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Positive experiences: Focusing on the good in new professionals in student affairs

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

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The Graduate School

POSITIVE EXPERIENCES: FOCUSING ON THE GOOD IN NEW
PROFESSIONALS IN STUDENT AFFAIRS

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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College of Education and Behavioral Sciences
Department of Leadership, Policy and Development:
Higher Education and P-12 Education
Higher Education and Student Affairs Leadership

May 2014

This Dissertation by: Amy Dinise-Halter

Entitled: *Positive Experiences: Focusing on the Good in New Professionals in Student Affairs*

has been approved as meeting the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in College of Education and Behavioral Sciences in Department of Leadership, Policy and Development: Higher Education and P-12 Education, Program of Higher Education and Student Affairs Leadership

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ABSTRACT

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Student affairs researchers for decades have examined new professionals' development and retention into the field. Many researchers explored skills, qualities, and supervision styles needed to retain professionals. Others looked at environmental factors, like institutional type and organizational structures, that contributed to new professional development and learning in first positions. While these studies produced a foundational body of research on new professionals, all are from a deficit standpoint allowed for the gap in understanding what new professionals are doing well in their development and how are they thriving and succeeding when entering the field.

In this dissertation study, the author used positive psychology theories, photojournals as a method, and portraiture methodology to explore the research question: How do self-identified positive professional experiences impact new professionals' development in student affairs? Positive psychology shifted the paradigm in psychology from focusing on deficit and lack of mentalities to good, thriving, strength-based mentalities. This shift challenged the field to understand more about what new professionals in student affairs are doing right in their lives, how are they thriving, and use those qualities, experiences and characteristics to produce positive feelings in all areas of life.

In addition to interviews, photojournals were used as a data collection method. In this study, photojournals may be described as a photoelicitation method through a technique called autodriving which put the camera in the hands of the participants. Participants in this study were asked to capture photos of six to ten moments or accomplishments in their professional development they saw as positive. These photos contributed to the portrait process as it added a visual element to an artistic methodology.

Portraiture methodology is a qualitative, constructivist methodology that allowed I, as the researcher, to capture stories and experiences from 10 new professionals in this study and creatively depict them by bring the art of writing and the science of research together. The focus of this methodology is on goodness which is the process of unearthing good in the research process, nicely connecting to positive psychology.

The findings from this study are 10 individual portraits of each participant's experiences of being a new professional. Findings include four themes: providing transformative moments, being a change agent, encouraging a positive spirit, and the need for reflection and relationships. These themes highlight for each participant how the four themes played out in their professional development as a new professional. In the discussion and implications section, practical examples are discussed for new professionals, supervisors of new professionals, and faculty in graduate preparation programs.

Key Words: Student Affairs; New Professionals; Portraiture; Photojournal; Professional Identity

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Help! The last few weeks at this job have been so challenging and I am struggling with the reasons why I wanted to work in student affairs in the first place. In graduate school, I thought my first job would be awesome. I thought I would love working with students. I thought I would really be able to impact the profession with my daily work. But in the last few weeks, I tried to voice a new idea and was shot down. I disagreed with a colleague and feel some tension in our relationship. My students hate me. When I brought all of these things to my supervisor, they brushed it off as if it was not important. I keep sitting here thinking, "What did I get myself into? Can I really do this job?"

I know in graduate school we talked about the transition from graduate school to a first time position can be quite challenging. But right now, there seems to be a sink or swim mentality towards my professional development. I don't know what else to do. At this moment, I have more than enough challenges and I just wonder if this position is right for me. Did you ever feel this way in your first position?

I will never forget the moment. The moment I sat at my computer and wrote this email and the significant doubt and struggle I was experiencing as a new professional. I was searching for something, anything to help me fully understand the transition to being a new professional. All I kept thinking was I was a failure, a statistic, and no matter how much education or experiences I had, I was never going to make it as a student affairs

professional. I took a deep breath, sent the email to a mentor and got to work figuring out if I was the only person experiencing these feelings.

I was not alone. Recent statistics show a range between 20% and as high as 60% of new professionals leave student affairs between one to six years after graduating from a master's program (Hirt, 2006; Tull, Hirt, & Saunders, 2009). Now, 10 years into my career, colleagues, former students, and my own peers have often shared with me the challenges they faced in adjusting to professional life. Some have even left the profession. I decided I needed to know more about this phenomenon to understand their experiences and my own.

As I looked for answers to why I was questioning my competency, I found some factors impacting new professionals and their success as practitioners. The transition from graduate student to new professional provided many challenges, specifically around skill development, work life balance, and actuality of the work (Cilente, Henning, Skinner Jackson, Kennedy, & Sloan, 2006; Cuyjet, Longwell-Grice, & Molina, 2009; Dickerson et al., 2011; Hirt & Creamer, 1997; Renn & Hodges, 2007; Wilson et al., 2013). Many researchers (Hyman, 1988; Lorden, 1998; Lovell & Kosten, 2000) found the retention of new professionals was central to sustaining student affairs as a profession and named feeling competent as one of the top issues as to why people leave the field. This finding made me feel less alone when I was struggling with my own transition. I went looking for the "this is how we keep people in the profession" document or "hey new professional feeling incompetent, you're not alone and here is what to do" manual. I found that neither of these documents existed. I remember sitting there wondering if my job and professional life would ever get better.

The job did get better. I now know what I was struggling with was professional socialization, which happens for many new professionals as they transition from graduate school to work. Studies have affirmed there was a gap between graduate education and practitioner work that caused transition issues (Cuyjet et al., 2009; Hyman, 1988; Jones & Segawa, 2004; Kuk & Hughes, 2003). There was dissonance within the student affairs and higher education community as to who was responsible for socializing new professionals. Some questions I have heard over the years and ones that were echoed in the literature were: Should socialization take place either in graduate programs and/or work environments? Is it the responsibility of faculty and/or practitioners, specifically supervisors? What were the new professionals' roles within the socialization process? (Magolda & Carnaghi, 2004; Tull et al., 2009). I witnessed finger pointing in many different directions from professionals, professional associations, and faculty without one concrete connection as to when and how socialization for new professionals occurred. In my own experiences, this felt like I was a being pulled in several different directions with unspoken expectations. When I would actively make a decision I thought was correct based on what I learned in graduate school, in practice it was not the correct decision. For example, in a staff meeting discussion about a new program, I started asking questions through a critical lens to understand my role and ideas for the program, something highly encouraged in graduate school. My boss pulled me over after the meeting and told me never to question critically in a staff meeting again. I got frustrated, questioned my competency and commitment to the profession and thought about leaving. Instead of giving up, I dug in and looked for greater understanding and more resources.

In looking for support, I found articles on new professionals' skill development preparation and perceptions of preparation throughout the student affairs community (Cilente et al., 2006; Cuyjet et al., 2009 Dickerson et al., 2011; Renn & Hodges, 2007; Waple, 2006). I thought this literature would give answers to some questions, and maybe offer a broader perspective on new professionals' experiences beyond my lens. At that point in my literature search, most research used a deficit model and created a challenge for me to figure out how to I was supposed to become successful as a new professional. Findings were all over the continuum with some studies showing new professionals were prepared to go into a practitioner work environment (Cilente et al., 2006; Cuyjet et al., 2009), while others were saying new professionals need to be prepared in certain ways (Dickerson et al., 2011; Renn & Hodges, 2007; Waple, 2006). The lack of agreement left me feeling more confused. I found many studies indirectly focused on new professionals' work experiences rather than making new professionals' voices the focus of the study. For example, studies have asked new professionals to define their professional values (Bureau, 2013), define their skill sets (Cuyjet et al., 2009; Dickerson et al., 2011) but fail to ask about the experiences leading to the conclusions or development of these areas. Knowing more about the thought process and decision making that led to these conclusions could help other new professionals who might experience the same process.

Other studies focused on the issues of graduate preparation, skill development, and identity development (Renn & Hodges, 2009; Wilson et al., 2013). While these researchers explored areas around new professionals' development, the research framework put these issues as purpose of the study, rather than focusing on the journey of

developing as new professionals. This still left a gap for me of knowledge as to how new professionals actually experience student affairs practice and what contributes to their overall success as a new professionals. I was determined to figure out how to become successful because I desperately wanted to do a great job for my boss, department, students and graduate program. I could not find the support I needed in those moments of doubt. I wanted to feel I was not alone, and could overcome the transitional process. I wanted to hear from another professional who had been through the transition that everything was going to be okay. I knew challenges were ways of growing, but I still did not know how to move forward.

As a new professional, I was caught in many of these gaps found in the literature. I had the skill set needed, but neither my graduate program nor first position really socialized me to the practice of student affairs. I was not alone either. After reading about professional socialization, I can take other examples of struggling new professionals and see they are due to a lack of socialization. Now as someone who supervised new professionals, I looked again for a guide for on how to socialize employees. While there was some literature that provides information on new professionals' socialization (Tull et al., 2009), I was still left wondering how to apply the research and use it to help new professionals.

As a new professional, I ended up being okay. Year two, professionally, was amazing and extremely contrasting to year one. Not because I found some article or book explaining the "how tos" for new professionals, but because I took the time to reach out and tell my story to colleagues and mentors who helped me process through the experience and how I could grow to make the next year better. My experience guided me

to this study. Could I, by capturing the stories and learning processes of new

professionals, potentially impact the growing field of new professionals research? Could

I share the stories of new professionals' positive experiences and these experiences

influence on professional development? What I have found in the literature since my

time as a new professional was most research was focused on a lack of development that

needs to be rectified. Knowing that some of the foundational developmental theories (for

example, Astin, 1984; Boyer, 1990; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Gillian, 1977; Sanford,

1967) did not focus directly on overcoming obstacles, I wanted to flip current research to

use a more positive lens. This provided an opportunity for me to study a new area of

research on new professionals focusing on the positive experiences and contributions to

their success in a student affairs career.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose in this study was to gather stories of new professionals' experiences

around their motivation to do student affairs work and how positive experiences

contributed to new professionals' development. In recent studies on new professionals,

there was more information about skill development and professional values emerging in

their graduate school experiences and how they were tied to practice (Cuyjet et al., 2009;

Hyman, 1988; Jones & Segawa, 2004; Kuk & Hughes, 2003; Wilson et al., 2013).

Researchers were looking at new professionals' identity development (Bureau, 2013;

Schoper, 2013), and soon studies will be conducted on how the ACPA/NASPA

professional competencies (American College Personnel Association, & National

Association of Student Personnel Administrators, 2010) impacted new professionals'

development and career implementation. All of these research areas were helpful to the

body of knowledge on new professionals, and still lack the intention of studying

experiences of new professionals.

I also found that new professionals' voices are missing from the research

literature. One study focused on sharing new professionals' experiences through their

voices by collecting data through reflective email prompt for the first year post-

graduation (Renn & Hodges, 2007); however, there is still limited knowledge on what

helps new professionals be successful in a student affairs career. The voice of new

professionals can be powerful in bringing new perspectives to the research. I think back

to my conversations with mentors and friends and the amount of information I could have

shared would have been beneficial to many besides me. I wanted to hear from new

professionals what was helpful in their socialization and professional development, and

share findings that included their perspectives and details. I believe this will help new

professionals and the profession of student affairs to support new professionals' transition

and development in the future. For this study, I focused on the positive to contribute a

new perspective of new professionals in student affairs by using positive psychology and

portraiture methodology.

Research Question

The following research question guided this study:

Q1   How do self-identified positive professional experiences impact new
         professionals' development?

This question was explored through a portraiture methodology. Portraiture methodology

is an in-depth, qualitative methodology mixing art and science (Lawrence- Lightfoot &

Hoffman Davis, 2002) and is discussed in more details in chapter three. I, as the

researcher, worked with participants to create portraits of their successful professional experiences.

Importance of Study

Given all of the research on new professionals, this study provided a new lens for looking at new professionals' development beyond the limited perspectives of what has already been contributed to the research body. The body of literature on new professionals in student affairs is mainly focused on where new professionals lack in their development and socialization process. While it is good to find gaps, finding effective solutions to those gaps have not yet been produced. When new professionals are struggling in their first positions, findings from this study will shed light on the successes of other new professionals and this may help their professional identity development.

This study also gave supervisors and faculty in graduate programs meaningful next steps to encourage new professionals' transition and development (see chapter five). Literature on supervision offered little ideas on practical ways to supervise new professionals. This study provided supervisors stories of experiences of new professionals and concrete ideas on supervision. This study also helped support the work of graduate preparation programs and faculty. Just like for supervisors, stories of these new professionals can benefit the continual design and curriculum for graduate preparation programs.

In addition to new contributions to the literature, this study also introduced portraiture as a methodology for research in higher education and student affairs. I believe, as student affairs professionals, we are called to work with the whole student (American Council on Education, 1994a, 1994b) and the learning process (American

College Personnel Association, 1996; Keeling & Dungy, 2004). Portraiture methodology provided a research process that allowed for the construction of development, learning and environmental factors in research topic. The use of this methodology could advance findings further than current student affairs research. In searching for previous studies using portraiture as a methodology in major student affairs journals, three publications were found (Petchauer, 2010; Stewart 2008, 2010). While these articles included relevant findings to the topic of research, each only had one line about portraiture methodology in the entire article, which still did not offer a student affairs' community the example of portraiture as a research methodology.

Portraiture was developed to conduct research in educational settings and could be an exciting methodological contribution to higher education and student affairs research. The methodology was designed to capture the whole picture of a given population, setting, and/or phenomenon (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 2002). This tied into student affairs research because studies produced by scholars in the profession need to capture what students were learning in student affairs settings and how the setting fostered learning. For example, in diversity studies, findings about power and privilege, racism, and personal experiences were significant. However, in research on diverse issues, the environment cannot be ignored. Portraiture methodology challenged the researcher to not only capture the participants' stories, but also the environment because of the significant role setting played within education.

Portraiture's style of writing was another reason this methodology can be beneficial to student affairs research. The finished piece should read like a book or short story. Academic research often is not written in a style that many student affairs

practitioners understand or enjoy reading. It can create a power differential that discourages many practitioners from attempting to stay up-to-date with current issues and from applying research to practice. Portraiture writing can make findings readable, available, and easier to put into practice by using common language, easy to understand terms, and a more narrative style. Many of my colleagues will not take the time to read publications because "they're boring" or "nothing they're saying helps me in my daily work." I get saddened by these statements. What is being published is so essential to the daily work of student affairs. Often what was really being communicated was the inability to understand research language. I believe we as a profession are doing a lot of good work that needs to be read and need to find a way to connect more our findings to daily work. I can see portraiture doing that as long as it is a more widely used and accepted methodology.

Throughout this dissertation process, my student affairs practitioner identity has wanted to ensure that the research process was enjoyable for the participants and different from the usual interview or focus group style of qualitative dissertations. This led me to visual methods, specifically photography, which was used as a data collection tool. Photography specifically was gaining more popularity in student affairs research as a method (Guido & Birnbaum, 2010; Harrington & Schibik, 2003). Photography has been used as a powerful tool in representing data, culture, and environments in many other disciplines and student affairs researchers were missing out on a phenomenal resource for data collection, which is in the hands of almost every student or research participant through the advancement of smart phones and tablet devices with cameras. What I discovered was current studies do not always put the camera in the hands of the

participants to capture their own experiences. It was an exciting way to view new professionals' experience through their own lens by take pictures of their experiences. From what I can tell, this will be a new addition to student affairs research.

Looking at research through a positive psychology lens was motivating to me knowing I would be meeting with participants and talking about their professional experiences that have been meaningful, empowering, exciting, energizing, and engaging. As mentioned before, student affairs research thus far on new professionals came from a deficit model focused on what new professionals lacked in their positions. Being able to approach these conversations looking at positive experiences gave new information about new professionals' development. Using a positive psychology lens did not mean that professional challenges did not come up in conversation. Since the study was positive or goodness focused, participants talked about how they were overcoming the challenges or worked to find ways to make an impact even in a negative experience. The findings through this framework provided an opportunity to learn what they were doing successfully and how they overcame challenges to inform the student affairs profession with a different type of knowledge about new professionals other than the current literature suggested.

Overview of Dissertation

I am so excited this study brought together portraiture, goodness research, positive psychology, visual methods and student affairs through the lens of new professionals. I believed the connections between these five areas contributed to the body of knowledge on new professionals in student affairs. For me, this research study was not only about connecting together many different theories and research practices,

but also about empowering new professionals' voices in their experience. Highlighting what new professionals are doing successfully, what experiences encourage them to continue in the profession, and defining the rewarding experiences creating intrinsic motivation, I helped both new professionals and those who work with them (supervisors, faculty, etc.) support, encourage, and inspire professional development.

In the introduction, I provided a brief overview of the issues with research on new professionals, highlighted the gaps in the literature, and promoted portraiture and goodness research. Following the introduction, chapter two, the literature review, I will provide literature to student affairs as a profession, including a brief history of the profession to help lay a foundation for student affairs work. After the foundation, I then discuss organizational theory in higher education and student affairs and how it connects to the socialization of new professionals in student affairs. These topics broadly outline the context, organization perspectives, and learning process for new professionals in first positions. I believe the literature lays a foundation to conduct positive research on new professionals' experiences. In the theoretical framework, positive psychology is shared in detail as the guiding theory for this study. I define positive psychology and explain how it gives a frame for the positive nature of this study.

In chapter three, I begin the methodology section with an overview of the constructivist paradigm. Following the discussion of the paradigm, I explain the portraiture methodology in detail including components critical to the methodology. After the explanation of the methodology, I outline the steps for data collection methods for this project. Because I used photography as one data collection method, I share an overview of visual sociologies and methodologies including photo elicitation, native

instant photography, and photojournaling, all of which participants used to construct their photos.

After reading these first three chapters, I hope you, the reader, have a basic overview of student affairs as a profession from the historical, organizational, and transitional experiences of new professionals, understand more about positive psychology and how goodness in research fits into this study, understand about visual sociology and methods in research practices and understand portraiture as a methodology and the methods used in this study to collect positive experiences in new student affairs professionals.

Chapter four introduces all 10 of the new professionals in this study and their experiences through individual portraits. The four themes from the study--transformative moments, change agents, positive spirit and need for reflection--are shared throughout each participant's portrait. After all 10 portraits, I discuss the findings in detail to help solidify each theme as a finding.

In chapter five, I discuss the implications for each of the themes and talk about how each theme can benefit a new professional, a supervisor of a new professional, and a faculty preparing new professionals. After the implications, limitations and future research ideas are shared. These future research ideas can take these findings and move them further into supporting and developing new professionals.

Statement of Philosophy of Student Affairs Practice

Since my first year as a new professional, I have grown significantly in my own professional development and identity. The timid, overwhelmed, new professional I presented at the beginning of this chapter has transformed into a successful practitioner.

Because my current style of student affairs practice influenced this research study, I believe it is important to know where my philosophy of working in student affairs is today and where it will continue from in the future.

I consider myself directly in the middle of being a scholar-practitioner continuum. I believe the two cannot be separated, but depending on the situation one may take a dominant role over the other. This directly impacts my style and philosophy of working in student affairs. My practitioner and teaching styles center directly on the concepts of theory to practice and transformative learning. In a practitioner setting, I see myself as a teacher often sharing theories and concepts and connecting them in a practical manner fostering development for those I work with. In my classes, students are taught the theories and foundations essential to student affairs practice through a variety of methods, while being challenged through activities to practically apply their knowledge. My goal for any learning environment, functional area or classroom, is creating a transformative learning experience for others where the environment is a safe and supportive place for personal and professional growth through reflection. Personal reflection, theoretical knowledge, and practical application are essential to develop in future and current student affairs practitioners. I foster these three characteristics through training, developmental conversations, and a supportive synergistic relationship.

I believe as a mid-level student affairs professional, it is my responsibility to guide students and practitioners through their learning experiences as a developing professional in student affairs. Essential to professional development is practical application and skill development. My supervision style includes activities and lessons

focused around practical application. In every setting, I instruct to help develop tools essential for leadership while challenging professional and personal development.

Essential to practical application is the theoretical and foundational knowledge of these skills. In all settings, theory and research guide implementation of practice. In a classroom setting, students will understand not only how to do something, but why it is essential to student affairs practice. In a practitioner setting, those I work with will be challenged to use research and best practices to guide new initiatives and daily work. It is likely in both situations people will hear me ask, "how are we connecting theory to practice in this project?" keeping us all focused and intentional with student affairs work. Those I work with will be challenged to think through complex ideas and issues while being encouraged to creatively problem solve. A sense of community and team is critical to me and as the perceived leader in many situations, I will foster this through conversations, sharing of ideas, and addressing conflicts.

Finally, personal and professional reflection allowing for transformative learning is the foundation of my student affairs style. Active reflection by those I work with helps them connect with their own skills, abilities, attitudes, and beliefs about a given topic and all play a role in the learning process. By providing an outlet through journaling, conversation, professional development, and activities, those I work with will understand how their own bias and experiences shape their learning and student affairs working style.

I am incredibly passionate about guiding future and current student affairs professionals. My ability to shape and support others, through classes and practical settings, is my way of contributing to the future of student affairs as a profession. I will

provide practical learning opportunities to help shape their skills needed for professional work. These skills will come from the theoretical understanding of student affairs work. I will challenge those I work with, through my inherent strength of individualization, which allows me to gain a great understanding of others strengths and cater to their personal and professional development. This combination will not only make for an active and engaging learning and professional development environment, but also serve to meet the developmental needs of future and current student affairs practitioners.

I read somewhere that styles and values are like fingerprints, nobody's are the same, but you leave them all over everything you do. This statement above showed up in every aspect of this study. Thank you for taking the time to read this, as this research project is near and dear to my heart, and I hope you are able to learn something further about just one of the new ideas I am bringing into student affairs practice.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Socialization into Student Affairs

It's five a.m. and my alarm goes off. I was already wide awake not having slept very well because I was too excited and nervous. As I sat up in bed, the reality of the day hit me; today I start my first position in student affairs. Questions ran through my mind at 100 miles per hour: what should I wear? Who will I meet? Will I get along with my colleagues? What will my supervisor be like? Will I be able to do the job? It was only a matter of time before those questions were answered.

I entered the conference room. The room was a converted modular trailer. I learned this was only supposed to be temporary building set on the campus in 1991, but has become a temporary permanent building since it is now 2005 and buildings were constructed around it with no ability to remove it. The walls were plain and beige. A whiteboard hung on one wall. Broken cabinets line the other looking like a small attempt to make this room feel a little less sterile and more permanent. I met several new colleagues and find out some were in their first positions too like me. Others were in their second and third year in the position. A supervisor passed out a binder of information including a schedule for the next three weeks of training. I take a deep breath as I open the binder. Many sessions include information on processes, skill development, and building a team. This binder contained everything I need to do my job.

I can barely picture the rest of the day or training for that matter, but what I do

remember most was this feeling of excitement about what I could do in the position and

the nervousness towards feeling competent in the position. I learned later I was

experiencing the practice of socialization.

Socialization is "the process by which new members of an organization come to

understand, appreciate, and adopt the customs, traditions, values, and goals of their

profession and their new organization" (Tull et al., 2009, p. *x*). Socialization can be as

simple as the appropriate attire for the job or as complicated as learning to navigate the

political landscape. Either way, it was the process of helping people feel like they matter

within an organization and position (Tull et al., 2009).

The concept of socialization came from sociology. The original process of

professional socialization developed about adults who wanted to learn a new profession

by spending considerable amounts of time in that profession. This time was meant to

"transform lay people into professionals" (Brim & Wheeler, as cited in Barretti, 2004, p.

257). In this process, it was expected the person accept the common core values, norms,

and roles of that particular profession (Goode, as cited in Barretti, 2004). As

socialization evolved, it was still a process in which a person intensely learned about a

field, but rather than just accepting values and norms, the learning process included deep

reflection and interpretation of values to be internalized by the person rather than

accepted.

The process of studying socialization in higher education came from research on

the professionalization of medical students (Merton, 1957) and expanded to include other

professionalization programs like nursing (Leddy & Pepper, 1989), law (Erlanger &

Klegon, 1978), and social work (Barretti, 2004). Studies from these three areas were seeking to understand how identity and values changed as a result of attending professional degree programs. Given the nature of attending graduate school for most student affairs professionals, many aspects of socialization in these three professions can inform student affairs work.

There was also an extensive body of literature on the socialization of new faculty into academia and there were some similarities between the socialization challenges for faculty and new student affairs professionals. Faculty were also often socialized, mostly in graduate programs, and learned the skill set needed to teach from graduate level courses and experiences (Austin, 2002). However to ease this transition, mentoring programs have been quite popular for new faculty in an attempt to create a better socialization process (Tierney & Rhoads, 1993) especially in supporting faculty of color and other minority populations. This mentoring process can sound a lot like training for new student affairs professionals. Much like the mixed findings on effective supervision and training for new student affairs professionals, research on the positive socialization of new faculty through mentoring programs was inconsistent (Cawyer, Simonds, & Davis, 2003). There is still also a lot we can learn from other professionals about intentional and impactful socialization of new professionals.

Key Aspects of Socialization for New Professionals in Student Affairs

Socialization is significant to new professionals as they enter student affairs for the first time. This is the process by which new professionals' understand the values, skills and expectations of the profession and learn how to execute them in an effective manner. The orientation process helps new professionals understand the expectations of

the position and the relationships around them. Having a good supervisory relationship is critical to the socialization process. While the process of socialization does occur in professional work setting, the beginning stages of socialization can occur in graduate preparation and programs.

Graduate Education Preparation
Socialization in Student Affairs

The socialization process for some new professionals began in graduate school. These programs were set up to help a graduate students understand the foundational values and skills needed for professional work and to start the socialization process of becoming a professional through reflection and involvement. The establishment of the first student affairs graduate program was in 1916 at Teacher's College, Columbia University under the program title Vocational Guidance (Sandeen et al., 1987). Now, according to both directories for graduate programs for ACPA and NASPA, there are around 140 graduate programs for higher education and student affairs in the United States (American College Personnel Association, 2009; National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, 2012). Even with 140 programs, consistency amongst the programs, like curriculum, practical experiences, and even admissions requirements can be different from one another. Arguments have been made throughout the profession stating there were no consistent expectations of what the purpose and goals of graduate programs in student affairs should do to prepare students for professional work (Kuk & Hughes, 2003; Magolda & Carhaghi, 2004) and many do follow Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) at the master's level.

Important to understand about graduate preparation however is no two programs may be alike. Graduate programs in student affairs have been housed in several different

academic departments including education and counseling (Evans & Phelps Tobin, 1993). The type of master's degree certification differs, and even if the same class is offered in two different programs, topics covered vary by instructor (Evans & Phelps Tobin, 1993). Graduates of these programs may differ in preparation levels, skills, understandings of the profession and practice, and needs. This may lead to the argument about new professionals being underprepared.

There could also be some strengths found in the difference among preparation programs. Arguments have been made encouraging graduate programs to change the nature of selection and recruitment processes to attract a more diverse population of graduate students who then in turn will create a more diverse professional population (Flowers & Howard-Hamilton, 2002; Komives & Kuh, 1988; Pope & Reynolds, 1997; Schuh, Jones, & Harper, 2010; Talbot, 1996; Taub & McEwen, 2006). Having a variety of preparation programs allows the profession to bring in many different types of new professionals who in turn can meet the needs of a diverse college student population.

Curriculum and Council for the
Advancement of Standards

One of the fundamental ways a student was socialized in student affairs was through the curriculum of a graduate program (Bureau, 2013; Kuk & Cuyjet, 2009; Schank & Weis, 2001; Tull et al., 2009; Wilson et al., 2013). What a student learns in class will directly impact their professional skill set (Erlanger & Klegon, 1978). "The philosophy of the profession, its values, vision, and ways of seeing the world are manifested through the curriculum" and model "values, ethics, and perspectives that serve as the basis for professional thinking within the field" (Kuk & Cuyjet, 2009, p. 91). In 1979, the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS Standards) created

guidelines for graduate program curriculum to help provide consistency among programs in the areas of curriculum and experiences. These standards have been revised several times with the most recent version in 2012.

In a study in 2007, only 33.3% of graduate programs listed in the ACPA graduate school directory stated they compiled with CAS standards (Kuk & Cuyjet, 2009). The point has also been made if every graduate program in the nation adhered to CAS standards in their programs, "new professionals graduating from these programs would gain competent, basic, working understanding of the issues in the areas mentioned by CAS" (Kuk & Cuyjet, 2009, p. 98). Further, supervisors of new professionals who are graduates of CAS compliant programs could anticipate what new professionals would bring in skills developed because of CAS standards (Kuk & Cuyjet, 2009). Even though these standards are encouraged, there still exists the problem of inconsistent socialization of new professionals.

While these standards were a start to common language and goals for graduate programs, there still were some challenges. A study on graduate programs in 2007 reviewed the curriculums to look for similarities and differences in program offerings (Kuk, Cobb, & Forrest, 2007). Three course content areas were found in at least 70% of program curriculums which were student affairs programs and services, methods of research, and student affairs/higher education administration (Kuk & Cuyjet, 2009). An additional five content areas were found in 50% of the programs: multiculturalism/ diversity, student development theory, college student populations, law, and student affairs/higher education issues (Kuk & Cuyjet, 2009). 95% of programs did require some sort of practical experience, but requirements differed greatly across institutions. The

connection is these commonalities were also a part of the ACPA/NAPSA professional competencies (2010) which continue development of the profession.

Even though these are higher percentages, the results do show there were significant differences in curriculums for graduate programs. This will then impact a student's socialization process and preparation beyond graduate school because every graduate student will come into professional work prepared differently making it challenging for professional development and training. For example, a student who was given the opportunity to have an assistantship within a department during their entire graduate school experience may potentially graduate better prepared for professional work than a student who only participated in a semester long internship experience.

On the other side though, preparation programs may have institutional limitations contributing to the differences in curriculums. For example, preparation programs rely on institutional support for practical learning experiences (i.e. assistantships, internships, practicums, etc.) Some institutions may not prioritize funding practical learning experiences for students in preparation programs therefore leaving the program to figure out how to bring in practical experiences for students. There also may be course offering limitations due to the course approval process at a given institution. Another issue was programs may rely too heavily on adjunct faculty because of the limitations to the courses offered when programs are not adequately staffed with full time faculty. Arguments about what and how preparation programs should provide for graduate students fail to recognize the bigger picture implications of graduation education and institutional support.

In looking through the CAS Standards for graduate preparation programs, one of the requirements was to have classes taught by full time faculty (Council for the Advancement of Standards, 2009). An argument could be made challenging this notion because of the role adjuncts play in student affairs programs. Often, adjunct faculty in preparation programs are current practitioners within the field. In a practical profession like student affairs, the information and practical experience knowledge an adjunct can contribute through a class setting could be highly valuable to developing new professionals. This is a limitation to the argument towards making CAS standards mandatory for all preparation programs.

On the other hand, CAS recommends classes in graduate programs are taught by full time faculty to share their expertise and be dedicated to the development of students (CAS, 2009b). An expectation of CAS was that full time faculty continued with research and inquiry and brought the latest research to preparation programs. This would help prepare graduate students for professional work in the most recent practices based on research. Also consistently having faculty available to help support and guide graduate student development was also critical to the point of full time faculty in graduate programs set forth by CAS Standards (CAS, 2009b). Full time faculty tend to be important for advising and students persistence through programs since they are committed to the department and not hired just to teach one course.

Socialization and Professional Life

After graduate school, the socialization process continues into the first professional position. While graduate school covers theory to practice, implementation of the practice comes in professional positions. There are several parts to the

socialization process in professional position including orientation and reflection, supervision and mentoring, and skill development, significant relationships and professional competencies to name a few. Each of these pieces played a key role in continuing and building socialization process starting in graduate school.

Orientation and Reflection

In addition to graduate education, there were some key aspects to the socialization process in student affairs: orientation to a position through a departmental and divisional lens, and supervision/mentoring relationships. Orientation was the process by which new professionals learn about the expectations, relationships, and key components of their position (Saunders & Cooper, 2009). Orientations were usually associated with a given time frame where a new employee sits in a room and is told about aspects of an organization. These orientations were broad and overarching. After a formal orientation time, new employees might be given a training schedule outlining times for topical education. Finally, individual meetings might be set up for the new employee with key people on campus to help form relationships. All of these are important in a formal orientation process; however, new professionals are looking for more informal orientations beyond these steps (Saunders & Cooper, 2009).

While they cannot always articulate the idea themselves, new professionals are asking for employers to educate them on the unwritten expectations the position. They desire considerably more instruction earlier on in their positions for overall professional success (Renn & Hodges, 2007). The informal orientation process required a current professional to design an effective training plan for the new professionals explaining the unwritten or unspoken expectations of the position. Items included in this process were

specific skills sets not taught in the formal orientation process that are essential to the

position (Saunders & Cooper, 2009). For example, if a new professional was hired to

coordinate social media outlets, a formal training time should be set up to explain the

overall philosophical vision for social media by the department, the uses of social media

platforms, definition of their role, and where they have the autonomy to make changes.

New professionals want this process repeated for each aspect of their position (Saunders

& Cooper, 2009). This takes time, intentionality, and most importantly, a current

professional or supervisor who can deliver the desired training.

After ample training has been given, the other piece to a new professionals'

socialization process was time for reflection. Structured, uninterrupted time for reflection

was critical for the learning process. According to Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner

(as cited in Saunders & Cooper, 2009), the "outcome of reflection is to gain deeper

insight that leads to action" (p. 173). Nursing is an area where socialization has been

widely studied because of the humanistic nature and skill development needed in the

nursing profession. Nurses find a deep identity in the work they do. Nursing is based on

skill development and also value development (Martin, Yarbrough, & Alfred, 2003). The

socialization process for nurses focused on personal awareness and reflection during their

time in an academic program (Schank & Weis, 2001). While part of the academic

experience was to learn the skill sets needed to do every day work, more importantly,

nursing students were challenged to think about their own identity and values, and make

a shift to integrating the values of the nursing profession into their practice (Schank &

Weis, 2001).

Student affairs work can also be rooted in a person's values and identity. Many graduate programs incorporate personal reflection as a key tool in developing student affairs professionals. Students were asked to learn the values of the student affairs profession, reflect and integrate those values into their practice. Findings from the nursing studies have shown reflection was a critical component to the socialization process (Schank & Weis, 2001). New professionals can benefit from reflection. Engaging in reflection with a supervisor created a meaningful relationship while accomplishing organizational goals. Training new professionals was helpful, but coupled with reflection; a supervisor created a meaningful learning process (Saunders & Cooper, 2009). Given the related humanistic nature of both nursing and student affairs, reflection should be a key component of new professionals' socialization process.

Law is another area in which socialization has been studied. Specifically, studies have looked at values transmission in law students (Erlanger & Klegon, 1978). Findings showed students felt like the biggest change in attitude they experienced during law school was beginning to think like a lawyer, meaning they learned to "distinguish a legal from a non-legal issue, to see the various sides of a problem, to reason formally and logically, and to express themselves clearly, concisely, and unemotionally" (Erlanger & Klegon, 1978, p. 30). This shift in thinking was vital to new professionals in student affairs as well. Many new professionals saw themselves as programmers or advisors, and needed to develop the critical thinking skills to understand the other work required for their role. For example, a professional in residence life may see themselves as a supervisor to resident assistants, however, they may carry additional roles and responsibilities like the facilities and maintenance of the building, the conduct of

students, and advisor to a hall government, but may not be critically thinking about their responsibilities beyond a supervisor. Given the findings from law students, the socialization process must prompt new professionals to shift their mindset to think like a student affairs professional.

Socialization for new professionals significantly impacted development (Bureau, 2013; Renn & Hodges, 2007; Tull et al., 2009; Wilson et al., 2013). The critique of socialization though is it takes time and commitment from experienced professionals, and in depth knowledge of *what* and *how* to train new professionals. Time is often at a premium in student affairs work unless there is a divisional or department commitment to making socialization a priority. Time for intentional planning for training new professionals and time for reflection in a learning process require significant commitments from a supervisor/professional staff member. In addition, training programs may not truly educate new professionals on the socialization aspects of their positions.

Supervision and Mentoring

Effective supervisors can help professionals grow, develop, and create meaningful work for their department. Supervisory relationships hold great potential to influence socialization in new professionals pertaining to self-image, job satisfaction, and professional development (Tull, 2009). Effective supervision involved communication of the unwritten rules, focused on career and skill development, provided emotional support and guidance, set clear expectations, and recognized boundaries (Tull, 2009). New professionals in student affairs have identified what they need a supervisor: structure, autonomy, frequent feedback, recognition of limitations, support, effective

communication, consistency, role modeling, and sponsorship (Tull, 2009). Many new professionals come into a position expecting to be "apprenticed" by their supervisors (Tull, 2009, p. 130). Supervisors of new professionals must understand the importance they play in socializing new professionals and the key to an effective socialized supervisory relationship is synergistic supervision (Tull, 2009).

While there are many types of supervision styles in leadership and management, synergistic supervision seems to be the most effective style for socialization in student affairs (Winston & Creamer, 1997). Synergistic supervision was "a cooperative effort between the supervisor and staff members that allows the effects of their joint efforts to be greater than the sum of their individual contributions" (Winston & Creamer, 1997, p. 196). Overall, the style has a dual focus, to accomplish the overall organizational goals while supporting staff in accomplishment of their own personal and professional goals (Winston & Creamer, 1997). This style created a relationship between the supervisor and supervisee focused on mutual learning, understanding and personal growth for both parties involved (Tull, 2009). This supervision style put the work at the forefront, with the established expectation that the whole is greater than each individual, all while creating a web of support for everyone involved (Tull, 2009). While this had impact for the one-on-one relationship between the supervisors and new professionals, synergistic supervision stretched beyond a supervisory relationship out to all of those on a team. This was important in the socialization process because new professionals need to understand the team is just as vital as they were in the department. New professionals need to feel like a valued member of the team with the ability to contribute and be valued by the rest of the team.

New professionals often come into positions with the expectation they will be given, typically by their supervisor, opportunities for personal and professional growth. In reality though, that may not be the case within the given position. This rub often causes role conflict. Role conflict occurred for new professionals when they find themselves "torn by conflicting job demands, encountering differences with their supervisors, or faced with obligatory tasks they are uncomfortable performing" (Tull, 2009, pp. 143-144). Role conflict has been positively associated with employee anxiety, job satisfaction, and intention to leave (Klenke-Hamel & Mathieu, as cited in Tull, 2009). New professionals often seek consistency and expectations from supervisors so they in turn know how to navigate times of role conflict. Helpful for new professionals was a supervisor who addresses role conflict during the orientation process and supervisory relationship (Tull, 2009). Having a synergistic supervisory relationship may allow new professionals to address these moments and clarify expectations within a position (Tull, 2009).

