start here, others want their students in the “heart of campus.” BIO fac member said she was open to having students on the hill. She seemed to be able to see all sides of issues and was good at pulling together key points of the conversation and communicating commonalities, getting group to consensus
  - Feels like there is going to be an explosion of LCs.

**APPENDIX H: UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE EXPERIENCES**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Years of Pro. Exp.</b>	<b>Undergraduate Major(s)</b>	<b>Graduate Majors</b>	<b>Graduate Courses – Faculty or Academic Affairs &amp; Student Affairs discussed</b>	<b>Other Graduate Work that Involved Learning about Faculty or Academic Affairs</b>	<b>Required to Work with Faculty During RA or GA Experiences</b>
Elizabeth	0	Exercise Science	Higher Education Concentration in Student Affairs	Faculty in Higher Education		No
Nancy	0	Psychology & Sociology	Student Affairs	History of Higher Education Teaching College Students	Presentation by Provost; discussed AA and SA collaboration	Yes
Nicholas	0	Vocational Rehabilitation	Higher Education Administration	Introduction to Higher Education	Discussions about org. culture and org. structure	Yes
Tommy	0	Business	Student Affairs in Higher Education	Doesn't remember	Conversations about academic and student affairs	Yes
Joannie	3	Psychology & Gender Studies	College Student Affairs Leadership	The Adult Learner	How faculty and student affairs would work with different types of students	Yes
Mary	3	Business	Student Personnel Administration	History of Higher Education	Studied different departments in Student Affairs and their connection to academics	Yes
Susan	3	Business	College Student Affairs Leadership	Can't remember name of course	Project in which she had to create a department that served students through academic and student affairs	Yes
David	4	Criminology	Counselor Education Concentration in Student Affairs	Organizational Culture	Project in which he had to create a student affairs department; touched on connection with academics	Yes