An interesting gap in the literature was a lack of studies with findings about how supervisors of new professionals feel about this responsibility and the expectations set before them by the literature. Studies reported how to supervise and offered many suggestions on style and actions. At the time of this study, I was unable to find any publications on feelings or commitments from supervisors on supervising new professionals and the significance of the supervisory relationship for new professionals.

Skill Development, Significant Relationships
and Professional Competencies

In 2010, ACPA and NASPA collaborated to create professional competencies for all student affairs professionals. The competencies provided a framework for student

affairs practitioners, regardless of educational background, professional experience or length of time in the profession. There are 10 specific areas related to knowledge, skills and attitudes student affairs practitioners should possess (ACPA/NASPA, 2010). The 10 areas were advising and helping; assessment, evaluation, and research; equity, diversity, and inclusion; ethical professional practice; history, philosophy, and values; human and organizational resources; law, policy, and governance; leadership; personal foundations; and student learning and development (ACPA/NASPA, 2010). Further, the knowledge, skills, and attitudes categories were broken into basic, intermediate, and advanced levels to "delineate the increasing complexity and ability that should be demonstrated by practitioners as they grow in their professional development" (ACPA/NASPA, 2010, p. 6). The competencies provided practitioners with guidelines and examples for continued growth and professional development in their practice.

The professional competencies provided areas for skill development for new professionals and could be used in a variety of settings including graduate preparation programs and practitioner environments. Prior to 2010, it was anybody's guess as to what new professionals would need to learn in order to function in a position and success in their career. Student affairs as a profession is still learning the competencies effectiveness and impact on practice with no published studies as of yet, however, this document made it common for new professionals to all at least begin somewhere with what skills they need to be an effective practitioner.

Many researchers (Cilente et al., 2006; Fried, 2011; Renn & Hodges, 2007) have spent time identifying the skills and needs of new professionals to aid supervisors and new professionals in the first position. Specifically, competence, confidence, and

knowledge of skills are all helpful in the process of transitioning to a new job for new professionals. Renn and Hodges (2007) conducted a qualitative study with 10 new professionals over the course of their first year in a professional position. During their study, each participant was emailed a reflective question about their experience as new professionals. Three themes emerged as needs for new professionals: relationships, fit, and competence.

Relationships, both personal and professional, were significant to new professionals. One participant shared, "It's funny that my first hope/concern as a 'professional' was completely personal: Will they like me? This applied to my bosses, coworkers, peers, staff, and anyone/everyone I would encounter in my new position" (Renn & Hodges, 2007, p. 373). Relationships were critical to the socialization process for new professionals as well. Often learning came through conversation, teaching and reflection for new professionals. These conversations take place often with colleagues, supervisors and trusted mentors out to help new professionals grow and develop.

Finding a mentor can be an important relationship for professional socialization as well. Mentoring relationships in student affairs were often informal in nature (Tull, 2009). For new professionals, a mentor may be a person at their institution inside or outside of their department, or could be a person at an entirely different institution. Often mentoring relationships occurred because of a mutual value, understanding or perspective helpful to the new professionals (Tull, 2009). Mentors for new professionals should take their role seriously as their influence can impact the socialization process for a new professional.

"Fit" is a word we use every day in student affairs and has an implied meaning unique to each person. The general way it is used in student affairs language is in its true definition "adapted or suited" for a particular aspect of a position. It can be related to the position itself, or to the department, institution, role, or other factors. Renn and Hodges (2007) found fit can pertain to different things at different time frames within the first year in the position. Fit related to values both personally and professionally, while other participants talked about positional fit and feeling competent in the position by the end of year one (Renn & Hodges, 2007).

Competence in a position was critical for first time professionals (Renn & Hodges, 2007). New professionals felt they needed competence in the job (i.e., skills, training, knowledge of procedures), but also believed they needed to display competence as well from the start of the position (Renn & Hodges, 2007). Over time new professionals felt more competent based on experiences alone (Renn & Hodges, 2007).

In 2005, the Standing Committee for Graduate Students and New Professionals from ACPA conducted a study entitled "New Professionals Needs Study" (Cilente et al., 2006). The study gathered information from 270 new professionals about their transition to student affairs from graduate school. While there were many findings in this report, the top needs of new professionals were adequate support from a supervisor, mentor and colleagues, understanding job expectations, and enhancing supervision skills.

Adequate support for new professionals needed to come from those professionals around them in their daily work environments. These people included a direct supervisor, departmental colleagues, and/or a mentor familiar with the work environment. New professionals who did receive adequate support felt more competent at their job and

were more willing to learn and be challenged to grow (Cilente et al., 2006). Many professionals expressed a need for further clarification of job expectations from supervisors and departments. These findings came from experiences of new professionals being given expectations in the interview process or beginning of position that then changed over time. Participants also mentioned unspoken expectations of their positions and also the lack of realistic time commitments needed to accomplish the responsibilities of their jobs. The most common example was that new professionals were told the job expectations were to work 40 hours per week, but in order to accomplish everything asked of them, going over 40 hours a week was necessary on a regular basis (Cilente et al., 2006). New professionals in this study also felt underprepared to supervise in their first professional roles. Findings showed support from a supervisor or mentor helped develop supervision skills and increased a new professional's competence and confidence in supervising others (Cilente et al., 2006).

Fried (2011) stated research on new professionals focused "exclusively on the inadequacies of new professionals" and this "obscures and prevents new professional from being fully actualized and empowered…" in their positions (p. 42). From Fried's findings, first time professionals have some advantages over senior level administrators. First of all, often being younger in age, and more recently in college than mid-managers and senior leadership, new professionals may relate better and create better practices for students. As new professionals, they will also be more in touch with developmental theories, new research, and best practices because of recent graduate school experience (Fried, 2011).

Given these findings, new professional socialization for skills is all over the map. It is confusing for new professionals, faculty and practitioners, as to what skill sets new professionals should be prepared with for their practitioner work in student affairs. This contributes to the perceptions new professionals are not prepared for professional work. This is a challenge and limitation of the literature on new professionals.

Further, there was little to no research on skill development and socialization being directly related. While a new professional was experiencing the socialization process of a position, often also developing during this time was their professional skills. In *Becoming Socialized in Student Affairs Administration* (Tull et al., 2009), an entire book dedicated to the understanding of socialization in student affairs, not one chapter focuses on skill development and the learning process in the job. While the authors explained a lot of other attributes of the socialization process, new professionals who read this book may not think about skill development as an essential piece to practitioner work. So again, when do new professionals learn the skills needed for professional work and who is responsible for teaching them these skills?

Organizational Theory

Understanding organizational theory is critical for new professionals as they are socialized into professional work. Some research claimed "understanding the organizational and political reality of the job may be the key to addressing those issues that are generally not taught in graduate school" (Amey, 1998, p. 7). For new professionals, understanding the departmental, institutional, and political landscape can be critical to success and retention and can often determine professional and personal fit within a position. Studies on new professionals' comprehension of organizational culture

showed new professionals who learned how to navigate their work environment were more likely to be retained and successful (Amey & Ressor, 1998). New professionals must recognize the organizational culture of their department and institution looking specifically at mission, information, leadership, and strategy.

While new professionals must learn to navigate the environment from within, it is also important for new professionals to have an external lens to institutional type prior to applying and accepting a job at an institution. Institutional type can place a significant role in the organizational culture and makeup of an institution. Many new professionals do not think about the differences in mission, values, and practice from a comprehensive research one institution to a small, private, liberal arts institution. Both organizational culture and institutional type will be discussed below (Hirt, 2006; Manning, Kinzie, & Schuh, 2014).

**Student Affairs Organizational Culture
and Professionals Realms**

Organizational theory in higher education means understanding the culture of an institution in order to help navigate the environment (Tierney, 2011). Organizational theory began in the field of sociology and transitioned into higher education. One contributor who applies organizational theory to higher education is William G. Tierney. Tierney took the six components of organizational theory: environment, mission, socialization, information, strategy and leadership, and applied them to institutions of higher education. These six areas represent organizational components of student affairs work. Each will impact a work environment in different ways. It is significant for new professionals to understand the organizational landscape of a student affairs and institutional environment and learn to navigate the organizational culture of an institution

so they will be able to "spot and resolve potential conflicts and in managing change more effectively and efficiently" (Tierney, 2011, p. 339).

Fitting into Tierney's idea of understanding higher education organizational culture, Hirt and Creamer (1998) also outlined four areas of new professionals' transitions needing attention for professional development. The four realms are: personal, institutional, extra-institutional and professional. These four realms emerged as themes from a study looking at new professionals' transition and include components for new professionals to reflect on and navigate in their first positions. Using both of these models, new professionals may start to see and navigate the organizational dynamics within a first position. All six of the components and four professional realms will be discussed below to offer a perspective of what new professionals must learn to navigate from an organizational, theoretical lens.

Environment and mission. Environment and mission can provide a loose framework for the practice of a department, division and institution which includes both the external and internal environments (Amey & Ressor, 1998; Tierney, 2011). Environment encompasses the physical, social, and practice environments for new professionals. Examples may include the physical office layout, attitudes and investment of colleagues, and overall actions for carrying out both daily work and large scope projects. Also considered in environment is the person-environment interaction (Lewin, 1936). How a person engages with the work environment will also impact the organizational culture. This concept of environment also overlaps with the body of literature in student affairs on campus ecology (Strange & Banning, 2001).

Mission refers to the purpose and reason for existence for their position, department, and division within an institution (Tierney, 2011). Often departments will have a mission statement, a testament to the work being done within the department. New professionals need to understand the difference between a mission statement and a "living mission" which may look very different (Amey & Ressor, 1998). While a mission statement may be written, a "living mission" refers to the driving actions and beliefs behind departmental work (Tierney, 2011). New professionals must learn both the mission statement and the "living mission" when navigating an organizational culture in their positions and adapt their professional practice to be effective.

Environment and mission relate directly to the institutional and extra-institutional realms. The institutional realm "consists of those issues and demands that the campus places on individual professionals" (Hirt & Creamer, 1998, p. 50). Often environment and mission drive this work for new professionals and can be very confusing. For example, a university mission statement may state an environment of inclusion and diversity, however, when a new professional attempts to program around this value, they meet resistance and lack of support. In this example a new professional may be running into a "living mission," which at this given institution, means programming can happen on campus but cannot include anything controversial or challenging to students in the area of power and privilege. This transition can be challenging for new professionals who chose the institution based on its mission, want do a good job, and value diversity (Hirt & Creamer, 1998).

The extra-institutional realms are "namely those demands and issues generated by bodies external to the department and the campus including governing boards, state and

federal agencies, and public sentiment" (Hirt & Creamer, 1998, p. 54). In a more updated

list, consideration needs to be given to include national and international crises. National

crises, like the Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois shootings, the high rate of college

student death due to drug and alcohol abuse, and even the recent Aurora movie theater

shooting with the shooter being a former student of a college campus, has implications on

the extra-institutional transitions for new professionals. The extra-institutional area often

creates policies and procedures that may affect practice for new professionals (Hirt &

Creamer, 1998). When navigating the organizational culture, policies and procedures

may exist for very good reasons, but to new professionals, they may be seen as limiting,

too bureaucratic, and not in the best interest of students (Hirt & Creamer, 1998). New

professionals may not realize the direct and indirect impact of mission statements on their

position when first starting and therefore, need to learn the mission, "living mission," and

environment when navigating the institutional and extra-institutional realms in

organizational culture.

   Socialization and information. Both socialization and information relate to

understanding unspoken expectations and learning who are the underlying information

holders. Socialization is the process of learning the culture, traditions, unspoken

expectations, and norms of a working environment (Amey, 1998). For example, new

professionals may have come from a working environment where the norm for meetings

was to show up five to ten minutes late. A new working environment may have an on

time or early arrival meeting culture. New professionals must learn this and adopt their

practice. With the information component, new professionals need to understand the

process of how to learn information, who are the official and unofficial keepers of

information, and how information is disseminated (Amey, 1998). Another point about information is when, where and with whom to share and, importantly, not share information within the political environment. Along with technology, new professionals must learn the importance of written information in emails, documents, and social media and the impact permanent, written communication can have in the political environment.

Socialization and information relate to personal and professional realms of work. Hirt and Creamer (1998) identified the personal realm to include those relationships and experiences occurring outside of the work environment like personal relationships, obligations, quality of life, and other commitments. This directly relates to socialization for new professionals because new professionals may often be learning, for the first time, what it means to have a healthy work/life balance. This means finding interests, relationships, and activities outside of work. Many new professionals may have to advocate for themselves when it comes to work/life balance and build a professional environment of wellness which can be challenging depending on the work culture of the position (for example, a residence life and in a on call position 24 hours a day, 7 days a week). While this is happening, many new professionals may not fully understand the spoken and unspoken expectations of the job causing them to misspeak or make a mistake. This is where learning the information process of a department can be beneficial to navigating the organizational culture.

Information directly relates to the professional realm which consists of "the issues, activities, and interests dictated by the student affairs profession" (Hirt & Creamer, 1998, p. 56). If the information component is about navigating who has information and how to use in in practice, than the national trends, research, and issues

specifically facing student affairs professionals are essential for a new professional to stay abreast of while in practice. Professional associations may offer some guidance in this area, as they are constantly looking at trends and issues and encouraging professionals to change practices, conduct research, and prepare for new issues. How changing trends affect day-to-day work is essential to the transition new professionals must experience.

Strategy and leadership. The fifth and sixth components are about the bigger picture of organizational culture within a working environment. The fifth component, strategy, is the process of learning how decisions are made both formally and informally (Amey, 1998). For example, while formal meetings might have prompted discussions about departmental actions, it may be informal conversations before or after meetings that lead to decisions and plans. New professionals must decipher who is making decisions and how they are involved in the decision making process. The final component, leadership, is defined as the process of determining who are the influential leaders within a working environment (Amey, 1998). New professionals must learn who are the formal and informal leaders within the department and institution. Related to this, new professionals must learn the reputations of people on campus and how to work with them in the context of their positions.

Strategy and leadership relate to the broad picture of the institutional and extra-institutional realms, and also can relate to both personal and professional realms. New professionals must make sure their strategy for their work aligns with the expectations of the institutional realm and with their own values and beliefs in the personal realm. New professionals must navigate the differences between daily work and institutional work.

For example, given the changing practices of student affairs, a new professional in student activities may think their whole job encompasses programming and events, i.e. their daily work. However, with limited resources, a new professional may have to advocate more for funding and the purpose of each program more than actually executing the program itself, i.e. their institutional work.

Understanding leadership not only means understanding the overarching leadership philosophy of student affairs in the professional realm, but also understanding how the decisions made in an extra-institutional realm impact the institution. Navigating all of these components and realms can be challenging and overwhelming to new professionals who are trying to learn the daily actions and interactions of their positions.

When navigating the organizational culture, having a good sense of identity and personal awareness can be helpful (Amey, 1998). While new professionals may have been given opportunities for reflection in graduate school on organizational theory models, the transition from student to professional may shake their identity and values. "Because new professionals are more likely to see themselves as new counselors, programmers, or hall directors than as new administrators, they do not always have a context for understanding and dealing with the institutional challenges they face" (Amey, 1998, p. 7). New professionals need to spend time not only learning the organizational culture of a department and institution but also spend time reflecting on their own values, beliefs and identity and how those interact with the organizational environment on a regular basis. Being able to identify these values may help new professionals choose a good institutional fit for both the organizational and institutional culture.

**Professional Life and Institutional
Culture**

A key aspect to organizational theory was understanding different institutional

types and the various differences in student affairs work (Hirt, 2006; Manning et al.,

2014). Institutional culture for new professionals will impact their socialization process

because each institution will carry their own set of values on the practice of student

affairs and education of students. A professional needs to consider the "fit" of an

institution because fit is important in their professional work. Many new professionals

anticipate a professional transition (i.e., starting a new job). What many do not always

consider are the many layers beyond just doing the work required of them.

In *Where You Work Matters*, Hirt (2006) explained different types of institutions

to help professionals understand that institutional type impacts work experiences. The

Carnegie classification system breaks institutions of higher education into six different

categories based on enrollment, academic programs, research, and types of degrees

granted. The six classifications are: associate's colleges, doctoral-granting universities,

master's colleges and universities, baccalaureate colleges, special focus institutions, and

tribal colleges. Hirt (2006, 2009) found institutional type impacted overall "fit" for a

professional and finding the correct institutional fit is critical for retention of student

affairs professionals. Given the setting and institutions in this study, two of the six

classifications, doctoral-granting, and master's colleges, will be discussed.

Doctoral-granting universities were institutions who have awarded at least 20

research doctorate degrees each year. Doctoral-granting universities were also

institutions with high levels of research activity (Carnegie Classification, 2012). The

work at doctoral-granting universities differs from all other institutional types for student

affairs professionals. Institutions were typically large and most student affairs units have multiple professionals. These professionals tend to work within their given area with little interaction and connection to other student affairs units. Student affairs professionals get the unique opportunity to become experts in their given functional area as they were usually encouraged to be on the forefront of trends, current issues, and practices (Hirt, 2009). The work being done was usually fast pace and higher in volume than other institutional types. Because on institutional size, professionals do have high interaction with students, however, most interactions were on the surface usually in providing a service to students (Hirt, 2009).

Master's colleges and universities were those institutions awarding at least 50 master's degrees but fewer than 20 research doctorates (Carnegie Classification, 2012). Master's colleges and universities differ from baccalaureate institutions because of the way they have had to adapt to survive in higher education. Often master's institutions started as liberal arts institutions but in order to financially survive, they added master's programs. Because of these characteristics, the work at master's institutions can be more flexible, open and adaptable. Often student affairs functional areas will have more than one professional. Because they tend to be larger enrollments of students at master's institutions, student affairs professionals meet lots of students but only form close bonds with a small handful. A benefit of working at a master's institution is being able to work with a diverse student population which may not happen at other institutional types. The mission of master's institutions is often to serve their region and underrepresented populations at affordable tuitions. The reward for professionals was being able to make an impact with diverse students.

While these descriptions speak to very common characteristics of these institutional types, new student affairs professionals must understand the work they do may not be the same to the defined characteristics of their institution. Choosing an institutional type in a job search process is not always considered by new professionals. The socialization of a new professional at these different types of institutions will differ because of the given work of student affairs. Someone starting their career at a doctoral institution may only work with professionals in their given functional area because of the large, silo natured work of these institutions. However, some doctoral classified institutions may be highly collaborative in nature because of the values and mission of student affairs. New professionals would benefit greatly from understanding more about the nature of student affairs work at given types of institutions to see if they align with their own professional ideas and goals.

Perceptions of New Professionals' Preparation

The profession has not historically done well welcoming and retaining new professionals. Approximately 20-60% of new professionals leave within one to five years of graduation from a master's program (Hirt, 2001). While some of the research puts the blame on new professionals for not being retained into the profession, seasoned professionals and supervisors need to take responsibility for helping new professionals thrive. Looking at the perceptions of new professionals' performance, it could be implied from the literature that the student affairs profession does not know what to believe about new professionals. Some think they are underprepared, while some think they are prepared.

Numerous studies have been conducted to ask other professionals in student affairs about new professionals' preparation. Findings from these studies indicated new professionals are fairly competent in most areas of student affairs practice, being strongest in ethics and standards of practice, working with diverse populations, and knowledge of the college experience (Cuyjet et al., 2009; Dickerson et al., 2011; Waple, 2006).

Findings also indicated new professionals were not prepared in the areas of supervision of staff, strategic planning, budget and fiscal management, organizational dynamics, advising, collaboration and the use of microcomputers (Waple, 2006). New professionals and their supervisors agreed further learning was needed on budgeting and fiscal management, grant writing, and writing for publication (Cuyjet et al., 2009). While these are important findings, every new professional was different in their preparation and socialization.

From these studies, it would seem new professionals indicated they are more prepared than the profession gives them credit for in many professional skill sets. What supervisors have to remember about new professionals, is they are just that, new. They need time to learn, transition, redevelop skills, and find success. If new professionals are given the options to do so, they may thrive in their positions. Supervisors need to know more to better assist all new professionals. The student affairs profession needs to hear directly from new professionals, empowering their voices to tell what they experience in their transition and navigation of their first positions. It is time to stop asking practitioners, faculty, and many others about their thoughts and feelings and go straight to source of the experience.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks are included in dissertations to help frame guiding theories influencing the research process. For the purposes of this study, the theoretical framework used was positive psychology to support the goodness aspect of portraiture methodology. Positive psychology looks at the flourishing aspects of life encouraging growth, wellness, and compassion. Positive psychology is a relatively new area in the field of psychology; however, its popularity and influence on research has been growing significantly. This section will include a brief history of positive psychology and an overview of key theories used to guide this research study.

Born out of a call for change in the field of psychology, positive psychology was defined as "the study of the conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing or optimal functioning of people, groups, and institutions" (Gable & Haidt, 2005, p. 104). The field of psychology had three distinct missions prior to World War II: curing mental illness, making the lives of all people more productive and fulfilling, and identifying and nurturing high talent (Seligman, 200b). After World War II, as veterans returned home and as the Department of Veteran's Affairs established funding for mental health treatment, the field of psychology focused more on the first mission, curing mental illness. When Martin Seligman became president of the American Psychological Association in 1999, he challenged the psychology community to stop thinking about psychology as what is wrong with a person and returning to making the lives of all people more productive and fulfilling (Seligman, 2002b).

Positive psychology aimed to "catalyze a change…from a preoccupation with only repairing the worst things in life to also building the best qualities in life" (Seligman,

2002a, p. 3). Figure 1 depicts the paradigm shift. Both Seligman (2002a, 2002b) and

Gable and Haidt (2005) gave reason to why the field of psychology had a lack of focus

on strength and wellness. The first reason was compassion. In a field like psychology

where compassion for helping those who need help stood at the forefront of many

practices, it became part of an indirect mission to fix the broken and heal the sick (Gable

& Haidt, 2005). The second reason was mentioned earlier, historical events and actions

changed the practice of the field (Seligman, 2002b). The third and final reason had to do

with our psychological nature as human beings. As human beings, positive, happy life

events and actions were perceived to be "normal" so when something negative happens,

we tend to focus on it because it is "not normal" (Gable & Haidt, 2005; Seligman,

2002b). Gable and Haidt found human beings had 3.2 more positive interactions per

week than negative interactions. However, when these human beings were asked about

the most impactful interactions of their week, they were more likely to pick a negative

interaction than a positive one.

Since Seligman's challenged the psychology community, positive psychology

focused back onto the two other forgotten missions of psychology: nurturing talent and

strengths and helping people live more productive, fulfilling lives. Positive psychology

was just "as concerned with strengths as with weakness, interested in building the best

things in life as in repairing the worst, and as concerned with making the lives of normal

people fulfilling and with nurturing high talent as with healing pathology" (Seligman,

2004). The three pillars of positive psychology focus on studying the positive emotions,

positive traits, and positive institutions and the work of the field sought to understand

how people thrive, build strength and virtue, and ultimately live the "good life"

(Seligman, 2002a).

Problem Focus	→	Solution Focus
Complaints	→	Requests
Reactive	→	Proactive
Fixed Mindset	→	Growth Mindset
Shoulds	→	Wants
I have to…	→	I get to…
External Motivators	→	Internal Motivators
Blame	→	Responsibility
Judgment	→	Compassion
Shame	→	Guilt
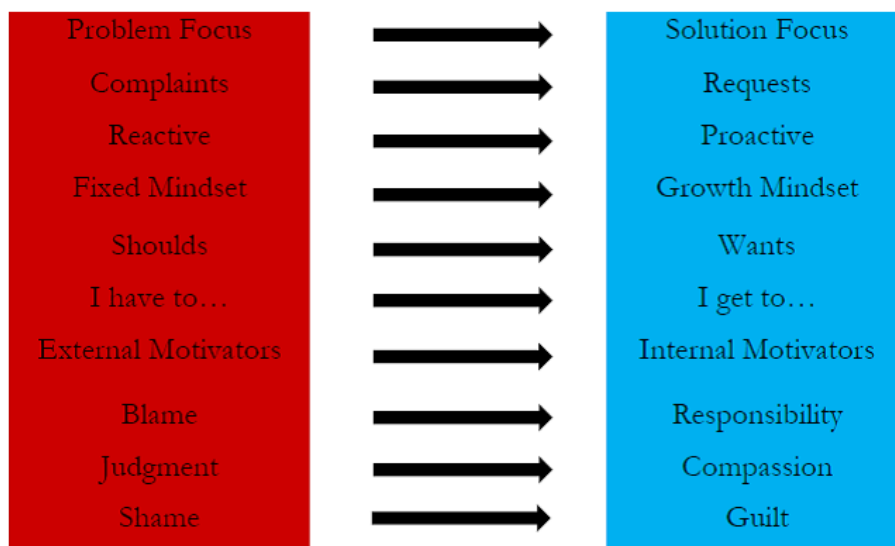
Figure 1. Positive psychology paradigm shift.

As the field of positive psychology grew, the concept of learned optimism came

to the forefront of the field. Positive psychology was scrutinized for being too happy,

and critics claimed positivity could not be learned. Learned optimism came from

research on people looking at what makes people naturally positive and if what they

possess could be learned by others (Seligman, 2002a). Permanence and pervasiveness

were the two dimensions that emerged from learned optimism studies as being the two

most influential factors in positive people. Permanence referred to the belief someone

had about a certain event and the impact on a person's life (Seligman 2002a). Pessimistic

people believed more that bad events were permanent fixtures in life with little hope that

things would change. Positive people believed bad events were temporary and had hope

change would come. Pervasiveness referred to a person's ability to create space around

negative experiences (Seligman, 2002a). Pessimistic people, once one bad event happened, believed all events in a given space (day, week, month; or with a particular role in their life) would be bad. Positive people, once a bad event happened, were able to compartmentalize the negative impact and not allow the bad experience to impact other spaces in their lives. Based on these concepts, even pessimistic people could work to practice positive psychology in their lives making it more of a practice rather than something inherent and unattainable. This will be important to the findings of this study because all participants were able to demonstrate either positive permanence and/or pervasiveness in their professional positions.

Beyond permanence and pervasiveness, studies looked at how people experienced positivity in their lives. Three different types of happy lives emerged (Seligman, 2004). The pleasant life was about having as much positive emotions as possible and also having the skills to amplify it in life (Seligman, 2004). Positive emotions included optimism, hope, faith, trust, joy, ecstasy, calm, zest, ebullience, pleasure, and flow (Seligman, 2002a). The second happy life was the engagement life. The engagement life focused on "cultivating and identifying a person's most fundamental strengths and using them in everyday work, love, play and parenting" (Seligman, 2002a, p. 2). When a person entered life at this engagement level, it was called flow which was a state of complete immersion in an activity (Seligman, 2004). Flow was a mental state described as "being completely involved in an activity for its own sake. The ego falls away. Time flies. Your whole being is involved, and you're using skills to the utmost" (Seligman, 2004). The third happy life was the meaningful life. Living the meaningful life for a person meant they were using their signature strengths each day to produce authentic happiness

and abundant gratification (Seligman, 2002a). The meaningful life was about understanding your strengths and use them in ways that impacted life in meaningful, intentional ways (Seligman, 2004).

Each person can experience all different types of happy lives at all different times. There was no progression through different happy lives. These happy lives helped understand how people make meaning of positive feelings in their own lives. The happy lives idea connected with student affair practice because professional work was catered towards finding a purpose within the profession, in student affairs it was called "fit", working with students often where student affairs professionals find deep meaning in their work, and developing skills using strengths and talents. These happy lives concepts connected to what many practitioners seek for their work experiences.

Positive psychology, including types of happy lives, created a paradigmatic shift for this research and as a theory framing the research project. As mentioned previously, most research on new professionals is presented from a deficit model. Positive psychology focused both of the positive aspects of life, as well as, the challenges. There was a significant amount of literature dedicated to the challenges of new professionals. It is now time to contribute positive literature about new professionals through a study looking at their positive experiences. In addition, new professionals may experience different types of happy lives and may provide insight as to how to bring these characteristics to their work. This could be beneficial for new professionals as they start out in their careers. In order to capture the positive, both traditional and non-traditional data collection methods will be used.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

I was a wide-eyed, excited, Master's graduate who had been waiting since undergrad to be "officially" a student affairs professional. My first job was a dream job, at a great institution and department. My supervisor rocked. Everything seemed to fit. Until the third month on the job when the school year started. Quickly things unraveled on many different levels and self-doubt and anxiety took over. I felt like I could never do anything correctly. Every decision I made pissed off someone, from the students I worked with, all the way up to the director of the department. I wanted to give up. I wanted to quit. Was this really the profession I signed up for? How could a field I loved so much, not love me back? So I did what I could do to survive and not get fired. It was never my best work.

Even after almost ten years of professional experience with lots of ups and downs, my first year is still my lowest point professionally. I would still describe my transition to the profession as challenging, limiting, and bad. This research process is just as much a formal project as it is a personal project so it was important to find a methodology that allowed me to share others' experiences. I want to seek out new professionals' voices and find the good actions and advice for new professionals that I did not get, in the hope that other new professionals in the future will have just a little bit easier of a transition than I did.

The stories you will read later, are from new professionals who can see the good in their experiences, who are challenged but are finding ways to make an impact. Maybe if I had these stories when I was a new professional, things could have gone a little differently. Their stories are important to tell. Their voices need to be empowered for others to hear.

Marshall and Rossman (1999) acknowledged researchers were frequently attracted to a project because of personal interests and prior experiences. I would agree. I am deeply interested in new professionals and their experiences because I want to know how they relate to mine. While I hope my early professional experience was an anomaly because in a developmental and compassionate profession like student affairs, we would treat each other with the same developmental space and compassion in which we treat our students. However, given all I have read and understood about new professionals, I may not be. In this research study, I sought out new professionals in their first professional positions; to explore the research question how self-identified positive professional experiences impact new professionals' development.

Given the literature on student affairs professionals and the deficit approach to research on new professionals' preparation, this study, using portraiture methodology and positive psychology, brought forward the positive attributes new professionals bring to student affairs through interviews and photojournals as data collection methods. Through the research process I explored good socialization practices (i.e., training, reflection, orientation, supervision, etc.), skill development, and also graduate preparation. All are significant aspects potentially filling gaps in the research body.

Constructivism

Portraiture methodology falls into the qualitative, constructivist research family. Constructivism was created in contrast to the positivist/post-positivists paradigm because some researchers believed sharing of stories and how people make meaning of their own realities was important to research (Mertens, 2010). As a result, researchers in a constructivist nature are engaged with their participants, building relationships allowing for authentic sharing of stories and values from the participants (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002). Because of these relationships, researchers cannot remain objective to the findings, but are more dedicated to their responsibility to share how reality is constructed within their participants' experiences. Collection and publication of these stories, according to constructivists, advances knowledge about peoples' experiences and how reality is constructed by individuals (Broido & Manning, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). From this collection, researchers are better able to understand different viewpoints, values, situations, and meaning making for all participants. In this section I will address the ontology of the constructivist paradigm, or the concept that reality is socially constructed; the axiology, or the ethical relationships between the researcher and participant; the epistemology or the way researchers and participants engage in learning; and the methods and methodology for conducting a constructivist portraiture research study.

Ontology

Researchers utilizing the constructivist paradigm believe reality is socially constructed (Mertens, 2010). It is the practice and search for "truth" (constructed reality) where "truth" is always evolving because of the multiple perspectives and constructions

of reality for each person involved in the research process. According to Alkove and McCarty (1992), "truth requires a value judgment on the part of the individual. As such, it cannot be objective or removed from the self" (p. 17). Both the researcher and the participants' values must be taken into consideration in the research process and in determining the overall "truth" of the research (Alkove & McCarty, 1992). Any interaction between the participants and the researcher influence each other, resulting in findings that are constructed based on personal interaction (Mertens, 2010).

Axiology

Mertens (2010) stated ethical behavior in the constructivist paradigm was foundational to conduct research with trustworthiness and authenticity. Depending on the theorist, researcher ethical behavior could be called transferability, generalizability, validity, reliability, or trustworthiness and could have components of dependability, credibility, and rigor (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). No matter the title, the purpose is creating valid and dependable qualitative research findings that can be trusted and used towards advancing knowledge.

Trustworthiness puts an ethical responsibility on the researcher's "efforts to go beyond simple repetition of data gathering to deliberative effort to find the validity of data observed" (Stake, 1995, p. 109). Researchers have an ethical responsibility to not only inform participants of research findings, but to work with participants to act on their own behalf based on the findings (Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Merriam, 1998; Mertens, 2010). Building a relationship to develop trust is crucial to both this study and constructivist research. Constructivist researchers include the participants in all processes of research and help them become aware of their own constructions of reality

(Creswell, 2007; Mertens, 2010). This responsibility was important for the constructivist researcher because it challenged the researcher to empower the participant voice and information from their research (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Therefore, trustworthiness techniques and actions help to establish validity and rigor such as triangulation must be included (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2007). A further explanation of triangulation will be included in the analysis section.

Epistemology

Constructivist researchers believed "knowledge exists within the self and is constructed by individuals as they interact with themselves and within their environment" (Alkove & McCarty, 1992, p. 17). Constructivist researchers also believed reality is "multiple, complex and not easily quantifiable" (Jones, 2002, p. 436). The intent then of researchers within this epistemology was to learn how a participant constructs their reality in the experiences of their daily lives. In constructivist research, researchers and participants create interactive relationships where both are influenced by each other (Crotty, 1998; Mertens, 2010).

The relationship between the researcher and the participant is to help understand how the participants make meaning of their own reality. Together, they work to help uncover how the participant sees the world in which they exist. Because of the investment required in this relationship, constructivist researchers do not believe total objectivity is possible when conducting research (Alkove & McCarty, 1992). In order to get to the level where authentic sharing occurs between the participant and researcher, an honest, open relationship needs to exist.

Portraiture

Developed by Lawrence-Lightfoot (2000), portraiture methodology was created to infuse science and art together for research. Portraiture was a mix of art through creative writing using imagery and metaphors, and science using the rigors of research, data collection and analysis. In her book, *The Art and Science of Portraiture,* Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) explained the process of how an artistic writing style or, how a narrative when completed reads like a story, and the scientific rigor of research, created portrait methodology. Her idea came from a research project where she sought to tell the stories and experiences in high schools. Rather than report findings, she narrated the experiences of students, faculty, and administrators with the intention of helping readers beyond the academy understand and find meaning in those experiences. During this process, the portraiture methodology developed. It was designed to "capture the richness, complexity, and dimensionality of human experience in social and cultural context, conveying perspectives of the people who are negotiating those experiences" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002, p. 3).

In creating the portraiture methodology, Lawrence-Lightfoot (2000) explained that social science and art have had a long-standing relationship. Dating back to the eighteenth century, social scientists and novelists would come together to create stories about social phenomena (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997). This was common because it was easier for the general public to understand studies of life, and common social themes through narrative-like stories, rather than academic texts.

Portraiture methodology was developed for educational research, making it a natural fit for student affairs research. Both the methodology and the profession of

student affairs share many common values including empowering others' voices, ethical

practices, story-telling, theory to practice, and collaborative relationships (Council for the

Advancement of Standards, 2006; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002). In

portraiture, a relationship built on respect and trust was critical between the researcher

and participants to gain a thoughtful, true portrait (Hoffmann Davis, 2003). "Do no

harm" was the mandate of portraiture research and "in the telling of a story…the

researcher holds to that mandate" (Hoffmann Davis, 2003, p. 209). This also related to

the ethical practice of student affairs which was "to do no harm" by having positive and

meaningful collaborations with colleagues to do good for students and provide safe and

inclusive learning environments for all students (Council for the Advancement of

Standards, 2006). Even though there were shared values between the two, portraiture as

a methodology for student affairs research has not been widely used. The following

sections explain portraiture as a methodology in detail including critical components of

research, goodness in research, the role of the researcher, data collection process and

methods, and data analysis.

Writing Style

Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffmann Davis (2002) wanted to create a research style

that "communicated beyond the walls of the academy" (p. 9). Humanistic determination

or speaking through relevant voices, rather than academic jargon, is meant to reach a

broader audience (Hoffmann Davis, 2003). As the founding methodologist, Lawrence-

Lightfoot wanted to "to develop texts that will seduce the readers into thinking more

deeply about issues that concern them" and felt common narrative language would do so

(Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002, p. 9). Each portrait was meant to capture

the experiences of a participant like a character in a book and grab the reader by conveying a story that was relatable, engrossing, and easy to understand (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002). This might appeal to a student affairs audience because of its easy translation to practitioners who are not in favor of reading research heavy articles.

Portraiture also can be written in many different ways as long as the final product includes the key pieces of a portrait (discussed below). *Respect* (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2000) was a wonderful example of the humanistic determination writing style of portraiture. In *Respect,* Lawrence-Lightfoot sought to understand in a variety of different settings how participants used and defined respect in their practices. Each portrait conveys how respect was empowered, captured, and used throughout six different people's interactions with others. Each participant defined respect differently, but through Lawrence-Lightfoot's writing respect was a theme weaved throughout each story. In the findings of this study, each participant has their own portrait sharing their individual experiences, with overall themes and threads winding throughout their story.

I am attracted to portraiture methodology for many reasons but specifically the writing style and the reasons behind it were central to my choice. It is important to me to have findings everyone can understand and relate to even if they themselves have never experienced the portrait. To me, this writing style takes "power" out of research. My grandfather felt higher education was critical and pushed his children to go to college. However, many of my extended family did not choose to pursue higher education. They often do not understand why I need or want a Ph.D. and what I do on a daily basis in my career in student affairs. Writing a dissertation to them as an audience is significant

because if they can understand better what I do after reading this, then I have done my

job as a portrait methodologist. It also will support the idea of lessening power from a

process perceived as equating to esteem and attitude.

Relationships in Portraiture
Research

In creating a portrait, introductions, context, voice, themes, and aesthetic whole

are all essential parts. While these are discussed in detail below, the most essential piece

to portraiture research was the relationship between the researcher and participants,

making it a natural fit under the constructivist paradigm. The researcher, sometimes

called the portraitist, and participants co-construct the portraiture through an in depth

process of seeking to explain the everyday actions and themes in the portrait. The

relationship was "rich with meaning and resonance and is crucial to the success and

authenticity of the rendered piece" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002, p. 3).

The "relationship is developed and cultivated in every step of the portraiture process"

(Hoffmann Davis, 2003, p. 209).

To establish a relationship, context was important because a basic understanding

of the site, phenomenon, or participant established credibility for the researcher and

promotes a positive relationship (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002).

Throughout my time with each participant, as I asked questions, they also asked

questions of my experiences. In all of my conversations, I disclosed both personal and

professional stories helping each participant feel more comfortable in our conversation. I

believe the sharing of my own experiences allowed me to be more relatable and

established a better relationship.

Once the relationship is established, researcher and participant engage in the

research process together, co-constructing the portrait that included both voices in a

meaningful and impactful way (Hoffmann Davis, 2003). In constructivism, meaning can

be co-constructed by the researcher and participants, even as intimately, as the

participants being considered a co-researcher (Mertens, 2010). In portraiture, where the

co-construction came in was through what is typically called a member check process.

Member checking was a significant part of the relationship. After I constructed the

portrait, each participant was given time to review the portrait to evaluate if they saw

themselves reflected in the narrative. If I followed the expectations of the portraiture

methodology, the participant should be able to see and feel themselves and their

experiences within the picture. If the participant agrees, I not only have done my job as

the portraitist but also in establishing a relationship expected in portraiture research. The

process of member checking for this project will be discussed in more detail in the

analysis section.

Goodness in Portraiture

In addition to creating the connection between art and science in research,

Lawrence-Lightfoot became concerned research was being done "to focus investigations

on pathology and disease rather than on health and resilience" much like Seligman's

perspective when developing positive psychology (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann

Davis, 2002, p. 8). While finding deficits in research can illuminate problems for

solutions, portraiture research seeks to highlight the goodness in experience. Lawrence-

Lightfoot (2000) believed goodness research should exist because of the following

reasons: (a) focusing on the negative will lead to a view of a social world that magnifies

what is wrong; (b) focusing on failure can lead to cynicism and inaction; (c) negative findings can often lead to blaming the victim for the problems; and (d) it is much easier in research to find problems than it is to highlight positive outcomes leading to research not being as rigorous as it deserves (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002). Therefore, goodness research concentrated on unearthing goodness and highlighting successes, while recognizing that imperfections will always be present within a social system (Hackmann, 2002).

Goodness and positive psychology connect nicely in portraiture. Positive psychology, as discussed earlier, focuses on studying how people celebrate living the good life. The helper's role in positive psychological practice is to help others look at ways in life helping them thrive and live more productive, fulfilling lives. In portraiture, the researcher's role in goodness research is to ask "what is good here?" in order to understand more about both the positive experiences and the weaknesses within them (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002). Portraiture and positive psychology are explained well in this metaphor: "A portrait backdrop illuminates [the participant's] portrayal as surely as the negative space on the artist's canvas makes its positive counterpart more vivid" (Hoffmann Davis, 2003, pp. 200-201). In a painting, the use of space and non-use of space contribute to the overall artistic picture. Goodness research did the same thing by highlighting the authentic central story as perceived by the participants and chose to tell their story from a framework of strength rather than deficiency (Hackmann, 2002). However, like positive psychology, goodness does not ignore the vulnerable and weak experiences either. In fact, understanding how participants negotiate through vulnerable experiences is central to the expression of

goodness (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002). I was more concerned with how each participant defined goodness, specifically asking about each participants' definition of positivity, rather than defining it for them (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002).

Goodness research findings bring a new perspective to student affairs research. Most student affairs research has focused on overcoming a deficit, fixing a problem, finding and filling a gap, or highlighted power. While all of these perspectives contribute to research and advance the knowledge of our profession, goodness research can bring a new perspective to practice not introduced yet consistently into the profession. Some of the values of student affairs work are holistic development and purposeful practice. In order to have holistic development for students, there needs to be a representation of both the positive and deficit aspects of a given research topic. If there is to be purposeful practice within student affairs, then both the positive and the deficit perspectives need to be presented as well. Presenting both balances the scale of information and provides opportunities for more practitioners to understand research findings.

Pieces of the Portrait

Now with an understanding of the overall parts to portraiture, it is time to get into the pieces of creating a portrait in research. Portraiture is a mix of art (writing, creating, imagery, metaphors, etc.) and science (rigors of research, data collection, analysis, etc.), where the researcher works to portray a portrait of participants' experiences using some essential pieces: context, voice, relationship, and themes into an aesthetic whole, a carefully constructed picture. Introductions to each participant's portrait set the tone for the entire piece. Context, including introductions, provides background, understanding,

and meaning to the portrait. Voice, as defined as a participant's experiences interpreted

by the researcher, was how meaning and value interplay within the portrait.

Relationships created the ground rules for engaging in in the research process. Themes

are the overall connections between each portrait that emerge to tell a story. All of these

pieces then come together in the aesthetic whole where the writing style takes over

creating a woven narrative.

Context

Context was significant because it set the backdrop of the portrait (Hoffmann

Davis, 2003). Context was descriptive, detail-oriented, and can be equated to creating a

setting within a theater performance. Just like the artistic detail put into backdrops,

lighting, costumes, and music set the context for the performance, writing the context did

the same thing in these portrait. Context started in the research process long before a

formal data collection process begins. Significant background information was sought

out to understand more about the site of the research, the dynamics and literary

understanding of the portrait topic (i.e., body of existing research), and the participants

themselves in the portrait (Hoffmann Davis, 2003).

An essential piece for the writing of a portrait's context was the introduction to

the study because it set the "context, content, and structure" to the research portraits

(Hoffmann Davis, 2003, p. 200). In reading both Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffmann

Davis' work, the introduction to each piece was creative and captivating. The reader was

immersed quickly into a narrative leaving him or her intrigued to read more and with a

sense of some understanding as to where the story will lead. It was important not only to

creating context, but was also crucial to building a relationship with the participants and for building the portrait (Hoffmann Davis, 2003).

In order to create context in my study, collecting information about the participants' environments through informal observations was vital. Contextual elements informing the research portrait fell into categories of physical context, personal context, and historical context (Hoffmann Davis, 2003). The physical context meant clarifying detail that sets the stage for the participant (Hoffmann Davis, 2003). This could include many different locations and environments. Context came through in the findings as each participant's portrait described an environment. I often arrived at our meeting location earlier than our meeting time to capture notes on the environment knowing they would influence the context of the portrait.

The personal context provides detail that clarified an understanding of the individuals and interactions (Hoffmann Davis, 2003). This included defining people's roles, relationships, and overall interactions. It was important for me to gain an understanding of all significant people in relation to the participant's experiences so readers can understand emotional dynamics, personalities, and interactions. For example, I asked the participants about significant people in their lives providing support to them. I also made observations of participant body language, what they are wearing, and their mood for our meetings all of which are included in their portraits.

The final detail was the historical context, which was the data that placed the here and now within the continuum of the individual's journey (Hoffmann Davis, 2003). This included previous experiences and perceptions of those experiences. As the researcher, I needed to gain understanding of identity developing moments in the participant's

experiences and give the reader an understanding of their significance. For example, asking "why did you choose to go into student affairs?" provided a historical career context and helped give meaning to a participant's professional actions and beliefs.

The other central part of context was it set the stage for the threads (i.e., themes or findings) connecting the narratives throughout the portrait (Hoffmann Davis, 2003). In portraiture methodology, findings, called threads, were discovered after an intense triangulation process. The context for each portrait lays the foundation for the triangulation process, which made its construction meaningful to the research process. Throughout the research process, I gave great detail and attention to all aspects of context, not only for the perspective of the reader, but also the triangulation process.

Voice

The idea of voice in portraiture research started with the concept that a researcher is listening *for* a story, rather than *to* a story (emphasis original; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002). This meant I was in a "more active, engaged position" in which I "search for the story, seek it out, and is central to its creation" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002, p. 12). To help gain voice, a portrait methodologist should conduct a preliminary review of the literature and sites to help gain further understanding of the portrait and participants (Hoffmann Davis, 2003).

Before I met with each participant, I had already been conducting extensive research on each university and on the topic of new professionals to understanding the setting, overall ideas in the literature, and previous findings about new professionals in student affairs. By the time this project was complete, I had spent almost two years seeking out the most recent publications on new professionals, as well as diving back into

the history of student affairs and the seminal research on new professionals. This helped

me in conversations with new professionals as I affirmed and provided explanation of

their feelings and experiences. It also helped me frame and empower each participant

voice when creating their portrait.

Very important to portraiture was the art interpretation of voice. Just like the

style of an artist set the overall tone of a canvas, the voice of the researcher was imprinted

on the rapport with the research participants (Hoffmann Davis, 2003). This meant my

voice was central to interpreting the portrait. This does not mean I "direct the drama or

constructs the scene" but I did "help shape the story's coherence and aesthetic"

(Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002, p. 12-13). This was established through

the language used and the particular details that were chosen to be included in the

portrait.

Think of a painter creating a portrait, the final picture may not look exactly like

the model; however, if an artist has done their job, the picture will be exact enough that

the model can see themselves within the picture. What makes it not exact though is the

artistic style of the painter. Creating a portraiture in research is the same. The final

picture is an interpretation of the portrait construct by me but not absent of each

participants voice, context, and experiences. In fact, given the intimate, authentic

relationship I developed with the participants, what I created allowed each participant to

see themselves in their portraits (Hoffmann Davis, 2003).

Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffmann Davis (2002) noted the intertwining of the

researcher's personal context into the research text was not intended to distract the reader,

but was to be used only when it enhances understanding of the research subject

(Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002). Embedding my voice within the text enabled the reader to experience a deeper level of understanding and empathy that would be exceedingly difficult to achieve if I were writing as a dispassionate, detached observer (Hackmann, 2002). It also allowed the reader to know my intent and past experiences that shaped what my 'painting of the model' looks like.

The interviews in this study were more conversations with an exchange of stories and emotions. I worked hard to establish an authentic relationship with the participants by engaging in reflection with them as they participated in the study. In our conversations, I included my own stories and examples from my own experiences. I shared with the participants bits and piece of the literature on new professionals when relevant in explaining what student affairs thus far understands about new professionals. When writing each participants' portrait, I attempted to write it through the voice of each participant using their word choice, dialect, and tone of voice often hearing our conversation in my head while writing.

Themes/Threads

Most artists create many pieces for a given collection with an overall commonality. It may be a medium, color, shape, image or subject, the list could go on. These commonalities create a collection rather than separate pieces. In portraiture research, themes are what create the overall portrait. Themes were those experiences highlighted in the portrait. Often these themes emerged over several different participants' experiences making them a larger part of the portrait and research findings (Hoffmann Davis, 2003).

In writing the narrative of portraiture, threads and individual experiences were conveyed through a writing style weaving themes throughout all portraits, both individual and collective. This was done to show themes resonated within and across the dimensions of the portrait (Hoffmann Davis, 2003). In this study, the themes are personal/professional transformative moments, change agent for students, positive spirit, and need for reflection and relationships. Each portrait represented a participant and their definition and experiences with the overall themes.

It also showed themes are distinct and porous (Hoffmann Davis, 2003). Each participant's portrait has distinct ways a theme emerged and also has a depth in which the theme resonates in their experience. In writing the findings, I wrote each participant's portrait with findings from their individual experiences while weaving common threads found across participants. I worked extensively with the trustworthiness process to find the four emergent themes from this research.

To create themes, a portraitist must engage in an intense process of triangulation, or an intense review of all of the data collected to start looking for commonalities and themes. There are many ideas behind the process of triangulation (Bodgan & Bilken, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Merriam, 1998) and for purposes of this project, I followed the triangulation process from portraiture methodology. Triangulation was as much an intuitive process as a strategic process for the researcher (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002). I took all of the interview transcriptions, field notes, and in this case, photos, and study them for common ideas, thoughts, emotions, and experiences. Only after seeing these in multiple places did themes emerge. To covey the themes, I wove each theme into both the bigger picture and individual portraits during the writing

process (see data analysis section for more information on how the triangulation process will be used to construct themes). This process is called creating the aesthetic whole.

Aesthetic Whole

The most comprehensive process of portraiture was creating the aesthetic whole (Hoffmann Davis, 2003). This was the process of balancing whole picture with careful inclusion of details. I, as the researcher, was composing the portrait and considering along the way "how to fit together what is included, how to decide what to exclude, and how to know when the whole is unified" (Hoffmann Davis, 2003, p. 214). The data I collected in this project resulted in 20 interviews completed over 38 hours, 10 photojournals totaling 55 pages of data and 81 pictures, and 276 pages of transcribed data. That was a significant amount of data and while much of it was included in this dissertation, I was selective in parts of the interpretation that were included so I could justify the inclusion of each story as it related to the whole portrait (Hoffmann Davis, 2003).

Carefully, I engaged in an intense writing process by writing pieces over a six week timeframe. In this process, it was important to me to engage in "developing a narrative that is both convincing and authentic" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002, p. 14) and interesting in "recording the subtle details of human experience" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002, p. 14). All while capturing "the specifics, the nuance, the detailed description of a thing, a gesture, a voice, and attitude as a way of illuminating more universal patterns" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002, p. 14). This was an intentional process honoring all aspects of portraiture methodology and the participants.

Because the process of this can be intense and rigorous, I created an outline per the recommendation of Hoffmann Davis' (2003) idea of creating an outline (see Figure 2). The outline served as the "same structural tool as sorting data according to dimension and later theme" (Hoffmann Davis, 2003, p. 215). The process of creating an outline started with taking a theme and setting the stage through context followed by "balancing observations with physical details" supported by "direct quotations" from participants (Hoffmann Davis, 2003, p. 215). Once this process was completed for each theme, the writing process began by "applying expressive language, rich metaphors, and vivid descriptions" (Hoffmann Davis, 2003, p. 215). Hoffmann Davis described this process as "the research portraitist, like Spiderwoman, is weaving elements into a vibrant multifaceted whole" (p. 215). This outline was based on the dimensions and themes of the study that emerged through the triangulation process. Following an outline for each participant helped me follow a specific process of creating the portrait allowing me to remember each theme in the weaving process (Hoffmann Davis, 2003).

The process of theme weaving was essential to the aesthetic whole. Weaving was what tied the entire portrait together in an artistic and meaningful way. "The weaving together of the parts of the whole exemplifies the ongoing portraiture dialectic between process and product" (Hoffmann Davis, 2003, p. 215). The weaving process honored each participant and each theme as pieces of fabric in the larger quilt. "It is out of this continuous weaving that the aesthetic whole is created" (Hoffmann Davis, 2003, p. 215). To do so, after review of the conversations and pictures multiple times, I created an Aesthetic Whole chart (see Appendix A), which allowed me to think about the themes and how they interplay within each participant's story. Once this could be filled in for

everyone, I knew the aesthetic whole had been created and it was time to write the

portrait.
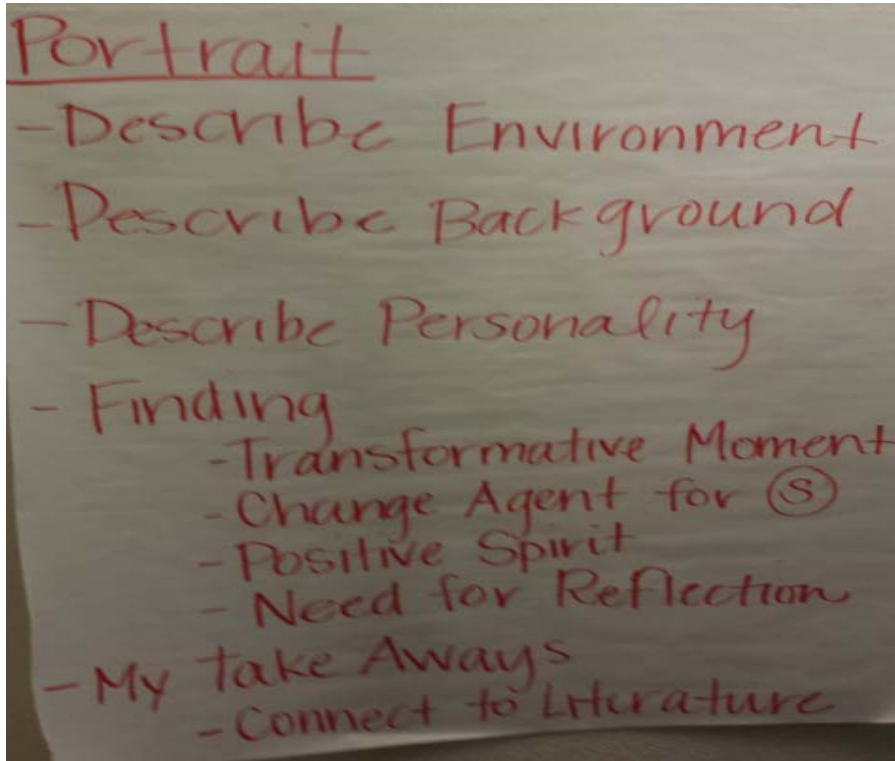
Figure 2. Outline for creating portraits.

Setting and Participants

Settings

Participants were recruited from two different institutions in the Rocky Mountain

region. Both Cream University and Crimson University were selected for this study

because of their similarities and differences as well as the proximity to each other and my

own location at the time of the study. The institutions were similar because they both had

masters and doctoral programs in higher education. This was important in the selection

criteria because of the impact an academic program can have on practice at a given institution. Both institutions have the same Carnegie classification of research institution but a different level which impact the practice and nature of both academic and student affair work. Both are residential institutions with the requirement first year students live on campus.

The first institution, Crimson University, was a rural, residential, mid-size, doctoral granting, public research institution with a Carnegie classification of doctoral/research university. The student population was about 60:40 female to male, 19% of the student population identify as ethnic minority. There were 100 undergraduate academic majors and 58 academic minors. There were over 100 graduate degree programs. As of fall 2011, enrollment was 10,231 undergraduates and 2,268 graduate students. Crimson University had 403 international students from 23 countries (undergraduates) and 28 countries (graduates). Crimson University was a liberal arts institution with specialty areas in teacher education, health and human sciences, and the arts. In my conversations, multiple times it was mentioned that Crimson University does not have a division of student affairs rather there are three reporting lines directly to the provost who all have student affairs functional areas.

Upon entering campus, there were two distinct sides to the architecture and establishment of the institution. The original side of campus, housed building with distinct 1950s charm and detail to their façade and interior design. The original lights were school house style and illuminated the tiled 1950s style hallways. It reminded me of the style of school from the movie *Grease* as I half expected to see people in poodle skirts, greased hair, and saddle shoes.

As the campus expanded over the rolling hills, you will find a frisbee golf course throughout the campus, connecting the original buildings to the newer side. The student union and education building resembled architecture from the 1960s and 1970s. The education building, towering up five stories, had no exterior windows beyond the second floor. The library was built in the same style. While the outside may seem sterile, the inside was rich with energy. While the design may be plain, the students lining the tables, halls, computer labs, and classrooms, buzzed with energy. Often, students from different countries engaged in dialogue about many topics. This campus in the fall felt picturesque and quintessential as the traditional and typical institution of higher education.

The second institution, Cream University, was an urban, residential, mid-size, doctoral granting, private research institution. The Carnegie classification was a doctoral/research university with high research activity. The student population was 54% females and 46% males. Fifteen percent of students identify as students of color. Nineteen percent were internationals students representing 93 different countries. Enrollment as of fall 2011 was 5,087 undergraduate students and 6,389 graduate students. There were more than 170 undergraduate academic programs and more than 120 graduate and professional programs. Students were attracted to come to Cream University because of the academic programs in social work, business, international programs, and law.

Located only 11 miles from the downtown of the capital city of the state, Cream University sat in a suburban neighborhood. The city's public transportation system had both a rail and bus stop on campus making it easily accessible to the city's residents. Upon arriving on campus, I felt the prestige, tradition, and richness of the campus in the

building architecture and grounds. The campus stretched across many city blocks and was intertwined with fast food restaurants and coffee shops almost making it hard to tell where campus stopped and started. Walking through campus, even though the university had a rich tradition, many of the buildings felt new. Every building was rich, red brick and only the windows gave me the sense of their age. I was quick to notice what were house-like dwelling interspersed between academic buildings. I found out later these were university owned Greek letter houses built in an attempt to combine student life and academic life together. Some still function as Greek letter houses, but others have been changed into cultural centers and other student affairs offices. The campus felt like a lot of money has been invested into creating a traditional feel on campus. I was surprised to find that even the décor in the bathrooms was in school colors provoking a sense of pride in every aspect of a student's experience.

The School of Education building was small but immediately upon entering you were greeted by an expansive student lounge area where students were meeting for group projects. Off to the right, a large conference room was attached to the lounge. The conjoining wall to the lounge was all doors that have the ability to fold back entirely to expand the lounge space even further. I was also surprised to learn there was a kitchen and work room on every floor for community use. Every day some sort of wonderful dish made it into the kitchen for all to share. I was struck by the contrast of this building to the School of Education building at Crimson University.

Beyond the spacious student lounge, on every floor I found open meeting space for students with everything from comfy couches to private table spaces. Each space provided a flat screen TV with hookups for laptop projection. I understood academic

work was serious business here and these spaces were expected to be used often by students doing work. The truth of the matter was they were being used by students. Either for academic work or socially, every time I entered the building every space was being used.

The institutions also have a lot of differences. Crimson University was a public university attracting a different type of student. Cream University was private and majority graduate students making the institutional culture different from Crimson. Cream University was also located in close proximity to a major metropolitan area and was well connected to the city by public transportation. Crimson University was a rural university located about 60 miles from a major metropolitan area. While both institutions have similar academic majors, Crimson was known for education and nursing, while the Cream was known for business, law, and public service (i.e., policy, international relations, etc.). These institutions had enough commonalities and differences that participants brought a richness of experiences and thoughts to the study.

Participants

For this study, I used purposeful, convenience sampling (Merriam, 1998). Purposeful sampling involved choosing participants based on their "special expertise and competence" in a given area (Chein, 1981, p. 440). I used purposeful sampling because I wanted to "discover, understand and gain insight" specifically about being a new professional and therefore, recruited participants filling criteria that would help do so (Merriam, 1998, p. 61). The sample was also a convenient sample based on their geographic location to me as the researcher.

Ten participants were selected for the study based on specific criteria. Participants were first time professionals in student affairs in first positions post graduate school working at either Crimson or Cream University full time. Five participants were in their first year post graduation from their master's program, four were in their second year post-graduation and one was in their third year post-graduation. All participants were in their first position accepted after graduate school. Five participants were from Cream University and the other five were from Crimson University, which provided a numerical balance of voices and experiences.

It was important to me to have a diverse sample of participants in functional areas. When looking for participants, I wanted to specifically find a few participants who work in areas outside of residence life to have varied experiences and perspectives in the study.   In creating the portrait of new professionals, there was no one typical new professional experience. The ten participants in this study represented the following functional areas: admissions, advising, student activities, Greek life, new student orientation, career services, residence life and access programs. By having both a public school and a private school, and eight functional areas represented in this study, the constructed portrait allowed for multiple readers to connect with the portrait (see Appendix A). Prior to participant recruitment, Institutional Review Board approval was given to conduct the study (see Appendix B). Table 1 provides further demographics of the 10 participants. Participants were asked to self-identify their sex and race.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Name	University	Functional Area	Sex	Race
Juliana	Cream	Advising	Female	Hispanic
Beth	Cream	Student Activities	Female	White
Stella	Crimson	Orientation	Female	Caucasian
Jane	Cream	Advising and Orientation	Female	White
Teddy	Crimson	Residence Life	Male	White
Rachel	Crimson	Greek Life	Female	White (non-Latino)
Brittney	Crimson	Career Services	Female	Black
Nadia	Cream	Residence Life	Female	Caucasian
John	Crimson	Access Programs	Male	Latino
Sophia	Cream	Admissions	Female	White (non-Hispanic)

Participant recruitment. To find participants for the study, I reached out to professional contacts using them as gatekeepers at each institution. I sought out names of new professionals and asked for permission to contact them about the study. Often, the gatekeeper would reach out to a potential participant first asking them if I could contact them. Once I had a name and an email address, I sent the potential participant an email. This email explained the study and invite people to participate in the experience (see Appendix C). Included in this initial contact was the summary sheet outlining the study and their role as participants. Once I had sent an initial email explaining the research study in detail, including the time commitment, the potential participant could accept or decline participation. All participants signed a consent form outlining in detail their

commitment to the study and were offered the opportunity to create a pseudonym to

protect their identity (see Appendix D). I shared the consent form in the first interview.

<div align="center">**Data Collection Methods**</div>

To bring this portrait to life, I used in-depth interviews (Merriam, 1998),

photojournaling (Heisley& Levy, 1991), and researcher notes as data collection tools

throughout the research process. In this section, other details of the study including the

interview process, photojournals, researcher notes, and how authenticity was established

in the research project are shared.

Interviews

In-depth interviews are probably the most common form of data collection in

qualitative research (Merriam, 1998). In-depth interviews can be described as a

conversation with a purpose (Webb & Webb, as cited in Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003).

In this study, using the framework of positive psychology, I conducted two in-depth

interviews with each participant around their positive experiences as new professionals.

Interviews were a semi-structured format (Merriam, 1998). I created questions to ask

each participant during the interviews, but also allowed for conversation to flow naturally

(see Appendix E for sample interview questions).

The first interview was conducted at the start of the study. During the first

interview, I spent the entire time getting to know the participant gaining an environmental

understanding of their position and daily work helping provide context to the portrait. I

learned more about their position(s), day-to-day tasks, areas of interest, values, and their

overall perception of their professional development thus far. I also asked about

historical context such as how they got into student affairs, where they did their graduate

work, and what attracted them to their current positions. These interviews were scheduled for one hour, but often ran over because in addition to great conversations, there was other business to take care of like consent forms, and further explanation about the photojournals.

A follow up interview was scheduled for six weeks after the initial interview so the weeks in between could be used to compile a photojournal (see next section for more detail). As mentioned before, thinking in a positive mindset was a paradigm shift and many participants commented on how hard it was to take pictures because they needed to change their mindset. Six weeks gave the participant time to shift to focusing on more positive aspects of their job and capture those through photos. However, due to timelines, some participants only had three weeks to complete the photojournals. Surprisingly though, these photojournals provided as much depth as those that had six week to complete.

During the second interview, the participants and I talked about their photojournal highlighting their positive experiences. My goal was to understand why each picture was taken, how the picture represented a positive moment for the participant, and how it related to their perception of their professional development in the position. I asked the participants to submit these photojournals to me ahead of the interview so I could review them prior to our time together. Some were able to do so, while a few could not due to timing. For those photojournals I could review ahead of time, I prepared questions to help understand further their photo choices. For those photojournals I received at the interview, I asked questions in the moment and followed up by email if I had further questions after our conversations.

Photojournals

The method of photojournaling was selected for this project because of the meaning participants created through taking photos. Photoelicitation was "based on the simple idea of inserting a photograph into a research interview" (Harper, 2002, p. 12). In photoelicitation methods, participants can reflect on pictures to create their definitions and interpretations of the photographs (Harper, 1988). Previous projects using photos allowed for the participants' memories to the sharpened and elicited "longer and more comprehensive interviews" (Harper, 2002, p. 14). Harper (2002) explained this occurred because of the way the brain processes visual information, "images evoke deeper elements of human consciousness than words do" (p. 13). The photos in this study added a layer of depth to the portraiture methodology specifically because "photographs get their meaning from the way the people involved with them understand them, use them, and thereby attribute meaning to them" (Becker, 1991, p. 2).

There were two different ways of using photoelicitation methods in research. The first method was pulling existing photography around a given topic and having the participants analyze the photos (Pauwels, 2011). The second way is creating a structured process for producing photos. In this study, the second way was used through a process called native image production which simply means the participants were going to produce the photos for the journal using their own experiences (Worth & Adair, 1972). Photojournals were a compilation of pictures representing a commonality (Heisley & Levy, 1991). Autodriving was a form of a photo elicitation method, but rather than showing photos picked by the researcher to elicit a reaction or response from a participant, autodriving put the selection of photos in the participants' hands (Heisley &

Levy, 1991). Autodriving as a method worked well for this project because this technique gave "the informant increased voice and authority in interpreting" the perspective of the transition and positive experiences of all participants (Heisley & Levy, 1991, p. 257). A participant taking their own pictures is considered more critical in a research process since it empowers their voices rather than the researcher supplying the photos in a more traditional photo elicitation process (Heisley & Levy, 1991). In this process, the participants took pictures of their positive experiences and created a photojournal.

The participants compiled photojournals based on a prompt I gave them in the first interview (see Appendix F). I asked participants over a three to six week period of time to take 6 to 10 pictures of things they felt were a success, motivational, or an accomplishment in their professional development. Each picture was accompanied by a written description as to why the participant selected the picture and what it meant to them. I left it up to the participants to define success or positive professional development so they could best capture a picture that represented the feeling for them. The pictures embodied all different ideas and were symbolic, representative, and/or literal of positive professional development experiences.

Eight participants chose to take pictures and put them into electronic documents (Word or PowerPoint). Two participants elected to use social media to represent their pictures. One of the participants used Flickr, an online photo gallery, and the other used Tumblr, a photo blog. All photojournals were creatively constructed and really represented the values, experiences, and positive moments of all the participants. There

were 81 pictures submitted over 55 pages of data. For me, the use of photos brought visualization to findings that I may not have been able to create with words alone.

Authenticity

Portraiture methodology had a standard of authenticity, rather than reliability or generalizability, because the main goal of the research process was the development of meaningful, trusting, authentic relationships with the participants in order to listen for a story and experience (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002). Important to understand was the fact that in portraiture research, I was deeply involved in creating an interpretation of the story and experiences of the participants and am seen as the primary research instrument (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002). This has come under scrutiny in the research world; however, the constructivist research paradigm rests in the value that objectivity was not possible between the researcher and participants. In order to truly construct meaning, and in this case, a portrait of experience, I cannot attempt to remain objective (Mertens, 2010).

Creating authentic relationships with each of the participants was vital to me and to this research process. Authentic relationships require awareness of others, being genuine, open, and honest, engaging in reflection, and self-awareness (Cranton, 2006). My relationships with the participants were built through intentional and impactful conversations that included time for reflection. In the socialization literature, time for reflection was critical (Tull et al., 2009). In authentic relationships, taking the time to ask meaningful questions and truly listen to the answers creates a sense of engagement and intentionality.

A component in all of my conversations was active listening. I gave my full attention to the participants when they were sharing their stories. I showed empathy, care, and concern as they shared. Good listening skills not only meant listening to what is being said, but also what is not being said. In many conversations as my instinct arose about an idea or emotion, I asked questions to bring new information to the surface for the participants. I found myself summarizing and paraphrasing what was being shared to demonstrate my listening and understanding. Many participants commented on how much they enjoyed our time together or "it's like therapy," one of them told me jokingly. While I was not doing therapy by any means, the time our conversations provided for reflection was critical to data collection and authenticity in this study.

Another critical component to authentic relationships was the reduction of a power dynamic. One way I tried to do this was to interact with participants as colleagues (Cranton, 2006). The participants chose our first meeting location to one, empower them in the process and two, have them be comfortable. It may seem small, but by reaching out to them and making myself available in spaces they chose, I believe it removed some power from my title as the researcher, thus creating more of a partnership.

A key component to authentic relationships was being aware of your own self (Cranton, 2006). I am an external processor of my own thoughts and feelings so throughout this time, I talked with a select few to help me manage my emotions, thoughts, and ideas throughout the research study. These experiences helped me process my own thoughts and feelings about an interview or photojournal so when I spoke with participants, I could ask pertinent questions and engage fully in our interaction.

A final piece of an authentic relationship was sharing in the emotions with the participants. As it came up in conversation, I shared with each participant my own experiences and emotions as a new professional. I shared experiences about working with students that were meaningful for me. I shared my own personal journey to college. I celebrated and delighted with the participants in their times of triumph, and empathized with the participants in their times of struggle. I believe authentically walking through each experience with the participant showed my investment in their experiences and offered a meaningful relationship. I was genuinely sad to be ending my time with each of them as I have enjoyed getting to know them. Many have asked to be at my dissertation defense and to have coffee in the weeks to come. These gestures showed me there was/is an established relationship there that will move forward after the project.

Portrait as Reflection

A criticism of portraiture is the argument that findings are not generalizable (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 2002). This is a naive criticism generated from an objectivist, post positivistic perspective that does not understand qualitative generalizations. While the findings are not statistically generalizable because each participant's story was unique to his or her own experiences, the steps in the research process could be duplicated for a future study. Again, in portraiture, the goal was "to document and illuminate the complexity and detail of a unique experience or place, hoping the audience will see themselves reflected in it" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002, p. 14). Meaning, any reader who has been a new professional may be able to relate to the experiences in the portrait, and those readers who may not have ever worked in student affairs, may read it and understand more of a picture of the

experiences of new professionals. Beyond the steps for research, what makes portraiture generalizable was the way in which the written portrait conveys the narrative for a reader and if the reader can see themselves in the constructed picture.

Additional Criteria for Establishing
Authenticity

In addition to portraiture authenticity, a few other steps were used to further establish authenticity with the research. Participants were offered the opportunity to create a pseudonym to protect their identity in the study. Also some photos from the photojournals were omitted because of the highly personally identifying nature of the photos. Other photos were altered to protect the identity of the participant.

As mentioned before, member checking was critical to portraiture through the review of the portrait by the participant. "A trusting relationship between research participant and researcher allows for the co-constructing of a story that belongs to and honors both of them" (Hoffmann Davis, 2003, p. 210). I talked with each participant about the artist metaphor for portraiture and explained the final portrait will be my interpretation of their experiences. Each participant was emailed their written portrait when it was in draft form and asked to answer "Do you see yourself in this picture?" or "Does this capture your spirit?" My intention as a portraitist researcher was to have the answer be "yes" in the first read and many of them did. However, if the participants felt differently, we engaged in a conversation about what I wrote. After our conversation, if a participant still felt strongly they could not see themselves in the portrait I would take their feedback and used it to continue to create a portrait until they answered the member check question positively. This only happened with one participant who was struggling

more with reading about his/herself rather than what I had wrote. This led to a great

discussion about how they saw themselves versus how an outside perspective saw them.

<div align="center">**Analysis**</div>

Theory

   I followed a thematic analysis process using the criteria for analysis from

portraiture while viewing findings through a positive psychology lens. Portraiture

methodology connected with thematic analysis because both processes were about

finding emergent themes from the data collected and weaving the themes into a story. In

this study, the theme weaving process was done through a positive framework meaning

themes highlighted the good skills and experiences of the participants and also lessons

learned through challenging experiences.

   Thematic analysis "focuses on identifiable themes and patterns of living and/or

behavior" emerging from the data (Aronson, 1994, p. 10). The focus of thematic analysis

was on the content of the data and using what was said in constructing meaning

(Riessman, 2008). Portraiture has five criteria a researcher should look for when in the

analysis process: repetitive refrains, resonant metaphors, institutional rituals, cultural

rituals, and revealing patterns together creating a positive picture of a participant's

experience (Hoffman Davis, 2003). In the data analysis process, I looked for positive

moments, including positive experiences, moments of triumph, and accomplishments, for

each of the participants, specifically looking for how each participant experienced the

positive psychology concept of the happy life. As mentioned earlier, the happy life

focuses on positive emotions, flow, and understanding strengths and using them actively.

In using both of these analysis methods together with positive psychology, I focused the

findings on capturing the story of the participant's positive experiences as a new professional.

Constructing Emergent Themes

The process of data analysis in portraiture has five modes of analysis: repetitive refrains, resonant metaphors, institutional and cultural rituals, triangulation, and revealing patterns (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002). Repetitive refrains were themes heard over and over again throughout the research process. Resonant metaphors provide a pattern for themes. Institutional and cultural rituals were actions and behaviors specific to the culture. Triangulation was the intense process of analysis where data was read over and over for themes to emerge. Revealing patterns came from the triangulation process, and are themes that emerged throughout and over all threads of a portrait.

Repetitive refrains. Repetitive refrains were themes and patterns I heard over and over again, from a variety of different people in the study and through a variety of different settings. Participants gave "voice to this refrain through identifying it, naming it, and sometimes through actions and gestures" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 1997, p. 193). The refrain could even be found in the environment through signs or symbols. When I started to hear ideas over and over, I listened more carefully and dug deeper to understand further (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002). These also showed up through positive emotions or moments of flow.

Resonant metaphors. Metaphors often "embrace and express a large arc of human experience" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002, p. 198). Many participants connected a metaphor with learning experience emphasizing their strengths in their position or with a particular aspect of their work. If a participant had reflected

enough on a particular experience or idea enough to have a metaphor to help others understand, there is deeper meaning and learning that has occurred in that process. My job was to capture that meaning, through a positive psychology frame, in emergent themes and include them in their portraits (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002).

Institutional and cultural rituals. Institutional and cultural rituals are "aesthetic and ceremonial reflections of an organization's purpose" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002, p. 201). Rituals can be an expression of community, celebration of traditions, or opportunities to create continuity and coherence (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002). It was my job to participate in these rituals, to look for emergent themes that might be embedded in the rituals (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002). During a ritual, I learned about the organization's values, priorities, and stories shaping an institution's culture. For example, Crimson University participants consistently mentioned to me they do not formally have a division of student affairs so I learned to use that language in my conversations with them.

Triangulation. In portraiture research, the intense process of triangulation was the main way in which the science of the research and the art of the portrait come together in a weaving process. I employed "various strategies and tools of data collection, looking for points of convergence among them" by reviewing transcriptions, photojournals, and researcher notes looking for intersections of themes (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002, p. 204). At these points of convergence, emergent themes "arise out of this layering of data" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002, p. 204). In the process of layering data, when something was mentioned multiple

times by multiple people, it then showed up in "factual evidence," like previous research, and then was collected again through research tools in this process, triangulation has occurred and a theme has emerged (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002).

Revealing patterns. Revealing patterns were the divergent stories that within themselves are an emergent theme. Some data cannot be triangulated and in qualitative research, there are no outliers within the data collected (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002; Mertens, 2010). I had the responsibility to "try to make sense out of the dissonance" and try "to discern the underlying patterns" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002, p. 209). These patterns were not immediately recognizable to me or the participant but came through after looking at photojournals and reading transcriptions. It is often after a researcher reflects on a conversation that the patterns begin to emerge into themes (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002). These divergent themes were significant findings to the overall portrait of the study.

Explanation of Analysis Process

Interviews. During the interview process, interviews were recorded and transcribed. Interview data totaled over 38 hours of interview time and 276 pages of transcriptions. During the interviews, I made my own notations about the metaphors, repeated statements, and rituals mentioned by the participant. In addition, I also took notes of divergent stories that seemed relevant to a participant's experience. I did have some initial thoughts on what themes would emerge from the data because of the intimacy of the data collection process and the relationships with the participants.

Once I had the transcriptions of both interviews for a participant, I read through each transcription making additional notes of potential themes, metaphors, and repeated

statements. I read through each participants' transcriptions at least three times and then went back to the literature, and positive psychology framework to see if possible themes related to either of these areas. If the themes were connected to either the literature or framework, I made note of it. I did this for each participant.

Once I had read through every participant's transcriptions, I used the aesthetic whole chart I created and wrote down possible themes and how they showed up across all participants (see Appendix A). When I found a theme ran across over half of the participants, I named the theme and applied it as a finding for the study. I then used the example or metaphor for the theme from each participant for their portrait. Photojournals also became a specific part of the theme finding process because often themes emerged or were supported by pictures in the photojournals.

Photojournals. Photojournals were of great value in constructing portraits because of the visualization and reflection they provided to the study. After I had read the transcriptions, I looked to the photojournals to confirm themes, metaphors, values, and actions. I re-read the photojournal summaries and my notes on the interview to help remind me of the purpose of the picture. Often the pictures in the photojournals supported a metaphor or repetitive refrain and were used in the findings to visually support a theme for a participant in the portrait. Once themes were finalized, I cut and paste photos into portraits to support stories and experiences of each participant. The photojournals allowed for deeper reflection for each participant often making something a theme rather than a possible piece of information collected in the study.

Researcher notes. Researcher reflection during a portraiture process is critical to the overall picture. After each time with a participant, I set aside time to journal and

reflect on my time with them. Because I was often driving during the time after interviews, instead of having a written journal, I audio recorded my thoughts, feelings, and interactions with both the participant and setting. These notes were helpful in my own reflection on the data collection process and potential writing of the portraits. While I did not go back and listen directly to them in my writing process, because I am a verbal processor, being able to audio record a setting, for example, helped confirm the picture of the environment in my mind for writing the portrait at a later date.

Writing Process

Once themes emerged, I began the portraiture writing process. There were two parts to this process; I started by constructing a generic outline to help frame each participant's portrait. Included in this outline were the emergent themes and how to weave them into each participant's portrait. After working through the aesthetic whole chart, I wrote each participant's individual portrait using both the outline and aesthetic whole chart. Once I completed writing each participant's portrait, I returned the individual portraits to each participant by email and asked him or her to review. As the participants' confirmed their portraits, they were included into the larger portrait. The second part of writing was to make sure all ten portraits read together as a bigger picture representing the themes of this study. This was an intense process of several readings through the portraits making sure themes were present and stories were being told to support themes.

After an intense data collection process, and an intense writing process, the themes for the overall portrait of positive professional development experiences for new professionals in student affairs are: having transformative moments, being a change agent

for students, developing of a positive spirit, and the need for reflection and relationships.

In the next chapter, I have written ten portraits highlighting experiences of new

professionals as they transition into their first positions in student affairs. During my

time with the participants, it was evident they were excited, happy, energetic, and eager

to make their mark in the student affairs profession. I learned about exciting experiences,

new ideas, projects, and challenges that have made their experience thus far in student

affairs worth every minute. These student affairs professionals have struggled,

celebrated, and are still figuring out their way in the profession but overall are doing

fantastic work, and learning every minute on the job. These are their stories.

CHAPTER IV

PORTRAITS AND DISCUSSION

I am rushing around the house trying to make sure I have everything. Keys,

check. Phone, check. Notepad, questions, water...check. I looked at my husband with a

nervous grin.

"I think I'm ready to go."

"You'll be great, babe. This is just you getting to know another person."

"I know. But I am so nervous! I just hope it goes well."

I walked out of the house and got into my car. I figured I had about 30 minutes to

calm my nerves and figure out a way to just make conversation. I make conversation

standing in line at the grocery store. This was no different, right? I did what I always do

when I'm nervous. I put on my playlist entitled "courage" and find myself getting lost in

the music and driving. Driving always helps me feel better.

It was a beautiful September afternoon and we were meeting at a new coffee shop

in one of the oldest neighborhoods in the city. As I arrived, craftsman bungalows lined

each street with cars parked so heavily on each side, two cars could not pass each other

driving down the street. I am directed onto a small main street where to my right a

farmers market has been set up for the day. Cute, quaint small shops line the sidewalk

and young couples, families, and others enjoy meals outside in the beautiful sunshine

day.

As I pulled up to the coffee shop, I see it is an old house that has been recently renovated into a vintage, industrial place to gather. Inside industrial lighting hovers over a long metal bar. People sit conversing and hovering over laptops. The garage doors lining the back wall are rolled up letting in the beauty of the day. Outside the patio reminds me of a backyard gathering space as metal tables surround each other with orange umbrellas to shade the sun. I set my stuff down at a table outside fully ready to enjoy the sunshine during our conversation. In ordering a drink, I notice the baristas all wear vintage button up shirts and suspenders adding to the vintage vibe. I spot white subway tiles along the walk framed with barn wood and know, I could get used to being in a place like this. I order an iced chai which comes in a mason jar. I go to pull out my wallet to pay and realize while I have everything to do research, I have left my wallet at home. The barista looks at me and says, "It's on us. You'll come back again." I think to myself, yes, yes I definitely will. To write my dissertation.

I guess before we move into the participants' stories, you should know a little more about me. By nature of this writing, I am a Ph.D. student but I also get to be a full time student affairs professional as well. As a student affairs practitioner, I have worked for almost ten years. Most of that time has been spent in residence life and also supervising professionals, often new professionals, but a little over five years ago I took a position in new student orientation. I often call orientation my first love in student affairs because I started as an orientation leader in college. One day I realized I had bosses, who had awesome jobs working with student leaders and asked "how do I get your job?" I am lucky in my current position to supervise student leaders paying forward what

someone did for me as a student. As I mentioned before, both their journeys and my journey as a new professional has brought me to this study.

I return to my table and anxiously await Juliana's arrival. Juliana's is the first of ten new professionals who have agreed to share their stories with me. In the beginning I thought there was something I had to do, a task I had to accomplish, but I should have known as easily as the barista told me I would come back to this coffee shop because it had impacted my life, this study ended up being my privilege and honor to spend almost 40 hours with ten new professionals learning about their journeys in student affairs. In one way or another during our time together, they thanked me for thinking of them, giving them the opportunity to participate, or just listening to professional triumphs. I want to thank them though. A thanks does not seem grand enough. I feel honored, and humble by these ten outstanding new professionals. I remember what it was like to be in their shoes. Their energy excites me. Their willingness to learn and grow is motivational. I am a changed person for the time I have spent with them.

These next few pages tell their stories, and capture their spirits as they have transformational moments impacting their professional identity. I was lucky enough to hear about and compile them into this dissertation to share with others that through graduate school, trainings, conferences, institutes and the other endless opportunities we take in student affairs to advance our skill set, what I found to be most important for new professionals cannot be found by spending hundreds of dollars or hours of time on these opportunities (although they are still significant).

Each portrait will highlight the experiences of each of the ten participants as to how they relate to the four themes found in this study. The four themes are new

professionals: need to have the opportunity to have a transformative moment through reflection building confidence; want to be change agents for students; want others to honor their positive spirit and find connections with colleagues through a positive environment; and need time for personal and professional reflection. All themes related to the idea of forming a professional identity in student affairs.

In the next few pages you will meet Juliana, Beth, Stella, Jane, Teddy, Rachel, Brittney, Nadia, John, and Sophia; all new professionals at either Cream or Crimson University working in their first professional positions in student affairs post graduate school. These ten new professionals are some of the most hopeful, excited, idea based professionals I have ever met. They are passionate about what they do and are willing to do the work it takes to foster their professional identity. Here are their stories.

Juliana

In a bright orange baseball cap and a long floral maxi dress, Juliana strode right up to my outside table and with a southern drawl and bright smile said, "it's so nice to finally meet you!" At about 5'10" with long brown hair and dark eyes, Juliana went to college in Florida and attended graduate school in Alabama. I learned she was from the south and relocated to the rocky mountain area a little more than three years ago for a partner's job. She now worked at Cream University. When we first met, she was in a Student Success Coordinator role and by our second meeting, she had accepted a new position as an Academic Advisor also at Cream University. Juliana was thoughtful with her words and enjoyed sharing about herself and her experiences. Our conversation came so easily because Juliana had a natural way with conversation. I had a hard time

remembering what I was so nervous about as she began talking about her assistantship with a women's resource center from graduate school.

Transformative Moment

She said, "If I could pick up that women's center and job and put it down here, I would give up everything to work there in a minute." Juliana's body language was engaged. She was leaning forward and looking me straight in the eyes. Her tone of voice was excited and intentional as she shared that her graduate school assistantship was not just a place she worked, but was a place where she felt invested. She was passionate about women's issues in a caring and empowering way wanting to build up women through creating community. She shared about a program she worked with while she was in graduate school and as she shared, I thought about the literature on new professionals' socialization and how often, the socialization process for new professionals started in graduate school. This was true for Juliana.

The program required Juliana to teach a class to undergraduate women who worked in local schools in a mentoring program for 5th grade girls. During the class, Juliana explained, the women learned about self-esteem issues with pre-adolescent girls and through that process, the undergraduate women worked through some of their own issues. I learned from Juliana that after the semester long class, the undergraduate students spent the following semester visiting local elementary schools and specifically working with 5th grade girls at these schools. The site visits were spent doing activities, playing games, and interacting with each other. She said, "That's what I like about higher ed, you're not just working with the students. It's working with the whole community."

Impacting the community was something Juliana strived to do in her work whether it was asked of her or not. She said,

> I guess it's not only powerful for these young girls at these schools. It was powerful for the volunteers, too, to go into the community and take just even five or ten minutes off campus where people are not having the resources and the chance or they may have had as students.

As we talked more about this program, I learned that the majority of the undergraduate student population was white and privileged in terms of socioeconomic status while the 5th grade students were all racial and ethnic minorities of lower socio-economic status. Juliana shared, for "some of the undergraduate students, this was their first time ever interacting with someone of another race. It was just such a powerful experience." Juliana's facial expressions lit up when she talked about this program. Excitement and contentment came over her showing how proud she was of her accomplishments with the class.

I sat back and thought about this for a minute. Juliana's program took place in Alabama. She was not only running a program helping to empower both college women and 5th grade girls in their own identity as women, but she was also breaking down racial barriers that existed long before Juliana ever thought about a career in student affairs. As she continued to talk, I just remember sitting there in awe of her and felt honored to be in her presence. She did not preach about needing to break down barriers between races. She calmly and charismatically told me about how this program empowered others to learn there is more to life than their tiny worlds. And that is when I knew, Juliana would make a difference as a new professional.

Change Agent: Empowering Others

"As I look through your photojournal and all throughout our conversations, one word keeps coming up over and over again," I say smiling. I was smiling because Juliana already knew the word I was going to say to her. She looks at me with light in her eyes and says, "Empowering? I know I say it a lot."

"So tell me, what does it mean to you?" She paused for a moment. I've seen this pause before. In my counseling classes, my professors said a good pause meant something great was coming. My leadership teachers said this pause was where learning occurred because the silence communicated reflection. I saw this moment as a significant point in our time together- a time where she shared something important to her that went beyond work or practice. Something that lay deep within her spirit as a practitioner. Juliana looked at me and said, "Taking a little bit of knowledge and spreading it and watching other people live it. It just feels good. It's warm. It feels like what you are doing is making a difference." These words resonate so deeply with me. Not because I have felt this feeling before, but because I believe what Juliana said about her practice was actually how she acted with her students.

What Juliana taught me in that moment was new professionals need to have moments where they create change during their first few years of practice, so they align their practice with their values. Without the opportunity to facilitate the women's program for undergraduate students and 5th grade girls, Juliana might not have been able to feel what it was like to empower students and define her professional identity through understanding her values. She was able to facilitate a program that not only created change in a community, but within every participant both undergraduate women and 5th

grade students. After that experience, Juliana was able to explain to me how she worked to empower students, through her leadership style, and how she would like to continue to empower students with her work in the future. All were significant to her professional identity and career.

Positive Spirit

Juliana also taught me another lesson about new professionals. One that may impact many in student affairs since moving around and moving up into positions can take a lot of waiting time. "Grinding it out," she said to me, "I just had to grind it out." She said this to me after including the picture (see Figure 3) in her photojournal. For Juliana, this picture represented the change in jobs that had occurred during the six weeks of the study. In our first meeting, Juliana talked extensively about her work in student success. She shared it was not the exact work she wanted to be doing in student affairs but, "hey, you know it's one of those things that you have to do your time, you have to start somewhere when you a breaking into a new profession." I admired her for that. I wondered if this attitude was being taught in our graduate programs and telling our new professionals about beginning positions. Sometimes with new professionals attitude and learning are key. As far as the literature on graduate preparation programs, career planning, and job searching did not seem to be high on the list of priorities for formal curricula.

Figure 3. You have to start somewhere.

I found Juliana's perspective on this to be very wise. "I think that's a hard thing

for people to do. Where did you learn that?" I asked.

> My dad. He's such a hard worker and one of those who just thinks it's important
> to do your time. It's not like you are going to start off at the top. But I always
> focus on the bigger picture, like what do I want out of a career, rather than being
> limited in my scope with just the position in front of me. I'm doing what I want to
> do and as long as I work hard I'll get to the next level. It's not permanent and I
> just keep telling myself that. So I grind it out. I do the work in front of me. Do it
> well and keep focusing on the bigger picture of my career.

As she sat across the table from me, I wondered how many young professionals

had this wise and thoughtful perspective on a career in student affairs. I know graduating

from my master's program and finding a first position, there was an enormous amount of

pressure to keep the reputation of the graduate program. Intentional positions were to be

chosen and looking for the best fit possible was ingrained into the search process. I loved

my first job and I loved my master's program. But I came out wide eyed thinking

everything I did should be founded in theory, intentional, and through creating fantastic

relationships with students. Never once did I consider the challenges, the feelings of

being stuck in a position. Juliana's perspective could help a lot of new professionals and

graduate programs think about how to intentionally prepare students for a long term

career in student affairs, rather than a great first position, by helping influence their

professional identities. Excitingly, when I went to meet with Juliana for a second time

only six weeks after our first meeting, she had a new job in academic advising. A job

that was much more in line with what she wanted to do in student affairs. Her long term

focus and her ability to "grind it out" made the next step a reality. This aligned with

Juliana's definition of positivity, which was "being hopeful and through that hope

impacting and empowering others."

**Need for Reflection and
Relationships**

Juliana was able to come to the conclusion about "grinding it out" because of her

ability to reflect in our time together highlighting why reflection was so critical in her

professional identity development. When I asked her what helped support her in dealing

with the not so fun parts of the job she shared, "I always seem to have either great bosses

or colleagues who I am able to talk with about the challenges. I can think of people who

fill these roles within each position I have loved. I can already tell with the new position

who might be those roles for me." Clearly, connections with colleagues led to Juliana's

time for reflection and processing of experiences. This was key for Juliana's ability to

"grind it out" and wait intentionally for the next position which would bring a better

professional fit.

Interestingly, the person Juliana sought out the most in her student success position was Beth who you will meet next. Juliana commented that without Beth "she would have quit a long time ago" from her student success position. Juliana and Beth's connection helped both of them be able to feel competent in their positions and also continue to challenge each other when the job got emotionally tough. As they separately shared these things with me, I thought about the literature on new professionals and the finding Renn and Hodges (2007) stated about relationships being key for new professional success. I had no doubt that Beth and Juliana were able to find success in their positions and confidence in their experiences because of their connection. They both called it a friendship which by name, can mean it is likely more significant than a colleague.

Beth

"Heeeelllllloooo!" I heard across the room in a bright, happy tone. This was how I would describe my interactions with Beth- bright and happy. As I entered my time with Beth, I was deep in thought about other conversations I had been having with others in the study. At 5'3" Beth is from New England, went to undergraduate school in Boston, and was so proud of her home, she even had a dog named Fenway. She smiled brightly and talked at a fast pace with her light brown hair swinging around highlighting her energy. I expected to hear an accent but she shared she had lost it after being in this place for over five years. I found out she was a runner and personal health and wellness were personal values. She was recently engaged and with the security of her first professional position was able to buy her first house. When Beth was in graduate school, she worked on my campus and I got to know her well.

Beth asked me as we sat down, "You seem deep in thought, how is the study

going?" I replied, "Great actually. I'm learning a ton and so happy to be meeting with

participants. I'm sorry if I seem distracted. I am just thinking about others' stories."

Throughout every interview, I was hearing stories of how these new professionals were

proud of moments in their positions impacting their professional development.

"Interesting. Tell me more," Beth said to me. I started to describe some of the details of

others stories and as we were talking, Beth jumped in and said "so what you're describing

is the ability for others to see the impact they are making in a professional position. I feel

that way too."

When the study started, Beth was in a position in student success at Cream

University that was routine, mundane, and gave her no ownership of her daily tasks. The

role was simple. She was told in her first few weeks on the job by her supervisor that she

would probably get bored and move on from the position within less than a year of her

start date. One particular picture from her photojournal visually represented this job.

"See this picture here," she said pointing to a picture of flowers (see Figure 4), "It is

lifeless, minimal. I even used a filter on this one to remove the color. I was not a

significant piece to this department or school." During the study, she was offered her

new position in student activities at a new university. Nine months after starting the old

one. Including Beth in this study highlighted her transition and the positive change her

new position brought to her professional identity development. There was a contrast

between the picture of the flowers (see Figure 4) and the rest of Beth's photojournal. By

color alone, I can tell which pictures from Beth's photojournal are from the old positions

and which ones are from the new position, a position Beth had been in about three weeks

when we met the second time.

Figure 4. Lifeless flowers.

Transformative Moment

"This was one of the first things I did on the job," Beth began. She was pointing

to two images of the same scene but taken from different perspectives. The picture (see

Figure 5) was of a campus field with small red flags staked throughout the grass with

Beth and students sticking small pinned plastic flags into a grass lawn on campus. The

other picture (see Figure 6) was an aerial view of campus and amongst stone buildings,

sidewalks, and green grass is a patch of red standing out against the backdrop.

We worked with another office on campus and went out a stuck at least 300 little red flags in the grass. The message was important having to do with interpersonal violence and clearly many small flags stand out to people walking by. It was a fun project and it took about 3 hours or so. I was not thrilled with having to bend over and stake but my student staff did it too and so it was a good amount of time getting to know them. We had some fun conversations and it was definitely a bonding experience to work on staking all these flags.

Figure 5. Staking red flags.

I laughed at her description because I understood the importance of the

installation but also the tedious feeling it can give as well.

But this picture (Figure 6) here on the right is the view of the flags from the 14th floor of a building on campus. First of all, the conference room I was in is this amazing room. It's grand. Molding and woodwork everywhere. The table is so shiny I'm afraid to put anything on it because I don't want to leave water rings on it. So it was my first time up there and you can see all of campus from the windows. So I'm admiring the view and looking out over campus when what do I

see, this square of red in the middle of campus. I took the picture to show the students who worked on staking them but as I took the picture it hit me. With this job I get to do so much more that has an impact on others. In this case, staking small red flags did not seem like much. But from that view, I saw what a difference it made and what an impact can be seen from afar.

Figure 6. Red flags from a distance.

As Beth described this picture to me, she was animated, funny, and detailed in her retelling of the experience. Her hands are flying everywhere as she motioned to what it was like to stake flags.

I thought it was just some mundane task, that while important, how it really impacted people could not be measured. But after seeing it from afar (Figure 6), it was a moment where I just knew there would be so many things I would do in this job where the bigger picture impact will be just as important as the details of

event. That is the type of job I want to be doing. Bigger picture towards the overall educational experience but also attention to the details because of the significance they can have.

Seeing these pictures, I realized what had been stirring in my mind with this study. Beth needed to see the bigger impact she was making in her position. For others in this study, this came through entirely autonomous tasks or responsibilities where they were trusted to implement a plan or event and carry it through to the end much like Beth in this example. What was significant for Beth's development and others was the end result was entirely their own. No one else could claim it or own it. This ownership gave Beth a learning experience- a transformative learning experience that impacted her professional development in a positive way. Allowing Beth this space, I found, made her a better skilled professional and allowed for a significant amount of confidence in her professional identity. Beth's story provided an example of what new professionals would learn if given the space and autonomy in their positions towards transformative professional development opportunities.

Change Agent for Students

"So this is the coolest thing ever," she said as she began our conversation. We were looking at a picture of what appeared to be balloons filled with paint and some were popped splattering different colors all over a white canvas (see Figure 7).

> So this was really one of those…not exactly students proving me wrong moments because I thought would be cool but I just saw all the work before anything else and did not know if the work the students would put in to make it happen would have that big of a reward at the end. But I was proud of them because it turned out to be a huge success.
>
> It was a project they did themselves. They came up with the idea. They did all the work. It was a moment for me where I had to step back and let them do it. Knowing I was there for support if they needed it but it was their project. Just made sure they did it safely…you know throwing darts at the balloons and

all. And you know what they did it. People stood around and watched the piece happen. They were all so proud of it. It was just one of those moments where you're like, the students…I don't know. You're just in awe of them. You're like 'you guys are so cool. You have no idea how cool you are.' This is my job now. Unbelievable.

Figure 7. Painting through darts.

I thought to myself after my conversation with Beth, maybe sometimes we, as professionals, can be so busy trying to make changes to better students, that we forget to let the students change us too. As a supervisor for students, Beth each day of her job had to weight what would be good for her students' learning and developmental process and what needed to be accomplished for the department. For Beth, stepping back and supporting the students' idea created the space for Beth to learn and therefore, be changed by her students. What I learned in this moment was sometimes being a change

agent meant the new professional had to allow others to change them, a challenging, but good lesson for Beth's professional development.

Her caption for the picture read, "This served as a great example of how great things can be accomplished when I take my concerns out of a situation and let the students run with something." The best part about this moment was Beth was happy to do it. She was confident in the students' abilities and challenged herself to change so her students could be successful.

Positive Spirit

"So this is a picture of a cup of coffee," she said smiling and laughing. I laughed too. We were laughing because we both love coffee. We often took coffee breaks together when we worked together. Medium iced coffees with cream and sugar from McDonalds.

"You know because I love coffee (see Figure 8). It makes me happy. I love going on coffee breaks with others and just catching up and enjoying each other's company," she finished. Beth continued and shared more about the setting of that particular picture but the setting was not as important as the cup of coffee. For Beth, a cup of coffee was a simple comfort of her day and completely represents her positive spirit. Like coffee, Beth is warm. The way she greets you is sweet like flavored creamer. Just like a good cup of coffee can change a person's day, Beth's inherent positive spirit can turn even the most challenging things around.
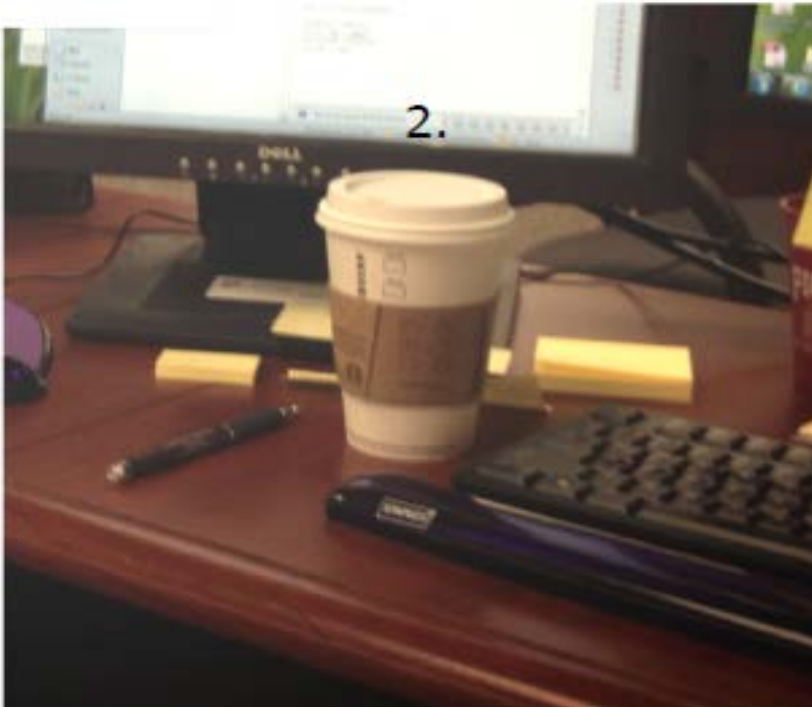
Figure 8. A warm cup of coffee.

When I asked Beth to define positivity she said,

I would go broad in saying the meaning of positive to me is this state [state of being positive; way of life]. It's not like a single thing or certain action. It is a healthy mindset. It's like this symbiotic relationship where you put out positive energy into the environment and the environment becomes more positive and willing to give it back to you. It's so important to make sure I am giving that positive energy every day so I can see that balance between being a good person and appreciation for the environment.

I appreciated Beth thoughts about positivity as a state of being. Positive psychology literature indicated a person can choose a positive attitude but, when you are happy on the inside, the outside becomes more positive as well. The happy lives in positive psychology were all about connecting the inner strengths, values and talents, with actions in the day to day world. In this new position, Beth found expectations and

responsibilities that aligned with her talents, and actions that motivated her to do the job.

For Beth, this was a true alignment of her positive spirit.

Need for Reflection and
Relationships

In my time with Beth, her need for reflection went almost hand in hand with her

learning experiences. As she was starting her new position in student activities, and

learning all kinds of new skills and ideas, she sought out others for conversation which

often included reflection. She mentioned that in the jobs she liked most, she often had a

close colleague to talk to which for her meant that person was a place for reflection.

"This is a picture of my coworker (see Figure 9). She is much more of a friend

than coworker though," Beth explained.

> I've always had one person in each job that I really confide in or really gets it.
> Whether it's just venting because they are able to understand where I am coming
> from and being able to validate my feelings to know I'm not crazy. I already
> know I'm not crazy but it's just nice to have someone say 'yes that is ridiculous.'
> And sometimes I need someone to guide me. It's usually a friendship that I can
> know and trust and knows me well enough too… to understand.

Beth spent a lot of time in personal reflection. She was a verbal processor who

understood that she needed someone in her work environment to help process and

validate her experiences. She also expected this person to hold her accountable and tell

her what she really needed to hear. It was important Beth knew and understood this

about herself and could seek this experience out in her work environments.
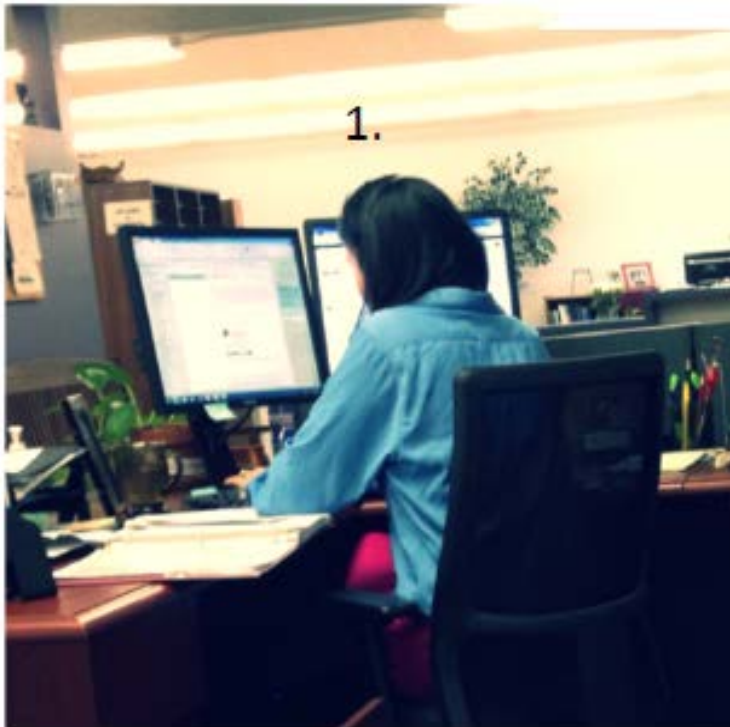
Figure 9. Co-worker connections.

What I learned from my time with Beth was what might feel like useless actions really do have an impact and if you believe they will be positive, they will. Beth's inherent positive nature made me laugh, smile, and think while we spent our time together. This time was needed for both of us; for Beth to reflect on this new journey in her new position and for me, to breathe in some good positive juju which changed my perspective for the rest of this project.

Stella

One day at work, I was checking email. Three days before another participant, Brittney, who you will meet later, had given me Stella's name as someone who might be interested in participating in this study. I had sent Stella my email as I had to other participants and had not heard back yet. I knew Stella worked in new student orientation

but had never met her before. It would only be a matter of time before I would meet

Stella given that the orientation community in the state was pretty small. As I checked

my inbox, a new email came from a colleague asking for information about student

staffing for orientation. Since that is one of my primary roles, I opened the email and the

first line read, "Hi, my name is Stella and I am the new Coordinator for Orientation." I

thought to myself, small world indeed. I quickly responded saying that I could help with

her request and mentioned my email to her about the research study. We agreed to meet

to talk about both requests and when our communication was complete, I was excited not

only for the new colleague I had, but also to learn more about Stella.

We met in the student union on her campus in the fireside lounge. The space was

wide and open with probably 50 couches spread out for student use. The couches faced

each other as if the space was to foster community and connections. The couches were

deep, comfortable, and as people sit down I could almost hear an audible sigh as if the

couch had melted away the stress of the day. The space was casual, comfortable. Many

students were spread out throughout the space. Some were meeting in groups, others

were working on laptops, and some were sleeping.

I sat in a set of four chairs directly beside the fireplace. The fireplace was stone

with a gold vent hood. The university's seal sat above the hood. As I sat down and

looked around, I wondered how many times this lounge space invited conversations and

connections amongst students. I learned the student union was built in the 1970s and I

thought about this fireplace and wondered what it would be like to tap into all the

conversations that had occurred throughout the years.

It was a beautiful fall day. Warmer than other fall days, but still the leaves were turning, the campus was buzzing with the feel of a fall semester, and I waited anxiously to meet Stella. Even though we had a phone conversation before this, I was still nervous to meet her. It was still early on in the project and I was still hoping the experience was worthwhile for the participants.

"Are you Amy?" Stella said interrupting my thoughts.

"Yes, I am. Hi Stella it's so nice to meet you in person!" I replied. "Thanks for meeting with me."

We started our conversation with some small talk about her experiences thus far with orientation and the staffing information I shared with her previously. I learned Stella was really involved in her undergraduate experience both in residence life and orientation. She said to me, "I grew up in housing and orientation and thought I was going to be a hall director." Stella's master's program was in counselor education with an emphasis in student affairs and she loved the experience. "I made incredible, incredible friendships, and my cohort, well, when you go through a counselor education program with people; you have to examine yourself and each other so much. We just got so close. I loved it there." Stella lit up as she shared this with me.

With dark blond hair and bright green eyes, Stella was bubbly, bright, and outgoing. She was extroverted and overall naturally positive and excited about life. Stella was wearing a black and white plaid scarf which she had draped around her neck and over her shoulders so it came to a point in front of her shirt. I loved the scarf she was wearing and when I complimented her, she smiled a great smile and said "Thanks!" and dove into a story about where she got it from. Our conversation was engaging and I

found we had lots to talk about and connect over in our experiences. As we continued to

chat, I felt myself relaxing, and even excited to be meeting with and talking to Stella.

From Negative to the Positive

"So my assistantship [during graduate school] was in housing and Greek life but

mostly I worked as a Greek Advisor. It was fun but challenging. I had two student

deaths when I was there. My boss was fired for embezzling $100,000."

"Oh?" I said, shocked and yet trying not to have too strong of a reaction so Stella

would be comfortable telling me the story. She shared,

> It was an interesting experience my first year for sure. My supervisor, before he
> got fired, was extremely, I do not know if there is a good word for it, judgmental
> maybe. He was constantly putting me down and getting upset at the work I was
> doing. I constantly felt like I had to prove myself. At the end of the year, I highly
> questioned if student affairs was really for me.

Her story related to the literature on supervisors of new professionals and how

key their role was in retaining new professionals. While this for Stella was in graduate

school, Stella's socialization process had already begun making this supervisory

relationship impactful as well.

"I am so sorry that happened," I shared empathetically because I could completely

relate to how Stella was feeling. Having had my own challenging situations in graduate

school, I understood how awful a situation like that could have been. Stella quickly

changed her tone of voice from a negative tone to one that was higher, upbeat, and

excited almost relieved. This tone of voice represented to me the change that happened

in her experiences.

"Luckily, I had a NODA internship and I would say it was a life changing

experience," she said. The initials NODA stand for the National Orientation Directors

Association which was the national association for orientation professionals in student

affairs. Each summer, NODA hosts a national internship program for graduate students

to get experiences with orientation programs during the summer. Stella said, "When I

arrived, the person who was supposed to be my supervisor had a family emergency and

was going to be out for a month. The director of the department was also the director of

judicial affairs and special projects for the division." I heard this and my eyes grew wide

as I looked at Stella because that was a huge role in student affairs. In fact, what she was

describing was a person who actually was doing the work of three separate positions at

other institutions. I immediately knew this person had a ton on their plate and would not

have enough time to run orientations and supervise Stella.

"I know, it was a small school," she said in response to my reaction. This was

just one example of how connected I felt to Stella. I did not even have to say anything in

yet through my facial reaction and she knew what I was thinking. I learned throughout

our time together her connection to people was significant to her work in student affairs.

> Essentially I arrived and they put me on a bus and said, "You're in charge,' and I
> led all of training. I had no time to question myself or feel like I had to prove
> anything to anyone. I just really felt like I came out of my shell, not like I ever
> had a shell.

She slipped this in with a matter of fact and sarcastic tone that made me laugh: "The

experience made me realize I am competent and when I went back my second year to

grad school, I felt like I had nothing to prove to anyone."

As my time with Stella went on, it was clear that the NODA internship and the

moment of her standing on a bus being told she was in charge was a defining professional

moment that transformed her own image of herself and what she was capable of as a

graduate student and now professional. Even though the moment was circumstantial

because of emergencies with other staff members, it forced Stella to step up and use her

skills and abilities--something she now relied on every day for her professional work.

Changing Student Leadership

"So tell me about this picture" (see Figure 10), I say to her as we a look at her

photojournal. Stella created a photojournal through Flickr, an online photo album

platform. Not only was it fun to see how she took and arranged the pictures, it also was

something she will have as long as the internet and Flickr are around that she can refer to

in the future. Her photos were arranged on a black and bright colored background. I saw

eight pictures and when clicking on a particular picture, it displayed bigger and had a

written description Stella created.

Figure 10. Students make me smile

> What I found fun about this photojournal was I am already a picture person and half of these pictures are from before we ever started meeting. I love to document life through pictures. I am on Instagram constantly and clearly, Flickr, so being able to just pull photos that already meant something to me was awesome.

In this statement alone, Stella had confirmed that pictures provided more depth to research. Through social media, people could tell their life stories through pictures so using them in research was just meeting people where they were documenting their lives already. I loved her sharing this with me and felt warm and happy as she was sharing her thoughts.

> So these two pictures are from the summer [see Figure 10]. The picture is of [one of the student leaders from the summer] jumping with balloons. It was a really funny picture for me. I feel like I made really great connections with my students really quick this summer. Starting in July, orientations were already happening and I just jumped in. I took a lot of time to get to know them so I was not this distant supervisor and to me the investment in getting to know them comes when they start to have fun with me. It means they feel comfortable enough to relax and share moments with me. So when I look at this picture, I have no idea why this student was holding balloons and jumping in the air, but I do remember just laughing. Knowing the students connect with me and trust me in a way where they're comfortable to share, we can goof around but then they still respect me as their supervisor. That's what I hope for with my students.

> "So student contact is sort of what for you?" I asked her. I could tell by how much she shared that supervising student and connections to student development were critical to her intentional practice in student affairs and as a new professional. Her next statement confirmed my thoughts.

> It fills my bucket. At the same time though, I know if I have a connection with them, I can advocate for what they need and how to make their experience working for us amazing. That's what this picture represents here [see Figure 11]. I think they are doing a skit but still they are all happy, excited, and making fools of themselves in front of new students to inspire them to have a great experience at this university. In return, if I can give them a great leadership experience then it's my little way of paying forward all they do for the department and university.

Figure 11. Work fills my bucket.

From this story, I understood Stella's role as a change agent for students. She wanted to develop relationships with them from the start of her position based on true authenticity and appreciation for one another. No one told her it was an expectation of her position to get to know the students well and create an open and fun environment to foster growth. She did that all on her own because she valued students and their experiences. This was the core of her practice and what kept her engaged in her position now and into the future.

Positive Spirit

In my time with Stella, I learned she was doing a lot to change things for the betterment of her orientation programs and for the university as a whole. She was charged with creating a parent orientation program to better meet the needs of parents who attend orientation with their students. True to Stella's spirit, she was not doing it

alone. She had pulled together a committee of people from across the university to talk about potential ideas and program implementation. She had also been charged with restructuring the student staff model for orientation programs. In the not too distant future, she will also be looking at new student orientation and how to update the program. I was exhausted just listing the projects on her plate. When I ask her about being busy, her positive nature and definition of positivity came through:

> I just have a tendency to see things as opportunities rather than challenges. I have always been the kind of person that seeks out a new challenge all the time. I see all of those things as positive things. Like the other day in a committee meeting, I was asked a question I could not answer because I am still new at this. I know some of my peers would spend time beating themselves up for not being prepared. Instead of shutting down, I was just like this is an opportunity for me to re-frame what I was doing and see how me as a professional can utilize this committee to benefit orientation, which will trickle out into the institution. That was positive to me. I love seeing challenges as opportunities. This picture here is of my meeting agenda from that meeting [see Figure 12]. I captured it to remind me of this.
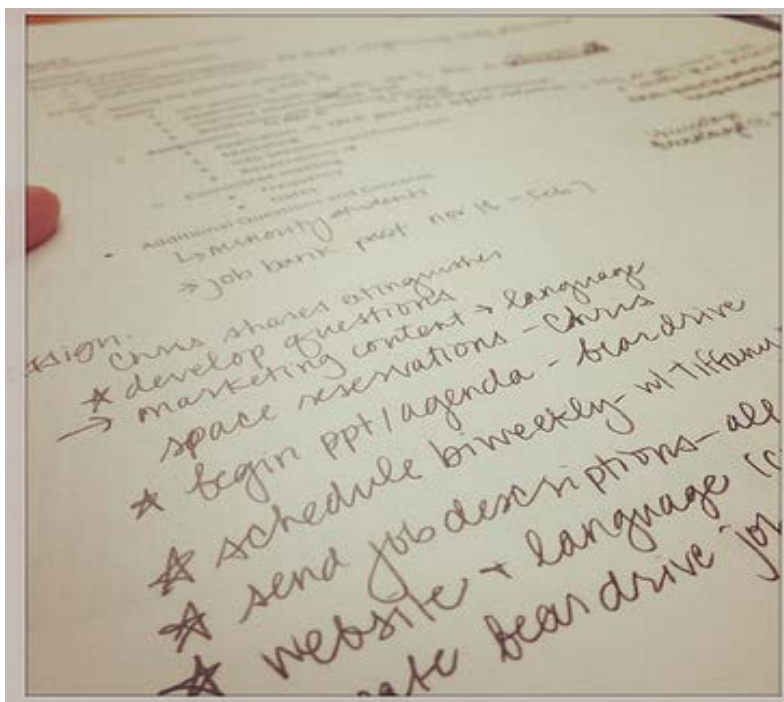
Figure 12. Committee meeting agenda.

Stella's ability to welcome challenge awed me. She saw failure as something that was part of her learning process and made changes about herself and her work based on challenge. In our conversations, she visibly did not dwell on problems, conflicts, or challenging moments. When I would push a little deeper, she always came back around to it being an opportunity. Stella demonstrated the happy lives concept of the pleasant life (Seligman, 2004) because she was able to take any situation and use her positive nature to turn a situation around for the better. In turn, her pleasant life state made her work environment and responsibilities even better than when she entered.

Need for Reflection

As I sat and talked with Stella during our time together, I could tell she spent a lot of her time thinking about her actions, reflecting on the past and planning for the future. This came through in one of her photos:

> We found these pictures and hung them on the wall of our office with our mission statement [see Figure 13]. May not seem like much but these pictures date back to 2007. That was my first year of college. While I do not know anyone in these photos, I see myself in them. I was an orientation leader the same years as these students and now, look where I am, supervising orientation leaders. I am not in these pictures but have been shaped by each one of these summers.

Stella stopped. I watched her as she paused. I knew what she was doing. She was remembering each summer. See you can do that in orientation. You can remember what you wore, because you wear the same thing every day. You can remember the staff, because each summer is a different staff with different memories. Because of the intensity of the experiences, you can remember each summer what you learned and how you were shaped because each summer is distinct.

Figure 13. Mission and purpose.

She started again,

When I sit at my desk, I look this way," she motioned to the left but positioned herself as if she is sitting at her desk, "that wall is a bit further down but it's right there and I can see it every day. I can look at it and think about each summer I have grown and our mission statement and what I am doing now and into the future for those empty frames. Again it may not seem like much but it reminds me every day why I am doing what I am doing.

Stella did not need meeting with me for her to reflect on her experiences. There was something daily in her environment that challenged her to just that, but she needed to tell someone. She needed to take a picture, explain it to someone, and reflect on what not only the project meant to her but how it impacted her every day. She just needed someone else to know besides her.

Jane

Jane sat across from me at yet another local coffee shop. The place was located in one of the young professional neighborhoods in the city. Old apartment buildings from the 1940s and 1950s lined many of the streets. The streets were quaint with mature trees, cute flowers, and people outside walking their dogs. Because many who live in this area are in their 20s and 30s, bars and restaurants line the corners of many streets. Drive up another block and there are several other coffee shops to choose from each packed with young professionals connecting and enjoying the day.

Jane worked at Cream University in academic advising. She attended graduate school at Cream University too and through an assistantship, was able to secure a professional position. Jane did not ever consider a career in student affairs until she was in a graduate program for counseling. Even though throughout her undergraduate career she was connected to student involvement, she never thought once about student affairs. "Even my mom mentioned to me in a conversation that she could see me doing the work of my programming board advisor at the time." Jane did not think twice about it. Through informational interviews with several student affairs professionals, she was able to learn more about the profession, gain an assistantship, and begin her career.

Jane was originally from Minnesota and a few times I caught her long vowel sounds coming through her soft, Midwest accent. As she sat across from me, she had dark hair cut in an align bob that throughout our conversations, she constantly tucked behind her ears. She had eggplant square framed glasses that framed her hazel eyes and fit her contemporary style. Her jacket was a trench coat but instead of a classic style, this one had been designed to be more funky, form fitting, and only a few people could

actually pull it off as Jane did. Jane was charismatic and deeply connected to our conversations. I felt during our conversations I was the only person in the whole world that mattered to her in that moment. As I learned more about Jane though, I found that this same attention and intention in which she treated our conversation, was the same intention she carried throughout her work with students.

Transformative Moment

For some participants, there had been one defining moment that allowed them to transform into their professional identity. Jane's story was slightly different in that Jane's transformation was a process that had started in graduate school and was still in process even during our time together. When Jane and I met, it became obvious to me she was still learning and growing in her transformation as a professional by her statements and reactions. Specifically after I asked most questions, Jane would pause and think before answering often including a statement like "that's a good question."

In our conversation I asked, "After looking at your photojournal and reading the descriptions of your pictures, there are three words that stand out to me about you. Encouragement, patience, and support." I asked Jane, "Would it be fair to call these your values?" Jane tilted her head in a brief pause.

> It's a really interesting perspective and I totally see it. It's not often in life that you slow down and think 'what are my values that I share with people?' I just want people to feel like they have something or someone that cares for them. I tell the people I work with, while your primary job is to support the students academically, the students are going to want to tell you all kinds of things outside of academics and that's okay. We want that. Yes, it may add more to your work load, but what's really important is that the students see us as a resource. I guess I'm a person when I meet with a student I don't want them to just see me as an advisor. I want them to see me as a support person. I want them to have the ability to contact me with any questions and know they'll get an answer even if it's not something I do, I'll point them in the right direction.

By this answer, Jane shared she was still figuring out what it meant to have

professional values, and develop a professional identity. Jane's socialization as a

professional was a sense of identity, not necessarily an action done with her work

responsibilities. The picture (see Figure 14) of a personality type inventory Jane

completed connected with the results of being a helper. Jane did her work through her

intuitive nature of helping others and was still figuring out the specific skills she used to

form her professional identity.

Figure 14. Being a helper.

I feel the literature on new professionals sounds like at some point, a new

professional will reach a point of being fully socialized into student affairs leaving yet

another deficit model for new professional development because the socialization

literature failed to take emotions and feelings into account. For Jane, transformation was

an intentional process which involved feelings. When it felt right for Jane working with a

student, then she felt like she was changing and growing as a professional. Defining her

values as a professional for Jane was not nearly as important as her intentional work with

students and being able to use her instincts to serve them in the best ways possible. Jane

will continue to transform through her interactions with students long after this study was

over. Jane's process was a good example of how many new professionals will need the

time and space to transform and develop their identity and may not do this through the

process suggested by literature.

Change Agent

As our conversation went on, I listened while Jane told many stories of students,

colleagues, and her own support system that repeated the themes of support, patience, and

encouragement.

> That is a picture of the couch that is in my office [see Figure 15]. Funny story. A previous graduate intern had it in her office and I always thought a couch would be perfect to help create a comforting environment. So when she was leaving she asked if I wanted it so I jumped at the opportunity and it has been there ever since. As I was taking pictures, I just think about the gathering space this couch has created. Colleagues will come and sit down and just start chatting. Whether our conversations are work or personal based, I leave the conversation thankful for the interaction. This sofa has allowed me to grow as an individual through finding ways to be my true self in the work place.

A couch in an office might seem simple, but as I listened to Jane, having a

comfortable spot for others was another way she provided support for them. In return,

while they might be more comfortable on a couch, she was encouraged and felt genuinely

honored to have others come in to her office, get comfortable, and share their stories

which allow her to do her best work as a helper. Supporting others was directly related to how Jane was a change agent. In the fact that the support Jane provided challenged others to make changes in their lives.

Figure 15. Comfy couch.

She provided an example of this with a story she shared about one of her students. "He was on academic probation and was required to meet with me bi-weekly." She starts to tell me:

> I could tell by his body language he wanted to tell me something important but was hesitant. He still had his backpack on so I asked him to take it off and get comfortable. I could see him almost relax immediately. I asked him how he got on academic probation and as he was telling me he disclosed he felt like he had a problem with drugs. We had a great conversation about what he needed at this time in his life. Ultimately, he came back to see me with his parents about a week

later and withdrew from classes so he could go to rehab. I knew that was the best thing for him but in our conversation I did not tell him that. I asked him questions that helped him think about the decisions impacting his life. And that is what I live for in this position. The ability to support students to think of themselves and make decisions that will help them be not only successful students, but also successful adults.

I sat back and thought about the work Jane was doing early on in her career. As she told me these stories, I grasped the understanding that Jane was intentional with many aspects of her career. She could have had a table and chairs in her office but instead chose a couch to make her office a comfortable environment. She could have told the student in her office what to do but instead chose to ask questions allowing for the student's own reflection and decision making process. This intentionality showed how mature and thoughtful she was as a student affairs professional and how she challenged others to make their own life changes helping them become better for themselves and their lives.

Positive Spirit

"So what keeps you motivated to do the job each day?" I asked as we continued to talk about the nature of student affairs work and the style in which she did it.

Again a thoughtful pause,

I am motivated to earn people's trust. This picture to me showed two people who feel comfortable and trust each other (Figure 16). I am always working hard to learn all I can about someone so they walk away feeling like I invested in our time together. With my colleagues, I am constantly looking at how can I be the best team player I can be. At the same time, I have always been really easy going. In this role, it means when I work with others, be it students or colleagues, I can be flexible, mold myself to what they need at the time, and work to provide the support needed.

Figure 16. Comfort and trust.

Her motivation to earn the trust of others was unique and set her positive spirit apart from just being a value. When Jane shared this with me, her tone of voice was soft, and intentional. She was confident in her statement as if this was more than just something she wanted to do daily. It was inherent to her being and with intention connected her to her engaged happy life. In student affairs, earning and keeping the trust of others, is probably one of the most influential things you can do. I was in awe of Jane's spirit.

"That is a really unique way to be motivated, where do you think that comes from?" I asked her. I think Jane's motivation to earn the trust of others was special. In a world that can be so untrusting sometimes, here was Jane pushing through to make a difference for those around her. "I do it because I have had lots of people invest in me. When I look at this picture I am reminded of how many opportunities I have had to grow

in my profession." The picture (see Figure 17) was of part of a compass and for Jane

represented the balance of her professional life.

Figure 17. Professional balance.

As we spent time together, Jane's curious nature, and willingness to be open

showed me exactly what others see in her at work. She was not just telling me this was

what she does in her work; she was actually doing it with me in our time together. Her

willingness to help others, all while taking care of herself, was something others could

learn about and apply to their practice. She intentionally balanced being able to help

students and colleagues, get her work done, and have a fun life outside of work.

> My supervisors are always looking out for me and seeking ways for me to
> continue to grow. I am continually grateful for the trust that is instilled in me. So

because I am continually being trusted to do more and get more opportunities, I feel I should be paying that forward to others, she responded.

What Jane was describing was the cyclical nature in which she did her work. By others investing in her through new projects and opportunities, she was willing to work that much harder. The process was also cyclical by Jane paying the investment others put in her into her students and those she led in her position. All of this led to her overall feelings of positivity and paying forward what had been afforded to her through opportunities.

After talking with Jane, her overall perspective on life was positive. When I asked her to define positivity she shared,

> An overall optimistic outlook on things would be my nutshell description of positivity. Making the best of things, no matter how things turn out or come across, just being able to see it in a good light versus something that is wrong or not OK.

This overall optimistic nature supported the spirit to do her job. No matter what the job, Jane's positive spirit was so strong that in any professional environment, she would create a supportive environment, where she was contributing, earning the trust of others, and thriving as a professional.

Need for Reflection

Jane and I ended up spending over four hours together talking about her professional identity development. I would ask her questions and always she would pause and deeply think about her answers. This reflection time was important to her nature as a helper. Jane shared with me stories of how she helped and learned from others. Her spirit, while she did not say this to me directly, embodied the concept of leaving the world a little bit better than she found it. Her motivation, intention, support

and encouragement all came from the underlying spirit she had for the world. Her reflection time with me allowed her to vocalize and illustrate her overall commitment to being a helper to everyone around her. She not only valued helping others, but deeply believed she had something to learn from everyone making her humble, approachable, and caring.

Teddy

As I waited to meet Teddy, I am genuinely excited to meet him. I was connected to Teddy through a former staff member of mine who was Teddy's supervisor. I was back in the fireside lounge of the student union where I met Stella and this time there were quite a few more people in the space. It had been a few weeks since my last visit here and the weather was starting to turn cold. Fall break was near and the amount of students in the space studying, as opposed to earlier in the year where it seemed the space was used for more social connections, told me finals and major project deadline were near.

My observation of the space was broken when Teddy walked up to my table. "Hello!" I said in a loud, cheery voice. I had a smile across my face. Teddy was tall, over six feet. He wore glasses and was dressed in khaki pants and a Crimson University polo. He was also wearing his university nametag. Teddy returns the smile and said "Hi, how are you?"

As an undergraduate, Teddy found student affairs just before graduating his final year. He attended a small, private university in Minnesota and was able to intern in the Vice President for Student Affairs office during his senior year. While there, an office administrative assistant left and Teddy was able to pick up a lot of their responsibilities

while the position was being filled. As he talked about this experience, I saw his eyes

light up. I could tell it was a special experience for him as it changed his entire career

future. I could also tell by the confident and direct tone of voice when sharing this

journey Teddy liked being trusted with responsibilities.

Teddy attended graduate school in the Midwest. After graduating, he did a

national job search and found a Hall Director position at Crimson University to be

exactly what he was looking for in terms of position and collaboration. He was hired

during summer training which, in residence life, was an intense time from the beginning

of July through the start of classes in August. Teddy interviewed on campus, was offered

a position and moved in about a week's timeframe. A quick start, Teddy hit the ground

running and shared with me he felt like for the first time since he started he was finally

catching his breath. From our time together, I picked up on Teddy's sense of loyalty,

genuine passion for student affairs, and never ending thirst for knowledge.

Transformative Moment

> It's hard to see from the pictures, but this is a picture [see Figure 18] of some
> really detailed illustrations that some students in the RA class I teach did this
> week. So we were talking about this culture of care that is important to our
> division and looking at how the RAs incorporate it into their positions. So we
> decided to use the metaphor of a tree for them. The roots signify the history and
> culture set in place. The trunk is what we build on to implement those policies,
> procedures, and programs. The leaves are the things we could do better in
> relation to policies, procedures, programs, and the culture of care.

Teddy was talking quickly as he told me the story. I followed along fine but I could tell

he was rushing because there was something important at the end of this picture and he

wanted to give me all of the background possible so I could fully understand why this

picture was first, and so meaningful in his photojournal.

I have really enjoyed working with new RAs. It was a really neat thing to do because it made the RAs reflect on their actions and how they've been doing the job thus far. I've watched some of them grow, even in their first semester on the job. They've become more confident and able to learn. We had a really great discussion around what they created. As they were sharing, I was able to reflect on my own time as an RA and a professional and share stories with them. After doing so I could tell they learned from the experience and really connected.

Figure 18. Helping students reflect.

"Tell me what it was like to share some of your own experiences as an RA with the class. How has your personal reflection impacted your role?"

Again, Teddy dove into the background and context of the class structure and weekly set up. I loved hearing this because it helped me understand where Teddy was coming from with his stories. I imagine he supervises in the very same way and the style serves students well. Students' always want to know why a decision was made or why

something exist. From what I gather in my time with Teddy, he worked to provide the

answer for them or he would work with them to figure out the answer.

> I am careful to not over take the conversation with my stories but also provide my experiences to really guide and shape some of the reflection time. It's a delicate balance but I think my own personal reflection on that part has been a good learning experience for me in the fact that I do have valuable things to share and they can help others. I also know that holding back and allowing the students the time for reflection as well can really share their learning. I've love it.

"It sounds like an amazing class experience and a good learning experience for

you," I followed up. I could tell by the way in which Teddy explained all of this to me

that by teaching this class, he was using skills and developed as a professional in ways

that were giving him confidence. He enjoyed being able to facilitate weekly classes for

RA student leaders. He gave them time and space each week to talk through challenging

aspects of their jobs and collectively as a class talk though ideas, provide support, and

create a community. Teddy's motivation grew each time an RA in the class took away

something meaningful.

"It just feels good to know I am helping them," he said to me as we wrapped up

looking at the picture (see Figure 18), "I know that in that class each week I am using the

things I learned in graduate school and applying them to help students grow and that

makes me feel like I'm doing a good job." I happen to agree. What Teddy needed in his

position was to take the tools he learned in graduate school, use them and see them work

in his professional position. He mentioned loving student development theory to which I

exclaimed "Me too!" and referred to several theories during our time together. Teddy

was more analytical in his reflection than other participants in the study, connecting

linear thoughts rather than feelings about his experience. What he needed to transform as

a professional was the logical application of theories and practices and see success from

those applications to have a transformational moment as a new professional.

Change Agent

When Teddy and I met, one of the things that continually struck me about Teddy

was his willingness to take on new project and the dedication he put into his

responsibilities for a project. While he did not specifically mention these words, Teddy

was dedicated to giving back to the student affairs profession. He gave me a few

examples during our time together including continuing a cohort support group where

they met through Google handout on a regular basis to support one another, meeting with

another new professionals group on campus to connect new professional together, and the

last one came through in his photojournal.

> "Tell me about this one (see Figure 19)," I asked.

> This is actually something we are doing here on campus. I guess a long time ago there used to be a higher ed interest group for undergrads looking to go into student affairs. When the division of student affairs was disbanded, the group went away. One way I've been able to give back to the students here is to restart/kick start/start a higher ed interest group again. Having had an assistantship in the graduate program department at my graduate institution and working with the admissions process for the program, I feel like this is outlet to use this previous experience and skills to help others. It has helped my professional development and giving me the opportunity to act as a mentor which is really important to me.
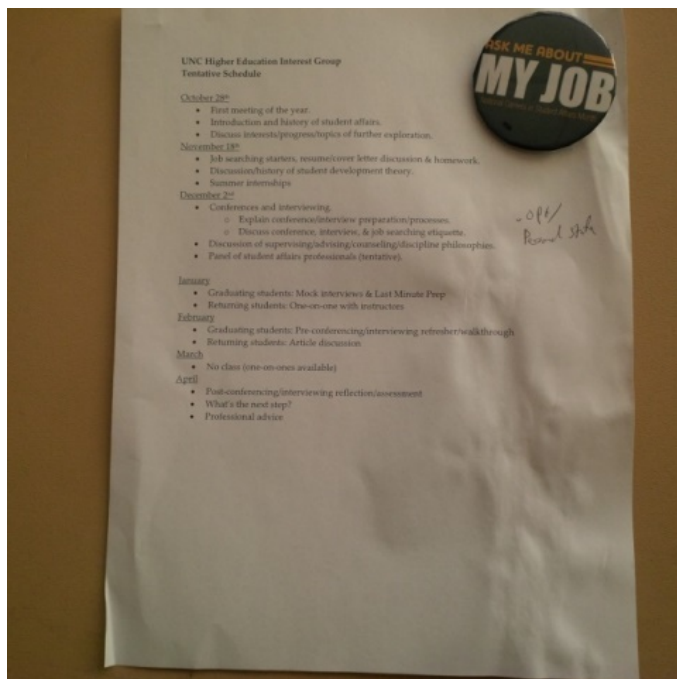
Figure 19. Changing the future.

This was an example of how Teddy was a change agent for students. Teddy took on the role as a change agent by taking past experiences, personal and professional, and using what he learned to influence learning experiences for others. He often used his own experiences as a foundation for understanding, thought about what he learned, and then shared ideas for a current project. His intention to engage with others, in these stories through Google hangout and a mentoring program, allowed him to get to know others experiences, process those experiences and offer ideas for support, and change. This role in Teddy's life was deeply significant to his professional identity development because he mentioned more about how he wanted to take on things outside of his job expectations for the support and guidance he could offer to others.

Positive Spirit

"So this is a picture of pickling [see Figure 20]. It's my new hobby and something I am trying to do outside of work for fun," he said to me shyly as we turned the page in his photojournal. He was smiling because I think he was partially shy about this new hobby but also really excited about it too. "I am really trying to find balance and doing things outside of work has been really good for me." It was good to hear this reflection from Teddy because of the literature on new professionals' transitions and the importance of the development of the personal realm in professional development (Hirt & Creamer, 1998). "These jalapeno pickles were both delicious, as well as a huge success in my first attempt at pickling," he stated going back to a little more context. I cannot let go of this new hobby of pickling. In the process of pickling, ingredients were selected and put into a jar to ferment for a period of time until the desired taste and texture was achieved. I think this metaphor could serve as a representation of Teddy's positive spirit. During our time together, he was selecting the actions, attitude, and values he would like in his own environment and put them into his practice. He then, through his own journaling process, ferments all the ideas which allowed them time to develop.

When I asked him, "how do you define positivity?," the answer was a balanced response. "I think part of it is having a healthy optimism for life or optimism for the future. I think another piece of that is very much in the attitude itself," he shared. Teddy explained positivity in the same way I see him taking an approach to balance in his life. Part of the balance is having an overall mindset but then also following up the second part with attitude and choices. Teddy shared he was an active journaler and found writing to be important to his overall attitude and wellbeing. Once he had learned,

reflected, and achieved his desired state of positivity, he then implemented it into his life

creating a balance between an overall attitude and a state of being.
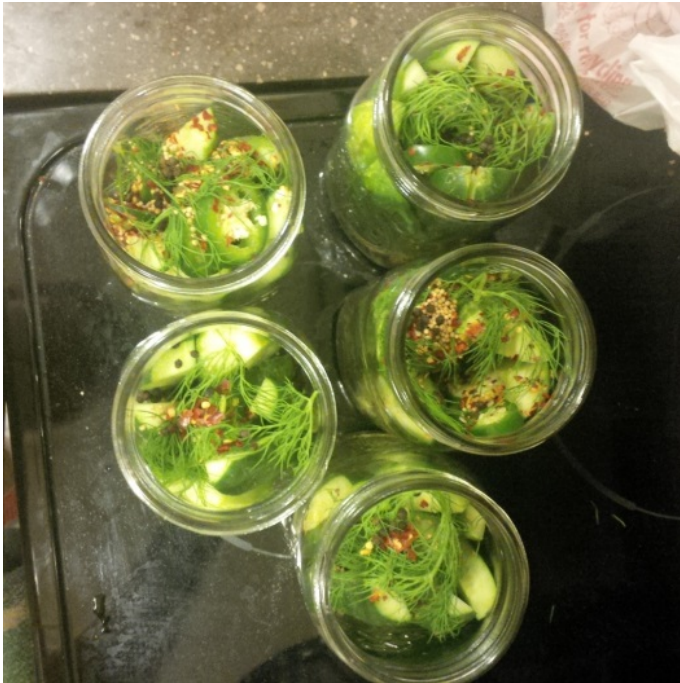
Figure 20. Pickling.

Learning as Reflection

As mentioned before, Teddy's thirst for knowledge was insatiable. When we met,

he had just returned from a regional conference that also hosted a new professional

institute which Teddy attended. "Participating in the new professionals institute and

attending the conference has perhaps been the most intense and potentially significant

professional development experience I've had," he said to me as we looked at pictured in

the photojournal (see Figure 21).

Figure 21. Continued learning.

I am used to Teddy providing the context and background of something before the

rationale. Therefore, when he started our conversation so directly and focused, I

understood how powerful of an experience this was for him. He was an emotional person

but for Teddy to state that much emotion about something caught me off guard.

> "Really," I say direct and serious, "what about this was so impactful for you?"

> I feel like I have been to lots of trainings and most of the time they feel like
> refreshers. Good to be reminded but not anything new furthering my knowledge
> or skills. At this conference and the new professionals institute though, I was able
> to participate in several sessions and programs that expanded my knowledge base
> and skills toolbox. What I learned I feel like helps me polish my professional
> practice and feel comfortable in my position.

This was Teddy's way of saying the conference interaction affirmed he was doing a good

job in his role. He described his experience at the conference as "rewarding, reassuring,

and comforting."

Teddy needed to be challenged to learn. By reflecting at the conference and beyond on, he felt more confident and comfortable in his position. Teddy taught me that reflection does not always need to be formal conversations with life directing open ended questions. Reflection can be done through learning a new skill or practice and the going through the process of implementation and asking about the learning process along the way.

Rachel

As we settled into a table in a back corner of the student union at Crimson University, I asked, "How long have you been here for?"

"Three months. I started at the beginning of August. Just kicked off and went for it. IFC [Interfraternity Council] and Panhellenic recruitment was at the beginning of September, so I had a couple weeks to get settled, I am finally now getting to sit down and do things," Rachel replied.

Rachel, a bright and thoughtful woman sat across from me. She was 5'6" with reddish blond hair. On the day I met her, it was pulled back and there were several pens holding it in a bun. We were sitting in what should have been the dining hall area of the student union. But at 2:00 pm that afternoon, the time we were meeting, it was dead quiet. I saw only one or two students working on laptops in a space that should seat probably 100 students. Our table was next to floor to ceiling windows and looking out a person would see the rolling landscape of the campus adorned with fall colors.

As Rachel shared her short timeline, I made a face of surprise and shock displaying how overwhelming it could have been to start three weeks before one of the

busiest times of the year for Greek Life. Rachel is the Program Coordinator for

Fraternity and Sorority Life at Crimson University. At my reaction, she laughs.

> I know. I was laughing too because last week I went into my director's office and was like 'so I never actually found out if I have a budget or not so…' He was like 'yeah we probably should have covered that.' Not his fault, just how quickly everything started once I was in the position. Starting at the beginning of the academic year is going to make you jump right in.

Rachel was a secondary education major in undergraduate school and discovered

while student teaching, she did not want to be a teacher. In a conversation with her

academic advisor, they mentioned working in student affairs. Rachel had held leadership

positions in Greek Life and thought working with college students sounded like the

teaching she wanted to be doing without the academic subject. "They helped me apply to

grad school and my boss at the time connected me with people he knew at other

institutions and I got an assistantship in Greek Life and that was it," she shared.

"So what was is like to be in grad school since it seems like it all happened so

quickly?" I asked as a follow up.

> Grad school was good. I was actually the Greek grad [graduate assistant for Greek Life] there, and half way through my second year, my supervisor actually left so I served in the interim through July after graduation. It was actually a better experience than I thought at the time. At the time I was like, 'Oh my gosh, I have to finish grad school and do my capstone project and all this' but it helped me prepare for a lot of things. Being able to say I've actually kind of sat in this position while managing all these others things is a good experience. I feel like I'm one of the crazy ones that stuck around with Greek life.

I learned throughout my time with Rachel she was a planner. She thought

through many details, she had a vision and would work to help others not only see the

vision, but figure out how to make the vision happen for themselves as well. This

seemed to be a perfect fit for the Greek system at her university. In our time together, I

learned the Greek system she had inherited was challenged. For years, it seemed they

had been doing the same things and over time, their purpose had become useless. Rachel

saw a new vision and intention for the Greek system and over our time together she

continually revealed to me, her plans, thoughts, and actions that were slowing shifting the

culture of what it meant to be Greek on her campus.

"So because you have only been here a short time, what do you like most about

the job so far?" I ask excitedly. I was excited for the potential for both Rachel's

professional identity development and the Greek students who had a fabulous coordinator

starting in this role.

Without hesitation she started listing off positive areas with a bright and cheery

tone in her voice,

> I really like the staff I work with. I really do feel like I actually am one part of a community but very much feel like we take care of each other, which is nice. I like being able to be creative and I feel like in this position I really have the opportunity to just take it and run with it. I am not one to be able to sit still and do the same thing every day, so being able to have opportunities to implement new ideas, be creative and take what we have as a foundation and run with it I think is good. I also really like our students. They are genuine and honest. They are open and appreciative to be here and getting an education. It's really cool to see because that has not always been my experience.

"Oh really?" I asked. "What has been your experience?"

> In my past there has been a lot of entitlement and students did not have to work very hard to get to where they were. It is definitely a good challenge here because I have to remember that students may not show up to things because they were called into work because they need to work to put themselves through college, so they have to go when they are called into work. It has made working with these students enjoyable and they are open to anything and just want to do a good job.

Rachel valued hard work and this matched with this university's student population had

already formed a good partnership even only after three months.

Transformative Moments

Much of my time with Rachel was spent talking about creating a culture of excitement for the Greek students on campus which led to several transformative moments for Rachel including connecting and supporting National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) students, contributing to the university and Greek perspective, and her work with Multicultural Greek Council (MCGC). Like Jane, Rachel was in a process of transformation rather than one defining moment. In talking with Rachel, I believed she would truly see her professional transformation after her work with changing the Greek culture on campus was completed.

> When I arrived at here, I found that our National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) students were excluded from the fraternity and sorority community because they do not have an active council. I have made it a professional priority to building relationships with students in these organizations so I can help them grow and prosper. This is picture of a poster [see Figure 22] from an event I attended last week. I could tell my physical presence made a huge difference. Comments were made to me like 'wow you're here. Thanks for coming' I was introduced to the group as the Greek advisor, and just got to talk one on one with students. It was a really great event and I hope it helps these organizations grow.

National Pan-Hellenic Council, or NPHC as it is commonly referred, is the governing body for the nine African American/Black cultural Greek letter organizations at colleges and universities. Often referred to as the Divine Nine, students who join these organizations often find intentional communities and cultural connections embedded within predominantly White institutions.

Figure 22. Supporting students.

"It sounds like you are really building relationships with students to help them grow their organizations," I said happy to hear the excitement in her voice knowing that her work was being purposeful.

> Yeah. Relationships with these students are important to me. They are important to the Greek system and I feel like maybe previously they were not treated that way. I'm not just here for the social fraternities and sororities. I am here for everyone. Advising a Pan-Hellenic council will be a good learning experience for me since I have never done so and hopefully building relationships with these students will help them see how important their organizations are to me.

I learned in our time together that relationships were central to Rachel. Every picture in her photojournal was of projects or events she worked on with someone else in

collaboration. In many, the photos were of events she had impacted to change from the

status quo created before her.

As we looked at her photojournal her first picture was of an event at night with

lots of people (see Figure 23). "This is picture of the annual Take Back the Night event."

She started to explain,

> I was asked to be on the committee because I think people thought it was a good idea to have the Greek students there. I saw it as I probably should do more than just attend meetings to probably help them develop this program and promote it to our students. So I worked really hard to make the event something our students would learn from. We had over 350 Greek students come out that night and some actually took something away from the event. This was an 'aha' moment for me. I had heard many things about how the students hated the educational events we require them to go to so I thought with this event, if I can influence some change and make it purposeful than maybe our students will start to see things differently. And they did.

Figure 23. Take back the night.

This was the first time Rachel really saw an example of how her hard work and vision

was in reality. The fact that students actually learned something from the event was a big

deal to her. When you are asked to do something as big as shifting a culture, the little

positive moments can make the biggest difference. That was what Rachel learned

through this event.

It did not stop there. "Tell me about this picture [see Figure 24]," I asked flipping

the page to a picture with a few students gathered around a table.

> This is a barbeque our Multicultural Greek Council hosted this past month. These
> are great organizations and are doing well but they have been struggling to get
> new members. So I encouraged them to have a barbeque in a pretty prominent
> part of campus to potentially attract new members. They were a little hesitant
> since they typically meet in our cultural centers around campus. But since they
> can be secluding from the rest of campus and [a] little intimidating to go to for a
> new student, we brainstormed doing an event like this. The event actually turned
> out great. Many students came and learned about the organizations. I believe
> they will get a few new members out of it but more importantly, many students
> who never knew these organizations exist now do. That is important.

Figure 24. Multicultural Greek Council student event.

"Yes," I said, "because you never know when someone who has a friend will remember this event and refer a friend to their organizations."

"Yup, and just creating some visibility for Greeks on this campus is good. On a side note, I was actually in an IFC meeting during this event and when it got over, I had the council come with me to the event. For the first time, I saw IFC and MCGC students talking- something that has not been done historically on this campus."

"Wow, so you're not only helping organizations to grow but actually forming a Greek community."

Community and collaboration kept coming up over and over in our conversations. I would say even though Rachel learned from each experience, what was more significant to her was there were many people working together to create community and collaboration. While she never said these words directly to me, her vision would not be possible without collaboration and community because one of the key piece to her vision was buy in from her students. All of these stories shared moments where Rachel was learning and changing the Greek culture and in return, transforming her own attitude, style, and actions towards her professional identity.

Change Agent

We turned the page of Rachel's photojournal and a picture of a neighboring school's logo was the next picture. I was a little thrown off at this but waited for the story from Rachel.

> When I got here I learned our MCGC groups are actually shared between our campus and [a nearby] university. Both schools require organizational paperwork and when I started to look at the process there is a lot of unnecessary tedious paperwork for students. So I reached out to the other university's Greek Life Office and got together to talk about streamlining the paperwork process for these organizations. For example, here, we require the president of the organization's

signature for most paperwork. For one organization, the president is a student at the other university, which makes doing anything here challenging for these organizations. So we are changing it to be one process, and the two universities will share information rather than having the students having to run all over the state to get something signed. They students are beyond excited about it!

As Rachel finished telling me the story I could tell she was proud not only of the accomplishment, but of the collaboration it took to get there. This process was a lot of work and needed buy in from a lot of people. Rachel knew though it would make a difference for these students- students who in the past had not always been treated equally and with the same attention. Rachel was making up for that with her own vision to have buy in from the Greek students to the Greek community thus making her a great change agent for students.

Positive Spirit

While she was only one person, Rachel made significant changes to make Greek life intentional and purposeful at her university. In my time with Rachel, I would not describe her as an outgoing person but more of a quiet, calm, consistent positive spirit. Because she has her vision, she was willing to work to make it a reality and knew in the process, there would be some bad things that happen along the way. When the bad things happen, Rachel's positive spirit will come through by challenging her students and herself to overcome the obstacle.

When I asked her to give me her definition of positivity she shared, "Finding the benefit in the bad and turning everything into an opportunity." This perspective still brought about the notion that finding the positive in your work can be motivating. Even when Rachel shared stories of not so successful moments, she still shared the learning experience and take aways which are all part of the identity development of a new

professional. This showed her ability to find the positive and the difference in her thought process connected to the positive psychology concept of pleasant life with her ability to see the good through the bad.

Brittney

As I entered Brittney's office, against her beige walls, was typical office furniture- desk, table with two chairs, and a bookshelf. The fluorescent lights and a desk lamp provided some light. There was a small window from floor to ceiling in the right corner with beautiful sunlight shining in and as I looked out the trees were turning with gorgeous fall colors. We sat at the table and on it were assessment cards, surveys, question lists; all tools used when Brittney met with students. They were not just stacked there as if they were never used. Cards and question lists were spread out all over the table as evidence of their importance in conversations and meetings. A bulletin board was hung above her desk and while it included informational pieces needed to do her job, there were notes, quotes, and pictures posted as well. I learned later these were constant reminders to Brittney of how the work she did impacted others. Included on the bulletin board was a circular gathering of note cards. Some express gratitude for work done, others were thought-filled notes from past students. Either way, their arrangement told me they were meaningful to Brittney. The other thing it told me was Brittney made an impact in whatever she did with her position and appreciated the little ways people had taken the time to show their gratitude. These little things drove Brittney's intrinsic motivation to do her work.

I picked up on this motivation almost immediately when I first met Brittney. Bright-eyed, bubbly and warm, she greeted me with a smile. She is about 5'5". She had

gold sparkly eye shadow starting in the crease of her eyes that carried out halfway on her eyelid. A deep green shadow took over after the gold finishing the rest of her lid. She had dangly earrings and many bracelets that jingled as we walked to her office. She casually made small talk and we connected over her adorable leopard print shoes. I have the same pair and immediately felt a connection with her. I know what it was like to walk in those shoes--physically and metaphorically as a new professional.

In the same way Brittney had accessorized her outfit, her office had hints of accessories as well. Posted on one wall was a subway art style canvas. The canvas hung on the wall opposite of where I sat. I wondered if she had strategically placed it there as an inspiration to her students. I was attracted to read it. As I read the last sentence, IT IS YOUR TIME, written in upper case bold letter, I immediately knew why Brittney had selected this piece for her office. This was Brittney's mantra. While she never said these words to me directly, Brittney endlessly believed everyone had the ability to succeed as long as they were willing to do the work to get there. Brittney provided a foundation of support which when impactful, provided moments of motivation Brittney lived for in her student affairs career. She believed her role was to teach transferrable skills to help anyone have an "aha" moment about their future. "I love when I see the light bulb turn on and the feel of the moment when they get it. When I can visibly see how this transformative moment can influence others' lives, I know I have made a difference with that student," she said to me once.

Brittney started in student affairs as a peer counselor at the career center at her undergraduate institution. Her current supervisor was also her supervisor in undergrad and asked that fateful question one day, "Have you ever thought about a career in student

affairs?" After two years of graduate school, Brittney was in love with the work of career

services and took her current position two years ago. Since starting this role, she shared

with me over and over again how her values of access and social justice played out in her

everyday work. In her photojournal, before ever showing a photo, Brittney wrote these

words, "To me you can't have professional development without the personal as well

because when we love what we do it almost becomes who we are." I closed my eyes as I

hear her words and think about all the people I know who do these jobs for something so

much more than a paycheck, but for the opportunity to make a difference.

Transforming Others

When Brittney and I sat down and talked about her photojournal, I could tell she

had enjoyed working on the photojournaling project and took a lot of time to find pictures

and write descriptions.

> We created a career class specifically for first gen students to help them
> understand more about career development [see Figure 25]. It's based on a theory
> [career development] and it will be really reflective to get them to think about
> things like "what am I good at" and "what can I do with a degree." We're
> targeting second semester freshman and sophomores to hopefully work with them
> before it's too late to change a major.

'Get them thinking about where this idea of a career comes from," she said to me

one day. "They will have to apply to take the class so they have some investment, but

this is so needed for them and getting them thinking about why they are here in college."

> "So is this new?" I asked her.

> Yeah. I've worked with some others in putting it together. One of the interns
> here was in a curriculum class so he worked on the structure and then I added the
> content. Because I know people across campus, I've asked them about it and it
> will launch in the spring. See the number one here, she pointed to the work
> discover and where the 'I' should be located was a number one.

That is for first generation students. This project is like my second child. Everything I believe in about creating access in higher education is in this project. My values of support, impacting others, and making them better for it, well, it's all here.

Figure 25. Career development for students.

When Brittney was done speaking, I felt this sense of amazement come over me. The way she was describing the class and what opportunities it brought to those students who were a part of it was phenomenal. This class was life shaping. Brittney became a better professional by working on it. Not because it challenged her to develop brand new skills, but because potentially for the first time, it aligned her personal values and motivations for working in student affairs into one project thus developing her professional identity further. This experience had transformed her. Even if the class was only offered once, Brittney was a different person at the other end of the semester. She

was a different person now sitting in front of me than she was two years ago when she

took this job. What was hard to put on paper was Brittney's motivation to truly create

access for those without the privilege of having it.

Change Agent for Students

> This is a picture of me working a career fair [see Figure 26]. I absolutely love
> being a resource for students and showing them what companies are looking in
> student with their skill sets and not necessarily their specific major. It's like a
> 'aha' moment when we start to have a conversation. I did it at this fair. I've done
> it at the college and business networking nights. Every time I watch this moment
> of clarity happen with students and alums, who are like, 'what? I never would
> have guessed that I could something like that.' For me it's just like, Yay! this is
> why I am here.

Figure 26. Career fair.

Brittney called these moments teaching transferrable skills. The reason they were

impactful for her was in those moments, she could visibly see and influence the lives of

others. Impacting others was the reason why she did this job and why she went into student affairs. Others in this study might be creating changing environments or programs, and while Brittney was creating a new class, each day she was able to advocate for students who may not be able to advocate by themselves. This was not the advocating someone would do to represent a voice for someone else, Brittney actually advocated by being with a student, asking them questions, drawing connections with them, and then sending them off to be successful.

Positive Environments

In our first meeting, Brittney defined positivity as "being able to do something that makes me happy, where I can learn a lot from, even if it's a challenge to work from because then that would have to be learned though. Also flexibility I feel is positive." As I reflected on our conversation, I could tell there was something more there for Brittney.

"The last time I was here, you and I talked about your definition of positivity. I've been thinking and while you defined it as something that makes you happy, I think it goes further than that." I said this to Brittney in our second meeting. As I looked through Brittney's photojournal each picture represents to me the bigger picture of positivity that she needs which has to do with her work environment. "Tell me about this picture which you titled 'The Work Environment'" [see Figure 27].

She smiled as she looked at the picture to which part of the caption read, "My co-workers and I literally yell across walls if we are too lazy to go into one another's office for a question or comment." She laughed out loud in a cackle that made me laugh right along with her.

I think this picture's funny because this is what the environment is like. Just really open and fun. I am happy that I can work in this type of environment. I feel like I thrive in these types of environments, because I'm able to be my complete self. For me, as a woman of color, I, most of the time, don't feel like I need to have my switches [code switching]. I feel like I can just be me.

Figure 27. The work environment.

As she finished sharing, I felt honored to be listening. I asked, "Can you give me an example of a time where you did not feel that way so I can understand what it might look like in this environment?"

Yes, when I had my first job out of college as a college access advisor in Utah I worked in a very conservative culture. When something was frustrating, I felt like I could not express it. I had to hold back my energy. I did not want them to make assumptions that I was this loud, obnoxious black woman. So I turned myself off at work, so to speak.

From an identity development standpoint, switches had to do with a person of color feeling like they had to switch on or off to fit into the majority culture. I think this notion of switches, being able to truly be yourself at work, was fostered by a positive and open environment. Clearly, Brittney found a place where she had the space to do what

she was best at and loved what she did, also known as "fit". This positive environment

had created a safe space for Brittney allowing her space to understanding her values

towards the professional work she was doing and the need to align her values in order to

make her happy. New professionals may come with their own positive spirit, but each

one carries their own identities that also need a positive environment to foster their

development and provide a safe space free of needed to "switch" on and off from who

they really are as professionals.

**Need for Reflection and
Relationships**

With Brittney, I found myself asking highly reflective questions challenging her

to think beyond the factual day-to-day experiences. She loved this and jokingly referred

to our meeting as "therapy sessions." For Brittney though, these highly reflective

questions made her think about the purpose for what she was doing and why she was

doing it, which is significant because her motivation to the job comes from within. "I

would definitely say my motivation is intrinsic again, that values, and purpose,

alignment. Sometimes it does not even feel like work. I get a paycheck for this!?" she

said to me.

> But the other side is I am challenged here to try new things and get a lot of
> support when doing so. My supervisor is awesome. Sometimes our one-on-ones
> are times where she just asks me life questions and we barely get to a work
> agenda. But I need that.

Brittney did not want to be told she was doing a good job. She wanted someone to sit

with her, ask her tough questions that pushed her to think, and then celebrate the

supportive relationships. Brittney is someone who needed to think about her purpose and

be reminded on a regular basis why she is doing student affairs work. Brittney taught me

when our values align with our actions in life; life becomes a seamless, connected environment full of integration and alignment. Like Beth and Juliana's relationship, the relationship between Brittney and her supervisor made personal and professional reflection possible in this position which allowed Brittney to grow and transform in her professional identity.

Nadia

As I arrived back again at Cream University, I was always struck by the beauty of the campus. Today was no different as I walked to my meeting with Nadia. I followed a brick path that winds its way up and round a building. The sky was a crisp blue. The air had a slight chill in it sensing fall was arriving. The trees were turning colors. In a parking turnaround outside of the residence hall I was going to, an SUV was being loaded by a few students with what looked like camping or road trip supplies. They were talking and laughing at each other with an excitement that an adventure was about to begin. This sight made me remember the energy that can be on a residential campus.

I walked up to a residence hall building and opened the doors. I am greeted by a few student workers at a hall desk. I shared I was here for Nadia and they pointed me to her office, which was behind the desk. As I walked to her office, I passed hundreds of mailboxes for the residents living in the hall. When I approached Nadia's office, she was with a student so I waited a few minutes. During this time, a resident came to check their mail. They stuck their key into a box, pull open the door, and after looking inside close it. Clink. A sound so distinct I can close my eyes and be transported back to a hall I ran early in my career. My office was close to the mailboxes like Nadia's and students would stop by my office after checking for mail just to chat.

I heard Nadia say, "Come on in, Amy!" I entered her office. I am greeted by a tall, brown haired woman with a contagious smile. Her eyes were bright and welcoming. The office walls were painted a deep maroon and were decorated with colorful portraits displaying places from other cultures. She had a bookshelf in a corner and I see she had placed book, awards, and pictures on it. In her office also sat two chairs for meetings. She took a seat at her desk chair and swings herself all the way around from her computer to face me. I sat in one of the comfy chairs and settle in.

I learned Nadia was involved a little bit in resident life during undergraduate but as she was wrapping up her degree in sociology and Spanish, she had no idea what she should do with her life. She explored many options including AmeriCorps. Nadia was unique because she had two parents working in higher education and because of that, she was encouraged to look into student affairs. She applied to graduate school and attended a well-known national student affairs program. She loved her experience and took this position after graduation. When I met with her, she was starting her third year as a hall director at Cream University and was really trying to decide what to do next since the department has a three year cap on the position. Nadia had a passion for international education and creating a more global society, which she hoped would lead her to her next position.

Transformative Moment

I noticed almost immediately as I talked with Nadia, a white and colorful framed logo stating "Global Res" behind her on her desk (see Figure 28). Anyone who entered her office and talked with her even for a few minutes would notice it. I have learned over the years, things that are meaningful to people in their offices will be on their desks, often

close to where they sit or in their daily line of sight as a reminder of their significance.

This frame was sitting just to the right of Nadia's computer on display.

Figure 28. Global Res logo.

"Tell me about an accomplishment you are proud of," I asked her one day. She

looked at me and said,

> It has to be Global Res. This is a program I started this year where international
> students and domestic students are paired as roommates. It is mostly
> programmatic right now but I have big dreams of it having an academic
> component as well. We took all the residents on a retreat before classes started. I
> had all these activities planned provoking deep conversations but the students
> were not quite ready for it. It was a good learning experience for me. Most
> importantly though, Global Res has created a community where international
> students feel welcome and domestic students can learn more about other cultures
> making the world a little bit of a smaller place.

I could tell Nadia was proud but humble as she finished speaking. I paused wanting her words to sink in. She starts speaking again,

> I think the other thing Global Res represents to me is initiative and hard work. This is my idea, something I came up with and sought out support for in the department. I did the research on best practices and developed the model for the community. It wasn't anything anyone told me to do- it was an interest of mine, a passion. It's pretty cool to hear it referred to and planned for another year and see people be really supportive of the community. For many years to come students will have a place and I will be able to look back and see I created that for them. It feels good.

Each new professional in this study had a process or moment that had come to fruition and shaped their professional identity development and outlook. For Nadia, part of her professional development was creating something from scratch around a passion and interest much like Brittney's course for first generation students. Seeing this project through gave Nadia a feeling of accomplishment, success and proof of her competency as a professional.

Change Agent

Nadia's work as a change agent was inspiring to me. As we were looking at her photojournal during our second meeting, she started telling me a story, "I don't think I'll ever get used to hearing the answers I do when I ask them what they are doing for break," Nadia said to me as we were talking about the student population she works with.

> Answers like, "My family is getting together, we're taking a private jet and jumping around island to island in the Bahamas" and you're just like Mhm, OK. Being so committed to social justice, it just makes it hard to create change when they have been handed most everything in their lives.

> "That would be so discouraging for me. I do not know if I could do it. I am much

better at working with students like me, who fought their way to get to college." I say to her, "How do you do it?"

She looked at me and without missing a beat,

> You remember that is not every single student's story. Yes, I've had to learn how to navigate stories like that and I think we are still figuring out what students' lives look like and how we are going to make an impact with students. But that's only one student's story, I think about the rest of them too. No matter what the person's background, social justice to me means creating as much awareness as possible about privilege. That starts with getting to know students. The more you know them the better the chance you have to make an impact.

Nadia reminded me in that moment that social justice work spans far beyond my narrow little world sometimes. To Nadia, it is bigger than her experiences and she worked hard daily to make sure she shared that world with every student she interacted with in her building. She talked about her favorite textbook in grad school and actually included it in her photojournal (see Figure 29) because of the impact it had on her daily work trying to create a little more of a just place in the world. Nadia's perspective on social justice and cultural competency integrated being a change agent into her daily student affairs practice. The work Nadia was doing was really encouraging and inspiring.
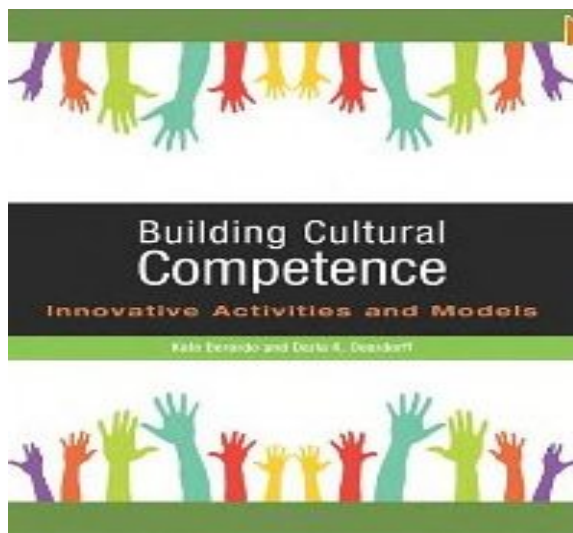

Figure 29. A diversity reminder.

Positive Spirit

"Tell me how you would define positivity," I asked.

"I guess I really look at it [positivity] as attitude, and really choosing your attitude

in this work," Nadia said to me in our conversation.

> I feel like there is oftentimes when I let go of why I am doing this and why
> I am here. It can get really negative. I can go home and have a lot to complain
> about. That is also influenced by the people that I work with, and we can all find
> ourselves digging a hole together and just climbing deeper into it, and then I
> realize at the end of the day, 1. I have not gotten anywhere and, 2. There are so
> many opportunities for us to do bigger things, if we can continue to dream and be
> positive about what we are doing.

Nadia said in our conversation, "It's dangerous" to be spending so much time in

the negative. I could tell she constantly worked at trying to see the best in even the most

challenging situations. I knew Nadia could be optimistic. In our conversations she often

praised my stories or celebrated good ideas. I think what Nadia was talking about here

was making sure the environment and personal perspective are positive.

I have been there. In the rut of professional life. Stuck, is what I call it. Not

feeling like there is forward momentum towards good things and complaining everyday

about the bad aspects of the job. It is challenging to climb out. When you might be the

only person in a department trying to look on the bright side, it is much easier to give in

to the negative than stand up and be positive. Nadia needed a positive environment to

help continue building her professional development. The more the positive is

recognized in her and her efforts, the better a professional she becomes and furthers her

professional identity development process.

Nadia talked about this with one of her pictures,

> This is a picture my sister sent to me one day [see Figure 30]. She just found it
> and thought I would like it and I do. When I look at it, I see a process of what I

would like to do, who I would like to be every day. Summed up what I strive for every day. I see myself in this and also these are values I can get on board with. Someone else was reading my mind, she says smiling. I see having good intentions, to be just a really good person with a good attitude and involved, surrounding yourself with those kinds of people just makes you better. It makes you break out of your mold and just see different perspectives, different experiences, different lifestyles, even.

The key words in this sentence for Nadia were surrounding herself with really good people to make her a better person. This was how I heard Nadia trying to integrate positivity into not only her professional life, but personal as well.
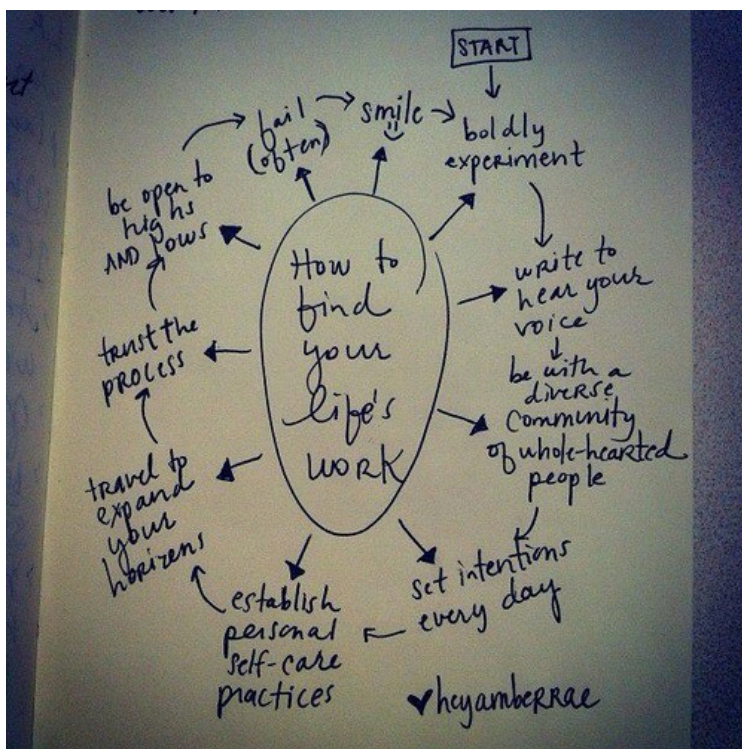
Figure 30. Positive life process.

Reflection

During my time with Nadia, she explained some of the not so great professional

development moments she had in her career thus far. Specifically she shared about her

first year professionally,

> I would say my biggest learning piece has been supervision. It's been huge
> actually. I came in and inherited a staff my first year and had lots of different
> people and personalities. They were used to a strong supervisor who they
> appreciated and valued, so it caused a lot of conflict for me. We learned in grad
> school to be intentional and do things to cater to developmental needs but it was
> challenging. I suppose I was really coming into my own and developing my own
> style but it was hard not to compare myself to my colleagues. I've learned a lot
> since then. This picture [see Figure 31] is of a staff development activity we did
> at our staff meeting that was just really great. It makes me think how far I've
> come.

She finished and I could tell she was still living between the doubt that started her first

year as a supervisor and the success she had since then.

Figure 31. People remind us how far we've come

I looked at her and said,

The same thing happened to me my first year as a professional. I inherited a staff and they hated me. It changed me as a supervisor completely. I had quite a few returning staff members who were loyal to their previous supervisors so no matter what I did all year, I was never going to live up to their expectations. It's hard not to take that personally or compare.

"Really?" Nadia responded, "That is so nice to hear. Thank you for sharing. Sometimes it feels like I am the only one, you know." I thought to myself, yes, I do know more than I could ever express in words to you. While I enjoyed sharing this connection with Nadia, what I learned in that moment was Nadia needed time to reflect to make sure what she was learning was also making her a competent professional. She needed affirmation from someone who had been in the same circumstances and could talk about how the situation changed them for the better. I knew how it felt to be in a place where you question every bit of your professional competence and it took years, sometimes an entire career, to build up the confidence that was taken. Nadia taught me that reflection is not just for growth, it is for healing as well.

John

The room was grand. Glass chandeliers hung from every corner of the room. Ornate ceiling details showcased the grandeur made the room feel fancy. A stage was set up in front of the room. Blue and red lights shined onto the stage backdrop illuminating a purple glow over the stage. On each side, a large screen had been placed to broadcast live events occurring on stage. Banquet rounds spanned the room providing seating for what felt like thousands of people. John entered the room. Overwhelmed for a moment, he stood there thinking about where to sit desperately looking out amongst the sea of people hoping to find a familiar face. He grabbed for his phone and dialed a number of a

colleague he met earlier in the day to hopefully find a seat with someone he knew. They answered and waved across the room. John moved towards them, found a seat and collapsed into the chair thankful to be able to find a place in this vast amount of people. Sitting in his chair, he took a moment to take in the room. In this room were people, like him, who were committed to providing access and higher education to students who may have never thought about higher education.

This was not the first time John had fought to find a place in what seemed like an environment where he may not belong. John was a first generation college student who pursued a master's degree in student affairs and now was working in his first professional position out of graduate school. As I met John in his office, he greeted me with a warm smile and a nice hand shake. He had an athletic build and stood about six feet tall. I learned in our conversations he played sports in high school and thought he would go to college on an athletic scholarship. In one of our meetings, he got up from our meeting table and started limping explaining he had an old injury that pretty much ended his athletic career.

His office, where we met, was in the basement of the library not ever intended for office use. The university had done an admirable job remodeling the space to be bright with well-placed signage making it easy to find where I was going. His office was one of many in a space that housed the center he worked for as an advisor. The center was a grant-funded program for first generation, low income, minority college students to gain extra support services throughout their time at the university. The center accepted a cohort of 200 students each year and John's job was to work with a caseload of students on everything from advising them on classes to teaching them in their university seminar

class. John shared that when he came to this same university as an undergraduate
student, he was one of the 200 students admitted for the program so there was an extreme
personal investment in his position.

> I definitely was an unmotivated student like a lot of the students I see here.
> Undergrad was a lot of stumbles. I was put on academic probation after my first
> year and had to dig myself out of that whole mess. I didn't know if I wanted to be
> here but was constantly in connection with my advisor here and with a professor
> on campus. They both really helped me. Then one day I just started to think
> about me and college and just decided to change the person that I was. I went
> from being very narrow-minded, very into certain things to seeing this whole
> gigantic work open up for me. That's what I love about college. Especially for
> first generation students, it opens their minds up to whole other world. I now see
> so much more than I did before and I'm grateful to have had that experience in
> college.

As I learned this about John's undergraduate experience, I was not surprised to
hear him share he never even thought about graduate school or degrees beyond a
bachelor's. As he started getting more involved during undergraduate, he met student
affairs professionals who took an interest in him and encouraged him to apply for the
student affairs master's program. "I never thought about grad school," he said to me.
John went to graduate and finished about six months ago.

Transformative Moment

As John told me about his first conference experience detailed in the opening of
this section, he said,

> In that moment, standing in that room [see Figure 32], it felt like my experiences
> came full circle. I once was a student who needed educators like the professionals
> in that room and now I am the professional in that room helping students just like
> me. I don't know. My master's degree paid off. It was overwhelming. And I'm
> not alone. I feel like now I belong to this club of people doing the same work I
> am doing. At least that's what that conference taught me.

Figure 32. Transformative moment.

As he finished his sentence, the tone of his voice went up as if he was questioning

if that was what he should have learned at the conference. I was drawn to John's genuine

presence. When he spoke he was thoughtful and engaged. I can imagine this goes far

with the students he work with daily. He was genuinely happy he had found a position

where he could do work that was a core value for him. His tone makes me think there

was something else going on.

"I sense some hesitation, like you know you are driving the car, and you have the

correct directions for your destination but you still are worried you're not going to get

where you need to go," I say to him.

He said to me, "I guess it was never expected of me to get this far so every day

feels like a learning curve. I just want to make sure I am doing a good job for the

students. Maybe motivate them in ways I needed to be motivated as a student."

I could tell by this statement John was ready to learn and needed to be challenged. When given a challenge, he would be cautious of success with his work not because he does not have the skills to do it, but because his confidence in his abilities was still growing.

Positive Spirit

Even with his cautious nature, John was driven and had a spirit of perseverance. He expressed over and over to me in his own way how fortunate he was to have this position and how much he appreciates the work he does. Every time we talked about his work with students, he lit up. He would talk for sentences without pausing or taking a breath. "I took this picture walking into work [see Figure 33]. It makes me smile for a few reasons," he says with a bright smile on his face and his eyes twinkling.

> Coming from my background and seeing how hard people have to work to provide for their families, I find myself often remembering how fortunate I am to work in a place like this and how far I have come. I went home for a football game about a year ago and ran into the principal of my high school. He asked what I was up to and when I told him I was in graduate school and pursuing a career in higher education he almost did not believe me. When I walk into work, I think about my students, many who could have the same types of people in their lives. I look back on that conversation and remember how important my job is in giving students an opportunity to pursue a college education and prove to the world they are a fit for success.

His words hit me hard and I was overcome with emotion. I had a pit in my stomach and a proud look on my face. I was extremely proud to know John was doing the work that is so essential to creating a more accessible higher education environment and in turn, was fostering a sense of perseverance and positivity for his professional identity. This was inspiring. The pit in my stomach though was from understanding the exact feeling of needing to prove people wrong that powered John's motivation. I may not be a first generation student, but I had many people along the way doubting what I

was capable of and would be shocked to know I will have a Ph.D. In this moment, I felt

an extreme connection to John's story and am proud to be able to share it here.

Figure 33. Walking to work.

Change Agent

I continued the conversation and asked, "So you have said to me you want to

motivate the unmotivated, how are you doing that?"

> Well this picture [see Figure 34] right here is of a workshop I developed called
> 'Finding Your Place: A Search for Purpose in an Unfamiliar World.' For this
> event, I brought in two speakers from very diverse backgrounds to share their
> stories of struggle and triumph. Often times our students believe the struggles
> they encounter are unique to their own situations and keep them from succeeding.
> This workshop brought in other people who shared their story to help our students

see others struggle too and show them the power of perseverance. I've always been able to motivate the unmotivated and help people find their place in this life. My motivation for this workshop originates from the struggles I encountered as a first generation student and the responsibility I have to pave for future first generation students.

Figure 34. Motivating the unmotivated.

For John, putting on a workshop with a theme around motivation was something of value to him. The other piece was his ability to give a platform to those who have been able to overcome challenges and share those stories with his current students. For him, planning this workshop for students may spark some change in students who attended and for John, that was exactly what he wanted to do.

Need for Reflection

To follow up, I asked John what students learned from the workshop. He brought out a stack of about thirty evaluations that had about five questions total: three quantitative based on satisfaction, and two open-ended questions. The amount of

comments at first was overwhelming. Nearly every evaluation had positive comments

and examples of learning in the open-ended questions section. Based on a few comments

I read, students really took a lot away from the workshop. I looked at him with a proud

smile, "What was it like to get comments like this?," feeling proud for him.

"It was good," John said as if it was nothing special. There was that cautious

thought process again I thought to myself, he continued, "It just feels good knowing that

we're bringing quality speakers. I don't know. Yeah."

I wanted to challenge him on this because what he was showing me was

outstanding work and he was treating it as if it was nothing special. I saw this person

sitting across from me who was still trying to figure out this whole profession and wanted

him to know he was doing a good job. I said to him,

> When I hear you talk about your work here you very much have a thought process
> and plan. I call it educating them [students] when they are not looking moments.
> You want these underlying themes and overarching themes to hit them but still
> honoring their learning process. Do you give yourself credit for how much
> intentionality actually is in what you are doing?

He stopped and kind of tilted his head to the side. Then a smile came across his

face, he looked down and said, "No, because I never noticed. That is the first time I've

heard that in my life. It's a good comment."

I paused for a moment because I hoped the next words I said would impact his

professional development, "I mean, what you are trying to teach them and help them,

there is so much intentionality and purpose and it's not just, well, let's do this just

because it sounds good. That's huge!" I responded to him. I saw his wheels turning in

his mind as I shared this with him. Reflection was a part of this process and in that

moment, John's reflection was the only thing that mattered to me- for him to understand

what a great job he was doing in his position.

> I just go with what is right. That's all I do. I just want people to understand who they are and how they can better because I did not get that. When I was in undergrad, either they did not tell me enough, or I was not ready to listen. Either way I just have to make sure that these [he pointed out his window to the lobby space of his office where about 10 students were hanging out] students know they have a purpose or a reason to be here. I think everybody should know that. That's just what I try to do. I try to help them the best that I can.

"I think that is awesome," I said to him with a smile on my face. He smiled back.

I followed with, "You should trust your instincts because if it feels right, it is having a

huge impact on what you are doing."

John needed reflection to help him grow. He mentioned to me as I was explaining

the photojournal he had to really think about participating in the study because he did not

personally reflect a lot and knew it would be a challenge for him but he wanted to do it.

This was the same way in which John approached his work. He was still learning and

often that could be a challenge for him, but he wanted to do it because he knows he will

grow from the experience. Again, perseverance. John taught me that pushing through

challenges does bring exciting, life changing moments on the other side. I know my life

is changed from the time I spent with him.

Sophia

I met Sophia at a little restaurant located in between our workplaces. From our

first time meeting to our second, Sophia had changed jobs and gotten married so needless

to say she was going through a lot of change during our time together. The restaurant we

met at was a place I've been before. From the outside. it does not look like much. From

the inside though, the minute you step through the doors, it feels like you have been

transported back to the 1950s. Memorabilia from the decade hung everywhere. On the hostess counter was an Elvis bobble head but instead of his head bouncing up and down, his hips swayed from left to right.

Sophia was about 5'4" with dark brown long hair past her shoulder. Originally from Texas, Sophia went to undergrad at Sweet Briar College in Virginia. Sweet Briar was one of the few remaining all women colleges in the country and Sophia loved her experience there. In our meetings, she talked extensively about the community feel it had as a student and how interconnected all the women were in good ways. While an undergraduate, Sophia worked in student activities with programming, residence life, and loved her experience. After undergraduate, she wanted to go to graduate school in student affairs and ended up at Cream University's program. Cream University's graduate program in student affairs did not require assistantships. While they did exist for some of Sophia's cohort members, she was not able to secure an assistantship. To still work while in graduate school, Sophia held a full time position at Cream University during the program but the position was not in a student affairs functional area. By talking to Sophia, the position, specifically the department, was a challenging work experience. She told me, "I did not love graduate school specifically because many of my classmates had assistantships where they were applying what we were learning and I was in a full time position not in student affairs, so it was really challenging for me." She shared with me one day: "I am just hoping this new position will help me apply what I learned in graduate school and that all the time and money was not for nothing."

In our first meeting, Sophia had just accepted, when I say just I mean within a day or so of our meeting, her first full time position out of graduate school which was

working as an event coordinator for admissions at a small liberal arts school. I thought

her story would be important to include in this project because she was literally in the act

of transitioning as we met which would potentially capture data differently than others in

the study. At our second meeting, she had been in the position for about two weeks of

actually working because of the time off for her wedding and honeymoon.

Sophia pulled out her photojournal, "I hope this is what you were looking for

with the photojournal," she said me over dinner, "only being there a short period of time I

tried to capture my experiences and what I think is going to bring positivity my way in

this role." Sophia was one of many participants who would ask me about or state

something questioning her ability to be competent with the photojournals.

"This is great. There is no wrong way to do this" was my response to Sophia and

to other hesitant participants. I saw my answer made her relax.

Transformative Moment

As we started looking through her photojournal, I could tell this new position was

going to be beneficial for Sophia's professional identity development because of the

intentional work she was doing and how it aligned with her strengths. Her previous

position did not do this and, repeatedly in our conversations, Sophia referenced this

change. "This [see Figure 35] is the calendar that hangs above my wall. Each colored

date is an event I am planning and coordinating," she explained as we looked at a picture

of a yearly calendar. What I am struck by was the sheer amount of work and

organization that went into color coding the calendar. "This to me represents my worth

in the department. It inspires me to keep working hard, because I know that without me

these events would not happen and recruitment would not be as effective."
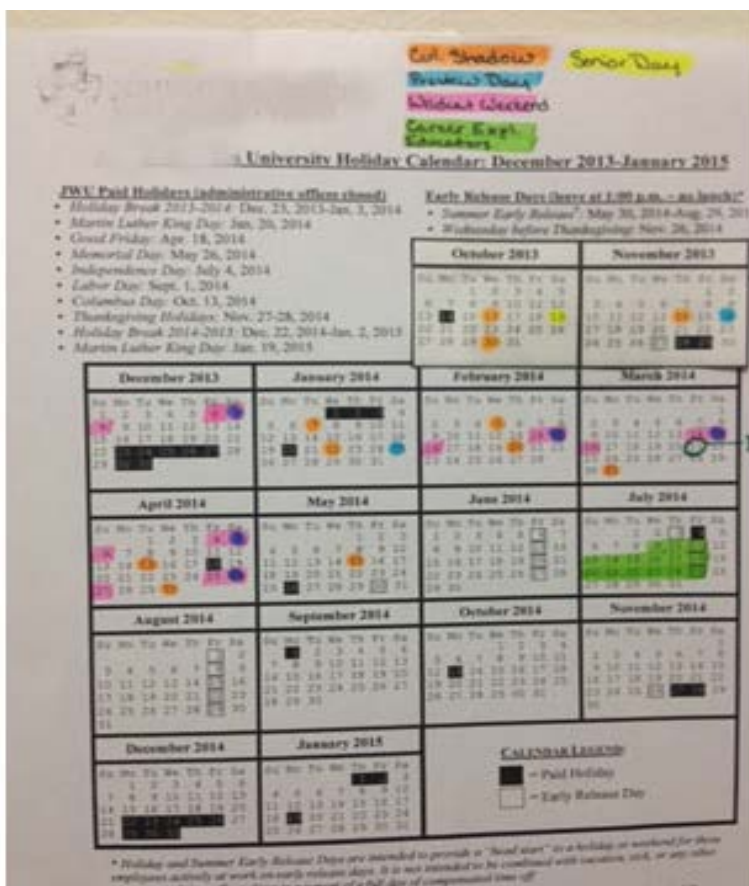
Figure 35. Scheduling a change.

"Tell me what it is like to help a student get admitted to the university," I asked as a follow up. Sophia softened for a minute. I could tell the question I asked tapped into something good, something sweet for Sophia. "It's feels amazing to know they are here because I worked hard at helping them find a college they love and a place where they will learn," she responded.

> I may be organized and like to have fun with co-workers, but at the end of the day, that is why I do my job. To help students find a place like I had for undergrad where they will grow and thrive and learn. If I plan an event, and a student comes and has a great experience that matters to me. I know the impact a visit can have on a student makes all the difference in their choices for school. I want them to know I care and their experience is important.

Sophia talked about many other aspects of her job throughout our time together and because it was new, many things were a little more technical rather than emotional. But when Sophia talked about this responsibility, her emotions came through. I could tell being committed to these events was not about earning a paycheck for Sophia. She truly, even in the first few weeks on the job, cared about a student's experience in the visit to campus process. I could see now why she was hired for the job.

Positive Environments

I realized early on that Sophia was going to be in charge of her own change and only she could modify her jaded feeling towards student affairs work that developed during graduate school.

"Tell me about this picture," I said. I recognized what was in the picture immediately. On a wall, five name tags were hung representing past positions Sophia had held (see Figure 36). I had the exact same display of my old name tags on the wall of my office, too.

> These are just some of badges I have accumulated over the past couple of years. Most of these are from jobs that I did not really enjoy. I keep them around because they inspire me to keep trying and moving forward. They remind me that I put in my dues and worked as hard as I possibly could, and that is why I have the position I have now.

Sophia shared and continued.

> It's hard to be hopeful things will get better when the daily environment is not supportive or caring. There were times in other positions where I did not even feel like I was being treated as a human being. I know how it felt and what I learned from it was how not to treat people in the future. I also know now that it will always get better even if it doesn't feel like that in the moment. I am so thankful for the position I have now where I know even in this short time, I am valued.

Figure 36. Reminder to keep moving forward.

Valued, I thought to myself. It was such a simple word with so much power. In many of Sophia's previous positions she did not feel valued and this struck her to the core. There may not have been anything worse for Sophia's confidence than treating her as invaluable. The other thing Sophia mentioned was environment, much like for Nadia, and Jane, Sophia needed a positive work environment to heal.

"So this position is really going to be a position of healing for you," I said acknowledging the hurt and struggle I knew Sophia has experienced.

"Yes," she said breathlessly, "like the other day, my boss told me I was doing a good job and I almost did not know what to do with it. It's hard to accept compliments when for years you have heard none."

Sophia wanted to change and was grateful for the opportunity to just be in an environment that might, just a little, foster this sense of change for her. As Sophia continued in this role, with every successful program, every thank you note, and every student who was having a good experience on a visit, she would gain more and more confidence. As her confidence grew, the healing would continue. Sophia is a brave new professional because she did not give up.

Positive Spirit

As we turned another page of her photojournal, a picture of the nameplate on the wall outside of her office came up. I saw her smile as she looked at the picture.

"This is my name tag on the wall outside of my office [see Figure 37]. This is the first position where I have had my very own office. It may seem weird, but this really keeps me positive," she says.

When I met with Sophia the first time, she shared her definition of positive was "that upbeat, kind of passion which is existent by itself and just being able to exhibit that to other people and make other people happy and passionate as well." Her definition of positivity very much came through in her new position as she talked about not only being an integral part of the team but also by having a role, and space, in the office, she could live out her definition of positivity with her co-workers and students.

> I feel as though having an office represents my moving forward in my career and accomplishing something. I feel like I am part of a team, not a replaceable person just doing a job. And in turn, I am able to plan events, contribute to a team, and

supervise students with a positive attitude that hopefully allows them to be positive and passionate as well.

Figure 37. Space can make a difference.

I thought about how four walls, a door, and some furniture can make or break a person's feeling of worth. Campus ecology literature and research definitely has affirmed space as something that can communicate acceptance, accessibility, and an overall feeling of a university (Tierney, 2011). For Sophia, this was no different in her professional life.

Need for Reflection and Relationships

As Sophia and I met, it became apparent to me that Sophia was still figuring out what it meant to be a new professional in student affairs. Everything was still new. While she knew the expectations of her role and the people she was working with, she had barely had time to experience many things on the job thus her professional identity was in its infancy. In our conversations, Sophia was really using our time to think

through her learning process thus far on the job. Because that was short, her reflections were not as deep as I knew they could be.

I went back to Sophia two months after our final meeting and asked her to revisit her photojournal seeing if further time in the position would give more depth to her identity development process. Specifically, I asked her to reflect on the original pictures she chose and see if she still felt they were significant to her professional development in positive ways. She 100% agreed with the pictures and even had additions to her original descriptions to her pictures.

Sophia shared,

I think that I would add in the relationships that I have built with our work study and student assistants in the office. My degree is in college student development. I thought that it was just words and that I loved the event planning piece the most, but as I have been working with these amazing students, I realize that I really do love the student interaction piece.

Further showing her positive spirit and how far she had come being in a positive working environment.

Also in revisiting her photojournal, Sophia took her positive environment one step further:

It has also been vitally important that I am respected in the office. Many of my ideas are being considered and incorporated in to the office. While a lot of things will be slow (it is higher ed), it is nice to know that I wasn't just blown off. It is nice to feel as though my opinions have worth and that they matter.

I sat back and thought that for Sophia to grow professionally she needed what are students needed sometimes, to matter to someone. I have no doubt if I went back to Sophia six months from now she would be a different person. Professionally she would have grown in the ways other new professionals do, and her spirit would be flourishing

and thriving making her a happier professional and more invested in her work, all resulting in a meaningful professional identity for Sophia.

Discussion

Here I sit at my computer in my office at home. The room is a bedroom upstairs that someday will be filled with another child. In the meantime, it serves as my little cave for the dissertation. The room is nothing special- a typical bedroom in a 1990s house. In it sits my desk, an Ikea desk, with a giant hutch full of books and binders holding all of my work from graduate school. I painted the walls recently. I figured if I was going to be spending a significant amount of time sitting in this office writing, I wanted it to feel like a space for me. Two walls are a deep navy blue. The other two walls are a bright coral pink. One of the pink walls is a vast bay window facing west. I can see the mountains when I look out and during this writing process they often remind me that beauty and hard work takes time. This idea keeps me going, writing, one word at a time, to tell a story.

Working to learn the stories of these new professionals has been an honor. I have felt so blessed to have these ten professionals want to participate in the study and take the project seriously. They have shared stories with me that have impacted my own thoughts on being a student affairs professional and I have learned a great deal. I feel honored they trusted me to share their stories and bring to light new findings to contribute to the overall literature on new professionals in student affairs.

Four themes emerged across all ten participants: transformative moments, becoming change agents, positive spirit, and reflection. These four themes help define aspects needed when a new professional is developing their professional identity. All

participants in this study were figuring out what values, skills, and knowledge they had about student affairs, all which contribute to a professional identity (Liddell, Wilson, Pasquesi, Hirschy, & Boyle, 2014). The 10 portraits in this chapter captured these four themes for each participant. Here in the discussion section, I tie together each theme to the socialization and professional identity development process.

Transformative Moments

New professionals need to have a transformative moment that allows their practice to align with their values. Transformative moments are those where the skills of a new professional, the theory gained in graduate school, and the work expected of them in their professional positions come together to create a moment of deep meaning and purpose in their professional work. When the participants talked about specific moments, either during their graduate programs or first work experiences, there was always something they learned. They were excited, passionate, engaged and grateful for these moments because they often boosted their confidence in the position. They often used words like "it feels good" or "I know I am doing something right."

In positive psychology, this was called flourishing and connects with the happy lives concept of the engagement life because in the engagement life, people were in a deep state of engagement using their strengths and completely immersing themselves in their work (Gable & Haidt, 2005; Seligman, 2002b). As a result, many participants were able to appreciate, get excited, and/or find value in their work and communicated that through statements like the two above.

This also related to socialization literature. A new professional experiencing integration of practice to a successful point would be in the informal stage of

socialization where they stylistically feel confident to implement their own style in accomplishing their responsibilities as a professional (Tull et al., 2009). New professionals, up until this point, may have been reacting to responsibilities based on the styles of others around them rather than their own. Once confident about their abilities, a new professional attempts to complete a responsibility within their own style. A successful outcome, like for many participants in this study, will boost the confidence and competence of a new professional and contribute to their professional identity development.

Transformative moments for new professionals occur around two major sub-themes; one, the ability to be competent in their jobs and two, the ability to do something that has meaning for them. The feeling of competence in a position is not new to new professional research (Renn & Hodges, 2007). New professionals have a need to feel like their work in graduate school has paid off in their professional lives. Teddy and Sophia demonstrated this well but in different ways. Sophia had a strong desire to obtain a position in student affairs where she could put her graduate school knowledge to work. Teddy developed a deep appreciation for learning in graduate school and by attending a conference as a professional and experiencing the same learning process from graduate school, he experienced feeling more competent in his position.

Transformative moments really had significant meaning for the participants in this study. In positive psychology, the three happy lives--pleasant; engagement; and meaningful (Seligman, 2004)--gave meaning to the moments in life where the participants were flourishing and thriving. This directly related to transformative moments because the participants did not see their transformative moments as work.

They worked hard to make the moments happen, but like Teddy demonstrated when he was doing something he loved to do, it did not feel like work. This is called the engaged life in positive psychology, which means someone is so engaged in what they are doing, they lose track of time. This is also called flow (Seligman, 2004). Jane talked about the engaged life in her conversations with students. Represented by the picture of her couch in her office (Figure 15), she knew the conversations would create meaning for whoever would sit on her couch and that excited her to the point where she would lose track of time in those conversations.

From the positive psychology concept of happy lives, the meaningful life showed up in the transformative moments that each of the participants experienced. In the meaningful life, someone discovered their values and aligned them in ways that impacted their life. For some like Brittney, Nadia, and Juliana, their transformative moments came when their personal or professional values aligned with the work they were doing in their positions. This meaningful life concept also related to Nadia and her work with international students and social justice. She found deep meaning and value in understanding the world was a big place with lots to learn about other cultures and identities. As something she valued, she engaged in helping students see this perspective as well by getting to know them. Her knowledge of others created deep meaning and motivated her to learn more and educate others through her knowledge.

For many of the participants, engagement in this happy life often led to feeling competent and confident in their positions. This theme aligned with Renn and Hodges' (2007) study on new professionals which found competence as one of the key three findings for new professional development. As new professionals in this study

experienced transformative moments, it was often because a skill set, idea, or theoretical knowledge was used in a professional setting and brought them success. In addition to feeling more confident and/or competent, transformative moments also connected professional practice with personal values for the participants, forming their professional identity further. Brittney and Rachel both had transformative moments when the skill set they possessed, aligned with a personal value, resulting in a moment of confidence and excitement for their position.

Change Agents

Each of these participants in their own ways were advocating for the change of something or someone within their work environments. This effort came from the new professionals' willingness to see gaps in practices provided to students and/or their departments and attempted to fill those gaps. Professional and personal in nature, through this theme of allowing new professionals to be change agents, the participants came into new positions ready to make change.

For some participants, specifically Rachel, Stella, and Beth, the work environment and departmental culture was changing, either due to a change in positions for the participant, or their departments were revamping services. This allowed them the freedom to be able to make changes both big and small in their positions and impacted their professional identity. For John, Brittney, and Teddy, their ability to be change agents was done through intrinsic motivation. All three had their own personal experiences as college students and those experiences impacted the ways in which they were creating change within their work environments for students. Juliana, Jane, and Nadia all created change through becoming a helper to students. Specifically, all three of

these women spoke extensively about their drive to get to know the whole student and their stories to effectively impact not only individual students, but the larger student culture as well.

The change agent theme also came from the sheer fact these new professionals were just that, new to their departments. Having a set of fresh eyes and experiences will bring in new perspectives and needs for change. However, all of these new professionals finished graduate school, at the most, three years ago. They knew the most recent practices and research which when implementing change, brought current departmental practices up to date to be more inclusive and developmental (Fried, 2011). In this, I thought about Juliana's work with college women and fifth grade girls enacting not only developmental work but also social justice work as well and also even Brittney's career class for first generation students. These examples were programs either creating or updating existing program to better serve the needs of this current population of college students.

New professionals' understanding of the institutional environment and student demographics was key in a socialization process (Tull et al., 2009). If a new professional can understand the institutional type and the characteristics of students at a given institution, change may be more possible. Updated programs to better serve students are overwhelmingly needed in both the profession and with new professionals because of constantly changing student demographics and updates to best practices. Student affairs is a young profession and constantly changing through new research and initiatives. New professionals know this and have been taught to constantly be looking for ways to make improvements in themselves, their positions, and departments. Having supportive

supervisors who give new professionals the space and time to understand current programs and make suggestions for the future only strengthens positions and departments. For the new professionals in this study, having the space to reflect on personal values, and align them in practice advanced them professionally. It also benefitted departments with new services to provide students. New professionals need to be allowed to discover their strengths and values in order to develop fully their professional identity.

Based on positive psychology literature, helping someone learn to build up their strengths was more influential in their professional development and overall outlook on life than looking at weaknesses and trying to correct them (Seligman, 2002b). This was demonstrated through Sophia's experiences specifically leaving one institution for another more impactful position. In talking with the participants, after they expressed success and excitement about a change process they were experiencing, the ability to share that with others solidified their learning experience. Specifically, John learned to recognize his successes and trust his instinct when it came to work decisions. In our conversation, John learned something about himself and developed a great attribute he brought to his professional position. That learning experience will be more impactful for John throughout his professional development than focusing on lack of skill development.

When new professionals in this study were given the space to be change agents and create transformative moments for themselves, they were able to align with what the literature has suggested about new professional identity development. New professionals during these times of being a change agent or having transformative moments were

navigating the work environment (Amey & Ressor, 1998), understanding both mission statements and living missions (Tierney, 2011), understanding information (Hirt & Creamer, 1998), and socializing into the profession (Hirt & Creamer, 1998; Tierney, 2011; Tull et al., 2009). This supports the findings that new professionals are competent (Cuyjet et.al., 2009; Dickerson et al., 2011; Waple, 2006) and also developing a professional identity is significant to the socialization process (Liddell et al., 2014).

Fostering a Positive Spirit

The first point in the positive spirit theme is related to why it is named positive spirit rather than a perspective or attitude. The happy lives theory from positive psychology refers to positivity as an intrinsic, inherent state of being and while people with this positive state can have a positive attitude, and/or positive perspective. According to this theory, this comes from a deep, inherent trait in someone rather than a conscious choice (Seligman, 2002a). With learned optimism, a person's ability to demonstrate permanence and pervasiveness with bad experiences can also contribute to their overall spirit and being. In addition to the influence of positive psychology, a professional identity is not tangible but an intrinsic perspective and embodiment of values and expectations. Because of these frameworks, I decided to name the theme positive spirit because a spirit can be something that goes throughout a person's being. It may or may not be inherent, but can be demonstrated and felt. In this study, some participants' positive spirit examples came from a place deep in their being rather than choosing a positive attitude and others came from a place of managing their permanence and pervasiveness about an experience. New professionals' abilities to have a positive spirit impacted professional development.

Throughout my time with the participants, it was evident that the environment played a role in their professional development but specifically, in fostering a space where a positive spirit would be welcomed and encouraged. New professionals needed a safe and welcoming environment that brought their values to the forefront of their work environment. Participants easily defined positivity for themselves and could give several examples where they felt positive about the work they were doing with students. These experiences often connected to either transformative moments or being a change agent. Without a positive environment, where the new professional felt valued or part of a team, neither transformative moments nor being a change agent could happen.

These 10 professionals described positivity as empowering, genuinely part of their being, perseverance, purpose, and optimistic attitude. While some had to think about their definition slightly, the outcome of positivity in this study was that in a developmental time where it could have be easy to focus on the bad things, all 10 professionals could see the good in what was happening and expressed it. This demonstrated their abilities to manage their permanence of bad experiences and their pervasiveness to not let it impact every aspect of their jobs.

There were two important aspects to this finding. First, new professionals must be able to define positivity for themselves and foster it into their practice. Part of this process was reflecting on their own definition and seeing ways they could implement positivity into both their personal and professional lives. In positive psychology, another happy life is the pleasant life which means having as much positive emotions as possible and also having the skills to amplify them (Seligman, 2002a). Beth and Stella specifically demonstrated this well. Beth, when defining positivity, spoke about it as a

way of life and part of her being. She exuded positivity in her life when not being

excited about staking the flags, but finding spending time with her students and being

extremely engaged. Stella also spoke about positivity as being a current part of her life

already. She defined positivity as the opportunity for change and demonstrated just how

integrated this was in her life when colleagues provided feedback to her and turned it into

a positive change for the university.

Also with happy lives, the meaningful life was essential for fostering a positive

spirit for new professionals. As mentioned before, a meaningful life was understanding

your strengths and using them in meaningful ways (Seligman, 2002a). Here with positive

spirit, new professionals took the time to figure out their professional values in a practice

setting. Having the ability to know their values can make navigating the work

environment an easier process (Amey, 1998). John, for example, because of his

understanding of his student population, found deep meaning in his work. He wanted to

leave the world a little bit better than he found it and give to his students what he did not

get when he was in undergraduate. John valued perseverance in his life and in the lives

of his students. He worked every day to provide the meaning of perseverance to his

students and in return, is deeply fulfilled by the meaning in his work.

Secondly, in order for new professionals to feel like they can be their authentic

selves at work, the environment must be considered. Institutional fit is stressed in the

socialization process because of its influence on environment (Tull et al., 2009). New

professionals are highly encouraged to explore different institutional types and the impact

they have on student affairs work. Finding the right fit can help a new professional

transition and socialize in a more integrated way than when the fit is not right.

Understanding the differences with institutional fit and the impact they have on a student affairs work environment can help a new professional find a department where their authentic self is represented and valued leading to acceptance and positivity in their positions.

In relation to positive psychology, the participants' experiences with happy lives occurred because they felt like their authentic selves were being honored in their work environments or when they were not honored, they left those positions. New professionals, also when having a supportive environment, feel more competent and are more willing to be challenged and grow (Cilente et al., 2006). The participants' experiences offered different ideas needed in an environment to facilitate a positive spirit. Brittney explained she needed an environment where her personality would be welcomed, specifically the ability to be casual and playful with her departmental colleagues. John felt that his departmental environment really had a common goal in serving students where stylistic differences were welcomed but all were working towards the same goal. Sophia felt like she was valued by having a personal space in the office that was connected to the rest of the department. Rachel valued the autonomy of her department but also the supportive nature of her colleagues. Beth's department was going through significant changes and in doing so, allowed her to contribute to the overall direction of the department. All of these factors significantly impacted the identity development of the new professionals in this study. These experiences have implications for fostering a positive environment for new professionals.

Environment was also mentioned in organizational theory, but more so from the standpoint of navigating the environment (Tierney, 2011). The literature on new

professionals has not taken into consideration the environmental factors that foster professional development. The participants all talked about their work environments and the role environment plays in assisting with professional development. Some directly mentioned the department setting, while others talked about university culture or student culture as environmental factors contributing to their work as new professionals. The environment has to be ready for change and a new professionals' development in order for these themes to occur. Sophia was a perfect example of how a negative environment where she felt unvalued could really affect the competence and the confidence of a professional. Sophia could not be her authentic self in her graduate school position and when transitioning to her current position, she had a time of change where she had to unlearn some previous environmental factors and the associated negativity.

Specific to the environment and fostering a positive spirit, the mentality of a team within a department significantly contributed to a positive spirit with new professionals. New professionals understand they are part of a team and, based on the ten professionals in this study, they wanted to be a part of a team or department which directly connected to the literature on socialization (Tull et al., 2009). Relationships were critical to the socialization process (Tull et al., 2009). Even when assigned individual projects, they often consulted with other professionals at the university or even formed committees to get the work done. Stella specifically was charged with a new project while in the position and without being asked, she formed a committee of colleagues across the campus to consult on the work she was doing. Rachel specifically commented on how in previous positions she would have been part of a team of professionals working in Greek Life but because of the smaller community at her current institution, she was the only

professional and it was different for her. Beth talked about how she could easily plan events by herself but valued working with others on them. Teddy talked about being a part of a team of hall directors and how nice it was to have others in the same position around. Brittney mentioned her co-workers as being one of the contributing factors to what makes her feel comfortable to be herself in her work environment. All of these examples showed how essential a team and collaboration was to fostering a positive spirit in new professionals. Consultations with colleagues or committee work often affirmed the work of the participants and excited them to continue fueling their positivity toward their work. Working with others, and having success celebrated amongst many was rewarding and gratifying for the participants contributing to their positive spirit and professional identity development.

**Space for Reflection and
Relationships**

The most critical theme from this study was the need for reflection in new professional's development. If the process of socialization is all about professional values integration thus forming a professional identity, then reflection is imperative. Forming an identity is like trying on hats, you have to try many different styles to figure out which one looks the best on you. Because identity is not a tangible, touchable object, reflective conversations become the "dressing room" for trying on all different aspects of a professional identity. Not allowing new professionals the time and space for reflection may stifle their development and cause a negative experience in their professional setting.

Throughout the study, participants expressed how grateful they were for participating in the study. When I would express my gratitude because I was really appreciative to have enough participants to write a dissertation, they would laugh but

always follow up with a thoughtful comment expressing how good it was to reflect. As I

was analyzing the data, I noticed it happened with each participant in their own way.

There was a benefit to helping all ten new professionals reflect on their

professional development experiences thus far in their roles. Some expressed that they

valued reflection but they had been too busy trying to do their job to stop and take the

time to reflect. Many of the participants in this study just needed someone to listen and

ask them reflective questions about their professional experiences and how they were

developing. Because they had time to reflect, some grew more confident about their

work, some they figured out they were not alone in how they were feeling, and others just

needed affirmation they were doing a good job- all pieces important to developing a

professional identity. Seems so simple, but many were not getting that elsewhere, which

has implications for supervisors of new professionals.

In addition to our relationship, many participants talked about significant

professional relationships with colleagues or supervisors. New professionals have

frequent interaction with peers and colleagues in their positions making these

relationships part of the socialization process (Tull et al., 2009). When the nature of

these relationships were positive, new professionals were more satisfied with their work

experiences and often wanted to work in collaboration with others (Tull et al., 2009).

The collegial relationships in this study specifically allowed some participants to reflect

in their professional work setting. Beth and Juliana, when working together, both talked

about significant their relationship was to their professional identity. They each

mentioned being able to go to each other to talk through work related issues which

allowed for personal and professional reflection. Brittney talked specifically about

having a relationship with her supervisor allowing for reflection. In the socialization

process, new professionals who had frequent interactions with their supervisors also felt a

deep satisfaction in the work they were doing (Tull et al., 2009). These relationships

contributed to the need for reflection and offered a space to do so. This is significant

because new professionals have a need to continue their learning process as they leave

graduate school and enter professional life that contributes to their socialization process.

     Reflection was critical in the socialization process for new professionals (Tull et

al., 2009). If the socialization process was where new professionals accept the common

core values, norms, and roles of a particular profession, then discussions about that

process were critical for full integration into professional and personal life. Let me go

further to say, reflection is not a check in conversation about someone's day. Reflection

is done to gain deeper insight and meaning that hopefully, leads to action for the new

professional (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, as cited in Saunders & Cooper, 2009).

As I reflected with the participants in this study, many mentioned needing to write down

things said in our conversations to remember for future ideas. Whether those ideas come

to fruition did not matter. What did matter was they had a meaningful conversation with

someone who challenged them to reflect on their experiences leading them forward in

their professional identity development.

     The literature on nursing socialization (Schank & Weis, 2001) mentioned that

nurses find a deep identity in the work they do. Many of the new professionals in this

study also found a deep identity in their work. Brittney specifically talked about how her

values and work experiences needed to align in her life and personality. John found a

deep identity in his work because of his own identity in the student population. Teddy

deeply valued the profession of student affairs for the work being done to develop

students. Jane found a deep identity in helping others. Nursing students were not only

challenged to reflect on values but also integrate them into practice. This was easily done

for nursing students as clinical rotations were a significant part of their academic

programs. While student affairs graduate students have assistantships in most programs,

I would challenge the notion that these actually allow for values integration because of

their temporary nature. Assistantships and internships are set up as practical learning

experiences for graduate students for a temporary period of time. Because of their

transient nature, each assistantship and internship experience varies greatly and is often

contingent upon the supervisor's commitment to assist the graduate student in

professional development. There is no standardization of skill development in these

types of experiences. At least with expectations like CAS Standards, there are common

guidelines and opportunities found in each graduate program certified by CAS Standards.

Supervisors are not expected to go through a formal training in order to supervise and

host graduate assistantships and internships adding to the issues of inconsistencies in skill

development. In this study, all participants were experiencing values integration as they

were in their first professional positions making reflection all the more critical to their

professional development. Reflection was so critical in the process that I believe the

other three findings from this study may not be possible for new professionals if they are

not reflecting about their experiences.

Conclusion

These findings are important to not only the development of new professionals,

but also to student affairs as a profession. Well developed new professionals who are

competent and confident in their abilities will serve students well and benefit the divisions of student affairs at colleges and universities. By developing good new professionals who understand and can apply the theories and practices of student affairs, their work at a university becomes more legitimate and necessary for students.

In return, universities, departments, and supervisors need to invest in new professionals. Hiring them is not enough. Departments, supervisors, and universities have a responsibility to orient and play a role in the professional identity development of new professionals in ways that will advance their careers. Investing in new professionals' development makes a significant contribution to the betterment of that particular new professional and also to the university in which they are placed, the department goals, mission, and values and student affairs as a profession.

New professionals are capable of developing their identity as student affairs professionals if fostered in the proper environments with the right learning opportunities. It is important to the future of student affairs that new professionals are socialized through graduate school and also have transformative learning moments fostered through reflection, positive spirit, and the ability to be a change agent as professionals. These enhance new professionals' identity and bring continued success to their forward progress as a student affairs professional.

CHAPTER V

IMPLICATIONS, METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS,
AND FUTURE RESEARCH

As mentioned before, up until this point, the current body of literature on new professionals spoke from a deficit standpoint. New professionals and preparation programs need to implement positive psychology theories to change current practices from a deficit model especially in research practices. Positive psychology and goodness research encouraged educators could "gain more from studying successes than they can from failures" (Hackmann, 2002, p. 54). This statement does not mean ignoring the weaknesses of a situation or person, but supports the notion that in goodness research, it is more important to learn the strategies and steps for overcoming weakness rather than just pointing them out through research findings like the findings from this study. Student affairs has yet to take this stance and the consequence of this may be harmful to the future of the profession, as well as, the retention of new professionals. As a profession, we need to focus on building up the positive aspects of student affairs so we can move forward in further development as a profession. The time has come to contribute what new professionals are positively experiencing in their first positions.

In thinking about the implications for new professionals, the findings from this study complement the current literature on experiences of new student affairs professionals and are directly related to professional identity development. They could

be used as guide for new professionals in their first position. New professionals will have

unique experiences in their first year on the job. Presenting them with tips and strategies

for being successful in their first positions may help them step into these roles and focus

more on the socialization of the position rather than figuring out the skills needed to do

the job. Supervisors should have meaningful, intentional, positive ways to train and

support new professionals supporting their socialization to student affairs. Supervisors

are often expected to help new professionals form their professional identity in a

professional setting. Because there is no formal training of supervisors in student affairs,

this research may reach out to supervisors and encourage their practice to be more

intentional in the socialization of the new professionals under their supervision. Graduate

programs could present both strategies and stories to help graduate students transition to

professional positions.

These implications will help new professionals, supervisors, and faculty better

understand the socialization process and may result in the intentional designing of the

socialization process for future new professionals focused around developing a

professional identity. These implications have the potential to create a new body of

practice around positive experiences for new professionals including professional

development opportunities, supervision, and practice preparation in graduate school. In

the next few pages, I will go through each finding and outline what new professionals can

do to take these findings and implement them into their own experiences. Specifically, I

have created a professional development plan (see Appendix G) that could be used by

new professionals and their supervisors, and for faculty, a 16-week course outline for

departing graduate students (see Appendix H) focusing on connecting socialization to the

finding in this study and the process of creating a professional identity. If implemented, the findings would allow a new professional, coupled with an intentional environment, to have a meaningful, reflective experience helping their overall professional development.

Transformative Moments

New Professionals

New professionals need to have a transformative moment allowing their practice to align with their values and develop confidence in their abilities. Transformative moments are those where the skills of a new professional, the theory gained in graduate school, and the work expected of them in their professional positions come together to create a moment of deep meaning and purpose in their professional work. New professionals want to find meaning and purpose in their work they do with their values and expectations of professional work. This is why reflection is critical to professional development. For Brittney especially, her process of reflection and skills for the job came together in the creation of the career class. While the class is vital, Brittney said to me in our discussions about findings, "Transformative moments needs to happen because that verifies and confirms our work and reminding us why we do these jobs and even that we made the right decision to go into this field." New professionals are seeking those moments to know their hard work and effort do make an impact on the professional development.

When new professionals enter their first positions, they should continue to reflect and seek out those moments where the feeling of purpose and passion come together. Specifically, new professionals could reflect on what was happening in those moments and if there are ways to carry that through other parts of the position. For many in this

study, transformative moments came at times where they were also experiencing either one of the happy lives (Seligman, 2002a) or a moment of extreme joy and contentment. Beth's moment came when seeing the flags from a prestigious conference room on campus. She already felt honored to be in the space, and then to see her hard work from afar, heighted her already positive and accomplished feelings to create her transformative moment.

The process of creating a transformative moment can also make a new professional feel productive and useful in their positions. When starting in a new position, new professionals should find out if there is a project, or aspect of their jobs that may need work done. For Teddy, this moment came when teaching the RA class which is a job expectation for his position. So even though it was expected of him, his own stylistic abilities took an already expected task and turned it into a transformative moment of making a difference with the development of the RAs in his class.

Many of the participants, when talking about their transformative moment, almost could not describe their feelings, but I observed a sense of abundant contentment and happiness as they were recounting their experiences. For new professionals, it is hard to predict how and where a transformative moment might occur. I have explained the feelings and moments for some in this study so when the time does come over a new professional reading this they will know they are experiencing the extreme happiness and contentment that comes from a transformative moment in their professional development.

Supervisors of New Professionals

Transformative moments for the new professionals in this study made them more happy and content with their positions. They also had to do extensive work prior to and

after the transformative moment including reflection, understanding job expectations, and understanding student affairs practice. The most important thing a supervisor can do to help new professionals have a transformative moment is to give them clear expectations with support when needed in their position, and then let them do their job. Sometimes this is easy, as some environments allow for autonomy and creation of style to do the job for new professionals. Other times, the work of new professionals may bring concerns to a supervisor and need for more involved supervision. One part of a new professional's expectations should include the freedom and autonomy to create on their own programs or process within the departmental guidelines. Figure out what that might be with a new professional and then check in on the process as time moves on. Challenge and support would be one way to assist a new professional in their developmental process. As supervisors, challenging new professionals to take ownership over a project while providing support through reflection may be one way to help provide transformative learning opportunities for new professionals.

As a previous supervisor of new professionals, autonomy can be hard depending on the circumstances and environment of a position including supervisory relationship, competence and confidence of both the supervisor and/or new professional, and limitations of the position. Every new professional in this study was able to have a transformative moment because the responsibilities associated with that transformative moment were autonomous. For John, he attended a national professional conference for the first time by himself, which allowed him to feel responsible for representing the department and reflected on the work he does in relation to others at the conference. Two factors came into play with this transformative moment, John was by himself and on his

own at the conference forcing him to navigate the conference and represent his

department by his own standards and expectations. This transformative moment occurred

off campus and outside of John's daily work making supporting professional

development in all aspects in a position meaningful including attending and financially

supporting professional conferences. Rachel, on the other hand, was hired specifically to

change the Greek culture on her campus. This was clear from the start of the position.

She had been doing so in her own ways and was given the autonomy and freedom to do

so. She regularly met with her supervisor to discuss her plans, and afterwards, moved

forward with her ideas. This work had an extreme impact on campus, which was why

she regularly met with a supervisor to discuss ideas and move forward with them.

One way I have helped set expectations, and allowed for autonomy for growth,

was by creating a professional development plan with each professional I supervise, new

or not. On this plan (see Appendix G), I and a professional staff member work together

to outline short term and long term goals. Also addressed are skill areas in need of

development. These are either self-identified by the professional or I offered suggestions

based on previously observed performance. Once the professional development plan was

completed, I revisited the plan regularly to make sure I was working with the professional

staff member in achieving the goals set through the document. This often helped,

especially new professionals, understand some of the expectations of their role in

addition to the day-to-day task expectations.

The other thing supervisors can do for new professionals about transformative

moments is celebrate in those moments with them. As mentioned before, all participants

experienced an extreme happiness and contentment in their transformative moment.

Others outside of that moment acknowledging and celebrating with them continue to build the confidence and competence in their professional development. Acknowledging the hard work done to get to that moment made new professionals in this study proud. Juliana specifically mentioned how honored she felt to be trusted with the women's development class. She talked about how she was empowered to do the work and as great things happened; her supervisor would celebrate with her and honor the hard work. Juliana said this just helped her to feel more proud because others outside of the experience acknowledged the amazing things happening in the program.

The other piece of transformative moments for supervisors of new professionals is, in order to get to a transformative moment, new professionals might have to fail first. As their supervisor allowing them to do this can significantly impact their professional development and transformative moment. For some new professionals, learning what not to do in their professional life is almost more important than doing things correctly.

Faculty in Preparation Programs

New professionals need to have an awareness that the theory, framework, or practice they learned in graduate school, be it in actual student development theory, or application of professional competencies, occurs in their professional work environment in order to have a transformative moment. These connections are significant to their professional development. Faculty should continue to teach theory to practice applications so new professionals can recognize when theory to practice is occurring in their professional development. The theory or framework may not show up exactly as depicted in literature or may not be a one size fits all theory which needs to be taught as well. It is important that professionals are able to recognize even parts of graduate school

course work in a professional setting for their own professional development. Nadia specifically shared a picture of a textbook from her graduate program that significantly impacted her work with her transformative moment. For her, being able to apply theory to a learning community and see students develop within the framework was a transformative moment in her professional development.

One assignment from the 16-week course outline created from this study focuses on helping new professionals not only connect theory to practice in a professional setting, but also expectations and responsibilities of a position. To help graduate student anticipate the expectations of a role in student affairs, I would assign them to a professional position exploration assignment helping students further understand the responsibilities and expectations in professional student affairs positions. In this assignment, students would need to identify a position on a campus they would be interested in holding as a professional. Once identified, the student would conduct an informational interview with the professional staff member specifically to learn more about spoken and unspoken expectations of the position. Students would be encouraged during the interview to learn more about professional values needed in the position. The assignment would also require students to obtain a job description of the professional position and include in the informational interview the realities of responsibilities beyond a job description. After the interview, students would explore professional values held by student affairs as an entire profession. Once all the information is gathered, students would write a paper applying the values of the profession needed to do the work of the specific position. This paper would challenge students to think along the same lines as to what created transformative moments in this study for new professionals.

Change Agents for Students

New Professionals

As new professionals enter into first positions, being able to make an impact through their work is high on the list of things to do in the position. New professionals spent their graduate careers critically thinking about the work they would do and once in a professional role, they immediately want to make an impact. It could be compared to race horses being let out of the gate. While this energy and excitement are important, it is also just as important to contain that energy to be sustainable beyond the first year of the position. More effectively, when entering into a first professional role, new professionals need to take the time to understand and experience the culture of the department, division, and student body before implementing change so that the attempted change is more likely to be effective (Amey & Ressor, 1998; Hirt & Creamer, 1998).

This does not mean a new professional should hold back by any means. New professionals need to hit the ground running in many professional situations. Rachel, Teddy, and Beth all had to jump right into the daily actions of their positions as they were hired into busy times within their department. Their ability to start and jump in was critical to their role. At the same time, none of them decided to implement any changes during this time. They did what was required of them, while making notes of potential changes for the future. John, Jane, and Juliana in their roles of meeting one-on-one with students were able to stylistically make changes to their approach to those meetings, allowing them to implement change very early on in their positions, which was appropriate.

New professionals need to use their understanding of organizational and environmental theory to survey their professional responsibilities first before making any changes. To do this, new professionals can suggest new ideas that potentially pose environmental or departmental process changes to colleagues, students, and supervisors and see their reactions. Reactions may say a lot about if or when a change could occur. If met with resistance, new professionals can find out where the resistance is coming from and revisit the ideas. If an idea is welcomed, a new professional needs to work to figure out how the change would occur.

Many new professionals in this study implemented small changes, most stylistically within this study. Those, like Stella, who were in charge of creating changes impacting the entire university, were working with committees of people to make the change more widespread and therefore, took much more time. In Stella's case, the changes she was working on with a committee would take over a year to implement and then assess for future consideration. New professionals must be realistic about how long change takes. Expecting to come into a position and make changes in short period of time may be unrealistic.

The other aspect for new professionals to understand is change may not be possible in a professional setting. In higher education, change takes time and buy in from many. Sometimes this buy in is not possible and therefore changes, even those with the best of intentions and practices, will not happen. New professionals must come to terms with that in a first position and if change is something they value, may need to assess the position and see if the fit is right for them.

Supervisors of New Professionals

New professionals are used to change; in fact they subconsciously expect change to occur in their lives. As they transition into a first professional position, they almost immediately are looking for some aspect of the job to change, or stylistically leave their mark on the position. Supervisors of new professionals need to be comfortable with some aspect of the new professionals' responsibilities changing and/or be open to new ideas and ways to implement departmental expectations. Some supervisors identified this prior to the new professional arriving and hired them specifically to create change, which is a great situation for both the department and new professional.

Specifically, Teddy and Stella talked about their role as a change agent being where the action was occurring. They wanted to be a part of processes where new ideas were being implemented into their departments or the university as a whole. In Stella's case, there was a lot of change occurring in the department known before Stella was hired. The search for Stella's position was to find someone willing to do the work for change. Stella's strength to bring collaboration and change to a department was a great fit for the position. Teddy also wanted to be where the action is occurring with change. His supervisor worked with him to find him opportunities to serve on committees throughout the university that are looking at current processes and making recommendations for change. This opportunity fit Teddy's need for change. Teddy and Stella were going to want to be a part of change whether they were hired for the position or not. Supervisors must work with these new professionals in determining where change can occur and allow new professionals to make strides for change.

In my own processing of information, I mentioned to a colleague this finding. They had been supervising new professionals for over five years in housing and residence life positions. In their time they had seen roughly 15 new professionals come into first positions. In explaining what a change agent was in a new professional and how some of the participants were experiencing this in their roles, they said to me, "Yes, that is extremely important because they want to have some ownership over the work they do. In turn, giving them that ownership also creates investment in the position." I agreed. Being a change agent for new professionals is as much about helping the university or student population gets better, as it is for new professionals to find something that gives them ownership over the work they do. In positive psychology this would relate to the broadening and building theory (Seligman, 2002a). Ownership is a great way to get investment from new professionals. Broadening and building, as a theory in positive psychology, focused on helping people grow and have positive development in life. If a new professional was able to have ownership over a project or aspect of their position, this would allow them to grow and have an opportunity to positively develop as a new professional. As supervisors, give new professionals areas where they can be invested and make change. This will significantly impact their professional development and socialization.

Faculty in Preparation Programs

Significant to new professionals' development in being a change agent is their ability to understand organizational culture and environmental theory. Many of the new professionals were taught about being change agents for social justice during their time in their programs and were doing the work in their professional roles. Critical though to

being a change agent was understanding the environment and organizational culture first. Nadia, in her social justice work, was working with a high racial/ethnic majority, high SES population. Jumping right into white privilege with these students might have shut down the learning process. Nadia learned this about her environment early on in her first position and adapted her style of social justice to meet the needs of students. Many other participants surveyed their environment and organizational culture before jumping into being a change agent.

Faculty in preparation programs should continue to include organizational and environmental theory into their preparation program curriculum as stated in the CAS Guidelines and work to help students apply those theories in their graduate assistantships and internships. New professionals' ability to do both prior to suggesting change will make that change more of a reality. Case studies around creating change are highly recommended so new professionals start to develop the critical thinking skills needed to create change in professional environments while in graduate school. The ability to critically think for these new professionals was evident and key to their professional development and success.

In the 16-week course outline, specifically students would be assigned an environmental scan assignment. Students would identify a professional setting potentially as a functional area of employment. After gaining permission, students would be required to spend 10 hours in the environment specifically looking to understand how the realms of professional practice (Hirt & Creamer, 1998) are enacted in a professional environment. Students would also be challenged to identify the characteristics of the environment including the stakeholders, information holders, key relationships, benefits

and challenges. Based on findings, students would be assigned to write a four part paper. The first part would be an explanation of the overall observations describing the characteristics of the environment. The second part would be how the realms of professional practice played out in the professional setting. The third part would be a reflective process asking the student to reflect on if they see themselves working in that kind of professional environment specifically addressing the questions: what did you like about the work environment, what else would you need in a professional environment that maybe did not show up in your observations, how are you going to identify the realms of professional practice in your own positions beyond graduate school. The fourth part would address creating change specifically asking the student how would they create change in this environment, how much is possible, what are the key components to implementing changes, who the stakeholders are, and what is an anticipated timeline to implement a change. This assignment will challenge graduate students to start thinking like new professionals and help with the socialization process post graduate school.

Positive Spirit

New Professionals

New professionals come in hopeful and optimistic about their career as student affairs professionals. They are eager and willing to do hard work because they are so excited to finally be a professional. Overall, the new professionals in this study were positive in nature. They saw many things as opportunities and often were able to find the good in professional situations. Each new professional in this study easily described their definition of positivity and gave clear examples of how this plays out in their lives and professional work. They were able to do this because they had some self-awareness and

understanding of their own intuitive nature. Those in this study who were deeply connected to their definition of positivity in their lives, like Beth, Juliana, Stella, and Brittney, did not need positive reinforcement from anyone else. They did need though, others in their professional lives to engage in positivity with them whether that is through office culture or a sense of fun in their work environments specifically through collegial relationships. If a new professional is struggling with understanding how they positively contribute to a professional setting, taking leadership inventories, like Strengthsfinder (Rath, 2007), may help new professionals start to understand more about their unique strengths and how they can contribute to a professional environment.

Many new professionals in this study expressed interacting with other professionals who seemed unhappy from their perception. Often new professionals perceived these other professionals as stagnant, resistant to change, not happy in their jobs, and a challenge to work with. New professionals need to understand they may encounter those professionals in their professional roles and need to continue to foster their own sense of positivity. Positivity was also contagious and many new professionals talked about how their positive nature seemed to impact others in a good way. New professionals need to continue to hold on to their positive spirit even when the environment may not foster that type of attitude.

By being able to look at the positive sides of professional development, new professionals in this study were able to feel more confident and excited about the work they were doing which impacted their socialization. They were better change agents and had more transformative moments because they were able to positively reflect on their experiences as a professional. New professionals need to learn from mistakes through

reflection, but also make sure they are capturing their successes and accomplishments in their reflection as well. Through reflection, new professionals can figure out what made something so positive in their work experiences and continue their professional development around those characteristics and situations.

Supervisors of New Professionals

Supervisors of new professionals can do two things to continue to foster a positive spirit in new professionals. First, create an environment that fosters a safe space for new professionals to be themselves (positive or not), and two, celebrate their positive spirit through enhancing their socialization and development. Environments that foster positive spirits for new professionals, and I would argue for any professionals, are environments that are team oriented. The mentality is working together to achieve goals. Each professional has individual responsibilities, while working together on overall big picture experiences. There is a sense of comradery and inclusion. These environments create safe spaces for professionals through the creation of expectations. Conflict is addressed in a constructive manner. All voices are represented in discussions with new ideas being welcomed and appreciated. Many of these qualities align with the concepts of synergistic supervision.

Second, celebrations of accomplishments are also a part of fostering a new professional's spirit. In the day to day race run by student affairs professionals, celebrating each other is not a priority. However, new professionals, as they are developing confidence and competence in their skills and abilities, need to have celebration and excitement shown towards the things they are working on. This recognition needs to be genuine.

One way to celebrate new professionals is to figure out what style of recognition means the most to them. Love languages is an inventory on how others like to be recognized (Chapman, 2004). After taking the inventory, a person has a dominant love language amongst five determined by the inventory. This is helpful to know as a supervisor because if a new professional hates public recognition, and the way the supervisor shows recognition is through public praise, it will not feel like celebration to the new professional an potentially will not foster a positive spirit. Knowing how new professionals like to be recognized is important to fostering a positive spirit.

Faculty in Preparation Programs

In graduate school, there are many theories, concepts, and information to teach that celebration of success and development is rarely done because it is not something a part of academic culture. This is true of practitioner life as well. "Rewards and recognition are important to the social structure of the student affairs staff" (Kuk, Banning & Amey, 2010, p. 15). Taking the time to celebrate and recognize accomplishments in graduate students will help foster this same positive acknowledgement in professional work. In reflection papers, require that students think about their successes. Often when I have worked with graduate students, in reflection they are hard on themselves because they want to develop the skill set needed to do student affairs work. What about the skills they already brought with them into graduate school that they are doing well? Taking the time to offer both constructive developmental feedback, and celebrating their successes in each step in graduate school is critical to their professional development. Feedback comments on assignments should highlight what a student did well as much as where a student needs to grow and be

challenged. This small gesture is often missed. Making a few positive feedback comments can instill confidence in a graduate students' work and therefore help foster their confidence as a new professional.

Another idea of fostering a positive environment is to begin classes with small community building activities like sharing highs and lows for the week. This activity invites all students in a classroom to share one good thing and one challenging thing that occurred since the last class meeting. Often, this activity fosters connections and community within a classroom as what is shared typically fosters investment from the community. The good is celebrated by the community and the challenges are supported. This activity also allows faculty to know and understand circumstances happening in students' lives that could be impacting their development and offer support adding to the positive environment. This may take a lot of time in larger classes so other shorter time for sharing could also be incorporated.

For the 16-week course, the environmental scan assignment could also help new professionals understand the positivity and celebratory nature of professional work environments. As recommended to supervisors of new professionals, love languages could also be used as a class assignment with a reflective component. In addition to understanding environment and recognition, a class assignment could be to take the Strengthsfinder inventory (Rath, 2007). Strengthsfinder is based in positive psychology and gives five inherent strengths as a result of the inventory. Students would be asked to complete the inventory and write a reflection paper on their results. Specifically, the paper would ask students to address what strength resonated with them the most, least, and how does the student see their results playing out in their professional responsibilities

or in those responsibilities learned about in the information interview. Students could specifically take the job description obtained in the information interview assignment and pick three to five responsibilities and apply how they would use their Strengthsfinder results to those responsibilities. This assignment challenges students to start thinking about how to apply their inherent strengths to a position and environment empowering them to foster their positive spirit.

Need for Reflection

New Professionals

The socialization process often begins during graduate school for new professionals including many of the participants in this study. Socialization takes time, potentially years, new professionals need to remain patient and willing to learn during this time. I have talked with master's students who are so eager to get to work that they do not take the time in graduate school to be socialized and figure out their own values, experiences, and identities. To new professionals, it is important to understand that findings from this study would not have been possible without the attention and time given by the participants in graduate school. New professionals should enjoy graduate school and invest in the learning process because it will make better professionals.

As a new professional, somewhere between all of the other responsibilities, finding time for reflection is critical. In order for this to happen, new professionals must figure out how they process information. Are they a verbal processor like Brittney or do they want to journal like Teddy? Do they want to seek out a colleague or mentor like Beth and Juliana? Do they want to talk with someone outside of the workplace for a different perspective? No matter what way, new professionals need to make reflection as

high of a priority as checking emails. New professionals can do this by scheduling time in their calendar each week to reflect on their accomplishments for the week, future projects, and goals. Creating a simple meeting on an outlook calendar entitled professional development could do this easily. In the notes section of the meeting request, thoughts could be typed and easily saved. If new professionals want to refer back to their notes, they are automatically saved and accessible. This could be completed at a desk in a few minutes or for an hour as the calendar request indicates. This idea makes reflection simple and prominent for new professionals.

Reflection could also involve looking at new values developing as professional work begins. Often, when others challenge new professionals in the workplace, most of the time it is because of a conflict in values. Reflecting on these moments, through processing conversations will be specifically key to values development. Asking probing questions in a one-on-one meeting could be one way of helping a new professional explore the conflict and developing values.

An important distinction in positive psychology framework, reflection and complaining are two different things. Reflection means taking the time to think through emotions, actions, projects, and relationships for an overall learning process and implementation into practice. Skills may be developed from times of reflection. Venting can also be a helpful tool in reflection and often allows for emotions to be expressed making space for learning experiences. Complaining leads to no productivity as it is often negative in context and does not foster any solutions, and can be dangerous if a new professional mistakes it for reflection. The difference between complaining and venting for new professionals was those who sought to vent were also looking for a learning

opportunity and a change in their emotions. New professionals who were complaining were not interested in solutions or learning making a highly negative and challenging environment.

The other piece for new professionals is that they should not expect their supervisor will provide this reflection time for them. If new professionals want their supervisor to be the person they work with on reflection, then they need to ask for it. Supervisors are not mind readers and new professionals will need to advocate for their developmental needs. New professionals also need to make sure a supervisor is the type of person and has the style allowing for reflection. This should be determined through the interview process with intentional questions about supervision style and reflection on the job.

Environmentally, new professionals need to determine a safe space for reflection. This may not be with a supervisor, but another colleague on campus, mentor, or friend. Reflection is key but a safe place to do so is equally important. New professionals must seek this out to help with their overall development and transition. Conversely, if new professionals are hired into a position and a supervisor does provide reflection, celebrate that supervisor's efforts and work hard for them. Nowhere in the students affairs profession is it required of supervisors to provide developmental opportunities for their professional staff. If a new professional has that in a supervisor, they should value it.

Supervisors of New Professionals

New professionals in this study who had supervisors that reflected with on a regular basis worked harder, felt more accomplished, took on additional projects, and committed to the department more than those who had supervisors that were not

reflective. If a supervisor hires a new professional, and expect them to do high quality work, they may have to invest in their development as well. This may mean meeting with them on a regular basis. For example, supervisors should meet with new professionals on a weekly basis and set aside time once a month to have a reflective conversation. No work talk, just time for processing experience. I know when I supervised new professionals; their developmental needs were never on a timeline so if a one-on-one meeting was supposed to be about business but in our conversation it was apparent they were struggling or needed reflection, that became more pressing. This is a much more organic and fluid approach. I learned too that the business piece we were supposed to talk about still was talked about in a timely fashion because it was relevant to their position and daily work.

Here are some ideas and strategies for how to have meaningful reflective conversations with new professionals. It starts with a genuine care for new professionals' development. There are a few ways supervisors can show this. First, if doing a performance or professional development plan for the year, include some pieces of reflection or developmental work. Many new professionals will list tangible things for professional development like attending conferences or develop programs to fulfill job expectations. By offering a reflective project or time, new professional will take the cue that work and reflection are just as essential in the work environment.

Second, supervisors should develop relationships with new professionals that are developmental in nature. Only supervisors know stylistically what that may look like for them since supervision style is varies for different people. This may mean a supervisor needs to take time to determine supervision style, boundaries, and professional

development goals for new professionals. A supervisor taking the time to do these things

directly benefits the staff around them and the department. It also provides a strong

example of supervision for new professionals learning and development.

When supervisors are having reflective conversations with new professionals,

asking open ended questions allows for more talking from the new professional can

further new professional development. Open ended questions could be something like

"what is one thing that challenged you this week?" (see Appendix E for more questions).

When a supervisor asks a meaningful question that challenges a new professionals'

reflection and they do not answer immediately after the question has been asked, it is

because learning is occurring and they need the time and space for it to happen. If a new

professional is more of an intrinsic reflector, offer them a list of open ended questions to

look over and think about for a period of time. This will allow for the new professional

to process when the time and space in their own life are available.

Supervisors, who role model reflection will encourage others around them to do

the same, and in this case, create an example for new professionals. Supervisors can

reflect on their own professional and personal values. Values change over time as life

and professional circumstances change. Supervisors, who know their own values, take

the time to reflect on them, and share those with others around you will help provide the

same experiences for the new professionals.

Reflective conversations are artful. They take time and practice. They are

different than management of personnel meetings. They require time, attention,

dedication, and relationships. If supervisors are not willing or able to do all of these

things, then they can help the new professional find a place where they can reflect on their experiences.

New professionals are already used to reflecting in professional settings because of the reflective nature of graduate school work. Having this suddenly stop in professional life can be developmentally stifling for a new professional. The lack of reflection may also be attributing to the gap between graduate preparation programs and professional work environments.

Faculty in Graduate Preparation Programs

Providing reflection in graduate programs through assignments and class experiences is critical because of the learning processes and expectations set by program and professional standards (Council for the Advancement of Standards, 2012). The new professionals in this study who had reflective experiences in graduate school referenced them in our conversations showing the impact they had after completion of the program. Specifically mentioned was either a capstone project or in class project where students had to define their professional values based on the literature and practices learned throughout their experiences in graduate school.

If new professionals are able to define values in graduate school, the reflection process could be around the alignment of those in practice. For example, a graduate program in a capstone course could offer an assignment to creatively depict professional values for graduating students. The reflection time aligns with completion of the program and a potential start in a new professional position. By being offered in a creative format, the assignment not only challenges graduate students to think about their professional values but also represents them in a format they create. These could be

highly personal to the student therefore creating even deeper meaning for the assignment and reflection process.

Nadia's graduate program had a capstone project where values definition was the major piece of the project. Three years post-graduation, she included the picture of her capstone project in her photojournal. In our conversations, she shared that she looked at the project for the first time in a long time and was excited to see some of the values she defined at the end of graduate school still are present in her practice. She also mentioned some had changed and evolved too as her professional career developed. This reflective moment for Nadia was significant for her own personal awareness and understanding of her identity.

Graduate programs should continue to teach reflection as it is making a difference with new professionals. A next step for graduate programs would be to help students develop a strategy for continuing this reflection process in a professional setting potentially through an assignment given in graduate school that is to be continued when in a professional environment and position. This shift should move a graduate student from an external motivation (i.e., required for a grade) to an internal motivation. One example might be to help a student understand if they are an external or internal processor and offer ideas for how these types of processing can be integrated into professional life. Graduate programs could also look to other professions, like social work, nursing, and counseling, to look at strategies and guides for creating internal motivation for reflection.

With the 16-week course, the previous three assignments are set up to contribute to the overall final assignments in which students are asked to creativity depict their

professional identity and philosophy for working in student affairs. The creativity piece of this is intentional because if students are being asked to state their identity and philosophy, it is highly personal in nature and the assignment should not stifle their identity in anyway including the medium in which the assignment is created. In this assignment, students will be asked to identify professional values, how they align with student affairs values, and how those values will play out in professional practice. Students will also be asked, based on the identified values, to create their philosophy for student affairs work. This should be short, like an elevator speech, they could explain to someone in an answer to an interview question. It should be rich with meaning and depth, but also short not to lose the audience. Students would be encouraged to make the philosophy something they could put in a future office to remind themselves and show others their philosophy of work. This project is highly reflective meeting the needs of this finding and socialization process.

Portraiture Methodology in Student Affairs

While portraiture was not specifically developed for higher education research, the values of portraiture methodology and the values and ethics of student affairs are similar and make it a fit to work together to bring stories to life. The impact portraiture had on illustrating stories in this study may help new professionals, practitioners, and faculty design better programs and services to meet the needs of the new professionals because of the environmental factors captured through portraiture. If this methodology was able to impact these participants, than there are many other areas in student affairs research that could benefit from hearing experiences first hand through the voice and lens of the participants.

Portraiture methodology in this study allowed me to offer practical implications for practices for new professionals, supervisors of new professionals, and faculty in graduate preparation programs because of the collection of participant stories. While other methodologies also collect stories, findings from these methodologies may not be practical in nature. By sharing each participant's portrait, their learning and development was highlighted and allowed for practice and implications to be pushed further than other methodologies. This benefits student affairs as this type of research could connect research and practice more intentionally.

Goodness research and positive psychology were a natural connection in this study. Focusing also on goodness research is a must for the future of student affairs. Student affairs could also benefit from using more positive psychology theory in their professional development programs. Uncovering gaps in student populations, functional areas, research bodies, and practices is only half of what needs to be done for student affair practice. By highlighting the good, positive, helpful practices for these new professionals, the findings from this study are able to help many practitioners and faculty gain insight to new professional development and continue to use skills and experiences that are working for new professionals. I often hear in student affairs we need to figure out what to stop doing to better refine our services for students and our universities. By uncovering what *is* working, through goodness research and portraiture methodology, student affairs could have tangible answers and could refine or continue services based on goodness research findings.

Another implication of portraiture research is the style lends itself to building mentoring relationships with participants. These relationships allowed me to capture

deeper stories from all participants than potentially other methodologies. Many participants and I continually talk about the study and things happening in their professional lives. They have asked to go to coffee, talk about common functional areas, and learn more about the study. They have asked about coming to the dissertation defense in support of me and about seeing the completion of the entire project. This style may fit other areas of student affairs research nicely as we need to learn more in depth about student experiences, especially specific populations, through developing mentoring relationships that could bring deeper findings needed to impact student affairs practice.

Portraiture also allowed for the use of photos as a method in this study. The nature of portraiture is to bring art and science together. Using photos as a method brought this concept even further in this study. The photos captured brought visual representation to every single portrait often allowing not only for great description in the story, but supporting the illustrations required of the researcher in the portraiture writing process. The photos took each participant's portrait one step further than required of portraiture methodology.

<p style="text-align:center">Visual Methods</p>

This study also brought visual methods further into student affairs research by sharing another method for giving participants voice in student affairs research. Interviews are commonly used in student affairs research and adding in additional methods through visual methodologies could bring a strong visual element to findings providing an additional way for people to process and reflect on findings of this study.

Having all of the participants in this study reflect through capturing pictures brought a new level of critical thinking to their professional development. As mentioned

before, incorporating reflection into professional live can be challenge for student affairs professionals. By intentionally asking each participant to take pictures, many commented that reflection became more in the forefront of their daily work because they knew they need to capture significant pieces of their job for the project. It forced a different thinking and different way of viewing their own professional development.

Looking at the pictures for each participant also allows a read to get to know the participants experiences better. Explaining them through their own words is meaningful to this project. Backing up those words with their own photos also shared their perspective and lens in the research and reflection process. Each picture allowed the reader to stand a little bit more in the participant's shoes. I think about John's picture from his daily walk to work each morning. From the picture, a reader can now see and experience what John experiences daily.

Pictures also impacted the analysis process for this project. By having pictures, as well as interview transcriptions and my own notes, the triangulation process in this project allowed for more themes to emerge from written data because often a theme was backed up by a photo in a participants photojournal. Without the photos, themes may not have developed as significantly as they did in this project. In telling of these participant portraits, the photos added the visual element that had only been described through writing in past studies.

Visual methodologies also have a place in student affairs assessment data as well because of their definitive nature. Supporting quantitative numbers with visual representation of learning through pictures can give more weight to assessment data. As student affairs departments are asked more to define learning outcomes and assess

programs, quantitative and qualitative data may not be enough to show demonstrated learning.

Pictures in this study provided a visual demonstration of learning, experiences, emotions, and/or attitudes and also provided more information about each participant. The pictures often were metaphors for a participant's experience thereby conveying ideas more clearly. People can critique research from interviews because they did not participate in the interviews. Pictures, however, can be the same from the minute they enter the study to sharing them in a presentation years beyond the study making it harder to argue findings. Even though pictures in this study were manipulated to have frames or filters, the image still conveys deep meaning and purpose for the participant's experiences. Support for research findings, like pictures, can make good findings, great.

Methodological Reflections

In reflecting on this study, I was seeking new professionals to talk about positive professional development experiences. The participants knew the study would focus on positivity and may have been referred or attracted to participate for the positive framework of the study. Those individuals with a less positive perspective on life and professionals experiences may not have been referred to me by the gatekeepers of this study and I also was not looking for them as participants. I also had significant relationships with the gatekeepers. Each knew my style and philosophy of student affairs because I had been their supervisor previously. These relationships were helpful in gaining participants that would fit the criteria of the study. I acknowledge that gatekeepers who did not know me as well could have influenced the type of participant referred to me in this study. The study did focus on challenges and negative experiences,

but all participants were able to reframe those experiences to see the good and/or learning opportunities.

The photos in this study presented some challenges. I wanted to leave capturing photos open for the participants to have unlimited abilities with the inclusion of photos. This allowed for rich depth and great insight to each participant. However some of the pictures representing the stories in this study were pictures of multiple people which may not be used without permission. While all of the participants signed consent forms and by choice, included the pictures in their photojournals, those who were in the pictures may not have given consent. Also, some of the pictures included were highly identifiable for the participant or institution and sometimes both. While the depth of the photos was awesome for the findings, I excluded some photos to protect the identity of the participants. The stories from the pictures are still included in this study but the photos were left out of the final dissertation.

Another piece I have been reflecting on in this process is my stylistic nature in student affairs and how that impacted the findings. Portraiture is a highly personal methodology to use and a researcher wanting to use it would do well reflecting on their own abilities prior to starting a research project. Because I am conversational, and can have the strength of individualization, I am able to instinctually pick up on strengths, emotions, and concepts when in conversation with others. I used this extensively in this research project in interviews, in photojournals, and with the analysis process to gather rich and deep findings in this project. I understand this is my stylistic nature and could be a challenge for another person using portraiture methodology.

Also, I enjoyed the writing style of portraiture because it fit well with my philosophy of student affairs. The writing style to me was very practical and beneficial in teaching the reader more about each participant and the findings. I find myself constantly thinking in a theory to practice mindset and called on that influence when writing the findings. I would highly encourage other researchers to use portraiture in student affairs research, however, I believe it is essential for a researcher to understand the components of portraiture research and see if it is a fit for the philosophy of their study.

Future Research

As with any research study, more research needs to be conducted to add to the bigger picture of new professionals in student affairs. There are several ideas for future research that would help expand the body of knowledge on new professionals. Each of the four themes from this project could spin off into their own studies. Specifically, a researcher could look at the elements that create transformative moments. Studies could be conducted on effectively implementing change as a new professional in a first position. More could be explored regarding positive spirits in all student affairs professionals. There are a wide variety of studies that could be on relationships and new professionals. These are only some of what could feel like the endless possibilities that can occur when research is done.

Each of the main themes from this study could be broken out into future research projects. To name a few, studies could be conducted further on what characteristics create transformative moments. New research could be done exploring environments fostering transformative moments. Another idea for future research is looking specifically at new professionals abilities to create change in a position.

The idea of the theme on positive spirits could be widely studied. One question that arose during this study was the need for literature on passion and student affairs. It is widely known people often enter student affairs for the developmental nature of the work and then find deep meaning and significance in their professional life. Some may call this passion. This is a word thrown around significantly in student affairs which seems to make a natural connection between the positive psychology concept of happy lives and passion in student affairs work. A future research project could be exploring student affairs professionals' definitions and examples of passion in their practice. This may lead to more understand about how professionals are attracted and sustained in their careers which could offer help with retention efforts of all student affairs professionals. In scanning the literature, there were not any studies on how passion impacted professional life. Positive spirit touched on finding meaning and purpose for these new professionals contributing to their overall positive outlook. This may be able to be taken further exploring the role passion plays for student affairs as a community.

This study focused solely on new professionals but offered implications for supervisors of new professionals and faculty in preparation programs. Because of the lack of formal training to be a supervisor in student affairs, there is still a lot to learn about how a supervisor learns to supervise. More needs to be learned about supervisors and their investment and strategies for developing new professionals. The literature puts a heavy emphasis on supervisors of new professionals but has yet to ask them about their commitment to the expectations set within the literature. Also in regards to supervisors of new professionals, there has yet to be findings on how supervisors feel about their role in a new professional's development. These studies could tell student affairs more about

effective supervision strategies for new professionals. Without any formal training for supervisors in student affairs, these findings might help contribute to creating supervision institutes and trainings for more effective supervision over all of the profession.

Retention studies on new professionals are almost 10 years old and with a new generation of professionals entering student affairs, it would be beneficial to look again at retention rates of new professionals to see if they differ from previous studies especially with the development of the ACPA/NASPA professional competencies and the more recent research on graduate preparation programs. If the retention rates do differ, characteristics of new professionals could be explored again to advance the body of literature. A study like this could also explore departure rates from other related professions to student affairs to see if student affairs departure rates are comparable to other professions.

Conclusion

There we sat in the lounge of our building, 10 faces looking at me during our in hall training on programming for the year. The room was meant to be a community room with a pool and ping pong tables. A community kitchen was off to the side for students to use. The room was an odd curved shape with floor to ceiling windows on the main wall. These windows overlooked the valley below and were a beautiful sight to see the rolling hills of the valley with homes scatter on plateaus for miles. The building was constructed in the early 1990s and true to popular decor at the time, the carpet, baseboards, and molding in the building were a teal green. Most walls had been painted a peachy, beige making it scream southwest décor fad. It was ugly but once the students

moved in and the community forms all of that faded into the background as what was most important were the people inside those walls.

After experiencing what happened with programming during my first year, I made significant changes. Changes that were going to require a significant amount of work from these 10 RAs sitting before me. I was nervous. Nervous they would rebel and I would have the same issues I had the previous year. This was training. The residents were not even here yet. Classes had not begun. I wouldn't make it another year if they rebelled.

"If they rebelled, what would I do? Maybe I just wasn't cut out to be in res life," I thought to myself. I stopped my thoughts and looked at this programming plan again. In my office earlier in training I had come up with this plan. I had made a playlist for myself during training called "courage" and at the time of the programming plans creation Des'ree's "You Gotta Be" was playing in the background.

"Maybe there is a way to benefit them and the programming plan at the same time. That's it, this program could be filled with this expectation, and they could work together on these programs making the work a little less." And there is was, in that moment I figured it out. Figured out how to change the past so the future would be better.

In my first year, I was dealing with so much and had a large residence hall that there was little time for reflection at work or at home. I did not have a professional transformative moment until my second year in the job. My transformative moment and ability to be a change agent came at almost the same time as told above. Once I felt competent and had a little more confidence in my work, I finally started to see and

celebrate the positive in my job and life. I am glad this study could bring to light these findings for the 10 participants in this study and for my own experiences.

The literature on new professionals gave a foundation for this study. New professionals need socialization often starting in graduate preparation programs and moving through the first year or two of professional work. During this socialization process it was imperative for new professionals to understand the values and skills required to do student affairs work. Many scholars conducted studies on how competent new professionals' skills were coming out of graduate school and into first professional positions. These studies gave mixed reviews as to if new professionals were prepared or not for the demands of professional work.

Graduate preparation programs consistency was also important to understand about new professional development. Seeing that no two student affairs graduate programs were alike, new professionals came out of graduate school at different levels of preparation and skill development. The CAS standards tried to create a set of standards all graduate preparation programs could follow but many current programs do not choose to do so leaving still the issues of inconsistency in new professional preparation.

Research on environment and nature of student affairs work and different institutional types also came into play with new professional development. If a new professional was socialized at a research one university and started professional work at a liberal arts institution, student affairs practice was different often challenging the new professional with skill development and readiness. New professionals needed to take institutional type into consideration for not only their socialization process, but also as a work environment.

The themes from this study fill in gaps in the literature about how to prepare new professionals in positive ways fostering their development. Transformative moments give new professionals the opportunity to use their skill sets in a manner they will learn from. Often these moments of success led to more confidence as a new professional within their position. Allowing new professionals opportunities to be change agents gives them a work environment where their values can be fostered into work responsibilities and projects. Often the participants in this study talked significantly about a development of a value right along with their ability to make changes in their professional work environments.

The ability and space to foster the participants' positive spirit in a professional work environment was also significant. For many in the study, positivity was more than an attitude, choice, or perspective. It was inherent to who they were and their outlook on life making it about fostering their spirit. In addition to the environment, collegial connections and relationships was significant to cultivating a positive spirit for new professionals. Many participants named colleagues, and supervisors as key people in their support process and positive experiences within the position. All of this though, would not be possible without the opportunity for personal and professional reflection. New professionals need to reflect on their experiences both in and outside of the job. New professionals who were able to reflect had deeper learning experiences and further their professional development experiences.

These four themes introduce new ideas not yet present in the literature and take previous ideas about new professionals in the literature and advance them to a new level needed to understand positive professional development experiences for new

professionals. It is exciting to see how these four themes really benefitted new professionals in this study and how they were flourishing in their positions out of graduate school. Implementing the ideas and themes found in this study will help new professionals develop now and into their future careers.

I went on to present that programming plan to the RA staff. They did not rebel. They knew it would be hard work but they also knew the benefits too. Most importantly, they knew I was willing to support them in that work and make the work a meaningful leadership experience for them. They still have no idea that in that moment, those 10 RAs changed my career and life.

We went on to implement the programming plan with great success. They as RAs felt successful. They loved their experience. The residents loved their experience. That was my transformative moment. I implemented change and it went well. I started to have a positive outlook on my career. It taught me I knew what I was doing in res life and student affairs. It taught me to take risks. It taught me to be courageous. It happened because I had taken the time to reflect on my awful first year professionally and made changes.

Since then, in those small seconds I still have where I may doubt what I am doing, I just remember those 10 faces and the year we had together and I find the courage again, and I find the risks again, and I push forward. My own experiences are my guiding examples in my commitment to theory to practice and influencing others through their own personal and professional reflection. I know if I can get them to see themselves transforming as professionals, then I know they will be better professionals for it. It is in

these moments now that I find deep purpose, passion, and a commitment to my work and

role as a practitioner-scholar in student affairs.

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APPENDIX A

AESTHETIC WHOLE PARTICIPANT CHART

Creating the Aesthetic Whole Chart

Themes	Transformative Moment	Change Agents	Positive Spirit	Need for Reflection	Definition of Positivity
Participants					
Juliana	Teaching the Women's Leadership class in graduate school	Empowering students to make an impact	Wants to be empowered and empowers others	Reflection brought focus and attention to life	"Being hopeful and through that hope impacting and empowering others."
Beth	Experiencing the flag staking on campus		Wants learning to be actively occurring	Wants to create and needs to develop changes for position	"I would go broad in saying the meaning of positive to me is this state. It is a healthy mindset."
Stella	Providing leadership in her NODA Intern position	Impacting change in students through connections	Sees opportunities for change as positive things	Internal processing allows for self-reflection and action	"I just have a tendency to see things as opportunities rather than challenges. I have always been the kind of person that seeks out a new challenge all the time. I love seeing challenges as opportunities.
Jane	Engaging in meaningful conversations with students	Making an impact in students' lives through empowering them to learn	Providing unconditional positive regard	Reflection helps her align her values with her practice	"An overall optimistic outlook on things. Making the best of things, no matter how things turn out or come across, just being able to see it in a good light."

Teddy	Teaching the RA class	Wants to be action-oriented with making impactful changes	Optimistic attitude and celebration of accomplishments	Active in journaling as a time for processing and connecting values and strengths	"I think part of it is having a healthy optimism for life or optimism for the future. I think another piece of that is very much in the attitude itself."
Rachel	Being influential in a student culture shift	Changing the impression and engagement of the Greek community	Always looks to find the benefit in challenging circumstances and turn them into positive moments	Reflection helps generate new ideas that are influential to her practice	"Finding the benefit in the bad and turning everything into an opportunity."
Brittney	Developing and implementing the first generation student career class	Activist and change agent for first generation populations	Intrinsically motivated to do good for others	Reflection helps provide purpose and understanding of work	"Being able to do something that makes me happy, where I can learn a lot from, even if it's a challenge to work."
Nadia	Creating and implementing Global Res living learning community	Social justice and diversity focused	Helps her determine her purpose and implement it in her life	Reflection was needed to further professional development	"I guess I really look at it [positivity] as attitude, and really choosing your attitude in this work."
John	Attending a conference representing his institution	Working to motivate the unmotivated especially with first generation students	Fosters a spirit of perseverance for his own development and in the lives of his students	Reflection was needed to further personal and professional growth	"Spirit of perseverance and overcoming challenges."
Sophia	Securing a new job and creating admissions events on campus	Recruiting students to a university where they could have a great college experience	Hopeful with both the new job and making an impact for students	Reflection helps solidify her decision making process and creates learning opportunities	"That upbeat, kind of passion which is existent by itself and just being able to exhibit that to other people."

APPENDIX B

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

UNIVERSITY of
NORTHERN COLORADO

Institutional Review Board

DATE: June 11, 2013

TO: Amy Dinise-Halter
FROM: University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [465198-2] Positive Experiences: Focusing on the Good in New Professionals
                            in Student Affairs
SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision

ACTION: APPROVAL/VERIFICATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE: June 10, 2013

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The University of Northern
Colorado (UNCO) IRB approves this project and verifies its status as EXEMPT according to federal IRB
regulations.

**Thank you for making all of the requested modifications and drafting the requested additional
documents.**

Be sure to use all revised and created materials from this review process in your research.

Best wishes with your study.

Sincerely,

Dr. Megan Stellino, UNC IRB Co-Chair

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records for a duration of 4 years.

If you have any questions, please contact Sherry May at 970-351-1910 or Sherry.May@unco.edu. Please
include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of
Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB's records.

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Phone/Meeting Participant Recruitment Script

Hello,

My name is Amy Dinise-Halter and I am a Ph.D. student at the University of Northern Colorado in the Higher Education and Student Affairs Leadership program. I am currently looking for participants in a fun study looking at the good things new professionals do in student affairs. (Insert gatekeeper's name) identified you as someone who might be a good fit for the study. I was hoping we might be able to set up a time to chat a little bit more about the study and your potential involvement.

To share a little bit about the study now, this is not your typical research study. As a participant, you will have the opportunity to tell your story as a new professional through conversations with me and by capturing photos of the great experiences you are having in your job. There is a lot of research on new professionals in student affairs and what not to do when a professional starting their career. This study will turn that idea on its head, and answer the question "How do self-identified positive professional experiences impact new professional development?" The intentions of the findings are to write a how-to guide full of stories for new professionals about new professionals full of encouragement, tips, and feel good moments to help future new professionals in student affairs.

If you are interested in hearing more, could please email me back a good day and time to chat on the phone, and a phone number as well? I would gladly share more details about your action as a participant in this process and see if this is a study you would like to be a part of as a participant.

Thank you for your time.

Amy Dinise-Halter

APPENDIX D

**CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS
IN RESEARCH**

UNIVERSITY *of* NORTHERN COLORADO

CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Project Title: Positive Experiences: Focusing on the Good in New Professionals in Student Affairs

Researchers: Amy Dinise-Halter, University of Northern Colorado

Email: adhalter@gmail.com   **Phone**: 714-293-8680

Supervising Professor: Dr. Tamara Yakaboski   **Email:**
tamara.yakaboski@unco.edu

Purpose and Description: In the profession of student affairs the experiences of being a new professional can be quite challenging. Amongst the profession, there seems to be a sink or swim mentality towards first time professionals and their development. After a review of the literature, this study will explore new professionals and how positive professional experience impact their socialization process. This study will be a portraiture of 10-12 current student affairs professionals working full time in their first year out of graduate school student affairs preparation programs.

Interviews and Photo Journals: You will participate in 2 semi structured interviews. The first one hour interview will be conducted either in person or over the phone (in person preferred) around the beginning of the fall 2013 semester. This interview will focus on the day to day aspects of your work environment and your experiences thus far in their position.

After the first interview, you will be asked to complete a photojournaling project. Over a six week period, you will be sent a text message asking you to capture a photo of an experience for that week. You will be asked to compile all photos together (adding any additional photos you feel represent positive student affairs practice) in a format of your choice. With each picture, please submit a small description of the picture and how it relates to positivity in your position. ***Please submit your photo journals six weeks from the initial interview to adhalter@gmail.com.***

The second one hour interview will also be conducted in person or over the phone around the end of November. This interview will focus on the photojournals specifically talking about why you chose the pictures for your photojournal and what they mean to you.

I have questions to guide the conversation. Based on our conversation, I may choose to use exploratory questions to attempt to capture your story.

All interviews will be recorded and transcribed. You will have the opportunity to use a pseudonym if you choose to help protect your identity in the study. After I have transcribed each interview, if you choose, I can send it to you for your review to make any changes, corrections, or for your own personal information. This process helps me represent your experiences accurately and carefully.

Data Handling: All transcriptions and photojournals will be stored on a password protected online cloud drive that only I have access to. All transcriptions and electronic voice recordings stored will only include pseudonyms. No other personally identifying information will be stored. Transcriptions will be recorded based on date of interview and participant pseudonyms. This project is my dissertation study so only I, and my professor, will be reviewing the transcriptions. I will destroy the information collected three years after the study is complete. Confidentiality is of utmost importance to me. As mentioned before, you will be asked to create pseudonyms to protect your identity if you choose. Only you and I will know the true identity of the participants. I will refer to participants as pseudonym names as research is discussed and presented to public groups and forums.

Potential Risks: There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study.

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw from this study at any time. By completing the interview you give us permission to use the results of our findings in our research. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. **You must be 18 years of age at time of interview to participate**. A copy of this form and interview transcript will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs, 25 Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-2161.

_____

Participants Signature   Date

_____

Researcher's Signature   Date

APPENDIX E

POTENTIAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Potential Interview Questions

Environmental
- Describe something you keep in your office that reminds you of why you went
- into student affairs.
- What a typical day looks like for you in your position?
- What do you intentionally do to create a positive work environment where you can be successful?

Professional Development
- How did you choose to go into student affairs?
- Why you chose this position right out of grad school?
- When you leave this position, how do you hope someone would describe your work while you were here?
- Can you share with me what has been your proudest professional accomplishment thus far in your position?

Relationships
- Who are the key people in your life that help you find positivity when work gets challenging?
- How would you describe supportive relationships in your role.

Practice
- Tell me about a time working with students where you felt you were successful.
- What parts of your job leave you with positive feelings?
- What is your favorite part about your current position? What makes that part your favorite?
- How have you gone about solving problems in this position?
    - How do you feel about the resolution?
- Describe a situation in which you did "all the right things" and were still unsuccessful. What did you learn from the experience?

APPENDIX F

PHOTOJOURNAL PROMPT

Over the next six weeks, you are to take pictures of positive experiences and moments you have in regards to your professional development. The prompts below are there for you to think about what positive experiences may look like. Please use your creativity, imagination, opportunities, and environments to help capture and compile these pictures. Some ideas for pictures may include:

- Something that reminds you to stay motivated in the job.
- Something that makes you smile in your job.
- Something that represents a part of your job that makes you proud.
- Something that represents an accomplishment or triumph you feel about your job.
- Something that represents success.
- A skill you learned prior to this job that has served you well in your job.

Picture may be in reference to these prompts **but do not have to be.** This is your project-capture what represents positive professional development to you. If you choose to take pictures of people, try not to take pictures capturing the identity of others and/or take/use photos of individuals whose identity would be obvious. This supports confidentiality within the research process. With each picture please submit a small description of why you chose the picture, how it represents positivity, and how it relates to your professional development.

Once you have all of your pictures, please compile them into one grouping. How to organized them looks is up to you. The only thing I need from you is one compiled photojournal with 6-10 pictures.

Please submit your photojournals by _____ (date determined by first interview date) to me at adhalter@gmail.com.

REMINDERS

If you so choose, I can send you text message reminders throughout the next six weeks to help encourage you through the project. If you would like to receive text messages from me, please provide a phone number able to receive text message below. I will only contact you by text message through reminders for the study. I will not share your contact information with anyone but myself and all information will be stored in a password protected online cloud drive that only I have access to.

Contact Number:

_____

APPENDIX G

PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Name: [   ]   **Supervisor**: [   ]

Position: [   ]   **Position**: [   ]

GOALS:

1. Describe your long–term professional goals.

2. Describe your values and philosophy for working in student affairs.

3. How does your current position fit into your philosophy and long term goals?

I am committed to your overall professional development and want to support you in achieving your maximum potential. As such, I ask you to consider the following:

4. What professional development activities and/or initiatives would you like to participate in or create in this professional experience?

5. What skills are you looking to develop in your professional identity? Do you have any ideas for projects or experiences that will help with this skill development?

6. How will you reflect and engage in your own identity development? (i.e. blogging, journaling, conversations, books, etc.) How will you hold yourself accountable to this?

7. What type of an environment do you need to grow and develop professionally? How might you create and contribute to that environment?

Discussion Points for conversation with Supervisor:

- Looking at some of your identified goals, what can I do to support you in accomplishing them?

- Is there someone you would like to connect with whom you think could be helpful to you in achieving specific goals or your professional development plan in general? (List names and departments of individuals in this or other departments)

- How would you like to be challenged in your role? How do you see that relating to your professional development?

APPENDIX H

**SOCIALIZATION AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY
COURSE OUTLINE**

HESA 699: Professional Identity Development

The intention of this course is to lead students through the four stages of socialization while challenging them to reflect on their professional identity. At the end of the semester, students will have a created a project highlighting their professional values in meaningful ways to their professional identity development.

Socialization Stage #1- Anticipatory Stage: "What will it be like?"
(4 weeks)

	Topic	Readings
Week 1	Introduction to Socialization	Collins, D. (2009). The Socialization Process for New Professionals. Becoming Socialized in Student Affairs Administration Jones, S. R., & Segawa, J.M. (2004). Crossing the bridge from graduate school to job one. In P.M. Magolda, & J.E. Carnaghi (Eds.), *Job one: Experiences of new professionals in student affairs* (pp. 59-76). Lanham, MD. University Press of America.
Week 2	Values of Student Affairs	ACPA/NASPA. (2010). ACPA/NASPA professional competency areas for student affairs practitioners. Evans, N. & Reason, R. (2001). Guiding Principles: A Review and Analysis of Student Affairs Philosophical Statements. Task Force of the Future of Student Affairs. (2010). Envisioning the Future of Student Affairs. Torres, V., DeSawal, D., & Hernandez, E. (2012). The importance of *The Student Personnel Point of View* in honoring the past and acknowledging current perspectives. Reflections on the 75th Anniversary of *The Student Personnel Point of View*. ACPA. Bliming, G. S., & Whitt, E. J. (1998/2004). Principles of good practice for student affairs. In Whitt, E. J. (Ed) *ASHE Reader on College Student Affairs Administration* (pp. 133-138). Boston, MA: Pearson.
Week 3	Institutional Types and Student Affairs	Hirt, J. B. (2006). Chapter 9: Where you work matters. *Where you work matters: Student affairs administration at different types of institutions* (pp. 186-209). Lanham, MD: University Press of America. Hirt, J. B. (2009). The influence on institutional type on socialization. In A. Tull, J. Hirt, & S.A. Saunders (Eds.), *Becoming Socialized in Student Affairs Administration* (pp. 109-128) Sterling, MA: Stylus.
Week 4	Creating Change	Kuk, L., Banning, J. H., & Amey, M. J. (2010). *Positioning student affairs for sustainable change: Achieving organizational effectiveness through multiple perspectives.* Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.
Assignment		
Professional Position Exploration Project Components: - Informational Interview - Job Description Analysis - Reflection Paper Please identify a student affairs position on a campus you would be interested in holding as a professional. Once identified, conduct an informational interview with the professional staff member		

specifically to learn more about spoken and unspoken expectations of the position, professional values, and skills needed in the position. You will need to generate well thought out questions to learn in depth information about the position. Taking notes on your conversation is recommended.

In addition to meeting with the professional staff member, you will need to obtain a job description of the professional position. After conducting the information interview, you will review your notes on the conversation and analyze the job description to look for consistencies and gaps between professional work and a forma job description.

In a 10-15 page reflection paper, you will share what you learned from your informational interview, 3-5 consistencies and gaps between the daily work of the position versus the job description, and apply the student affairs values and skills needed to do the work of the specific position.

Socialization Stage #2- Formal Stage: "How do I do my job?"
(4 weeks)

	Topic	Readings
Week 1	Professional Realms	Hirt, J. B., & Creamer, D.G. (1998). Issues facing student affairs professionals: The four realms of professional life. In N.J. Evans & C.E. Phelps Tobin (Eds.), *The state of the art of preparation and practice in student affairs: Another look* (pp. 47-60). Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
Week 2	Orientation and Transition	Cilente, K., Henning, G., Skinner Jackson, J., Kennedy, D., & Sloan, T. (2006). *Report on the New Professional Needs Study* [Online]. http://www.myacpa. org/research/newprofessionals.php. Renn, K. A., & Hodges, J. P. (2007). The first year on the job: Experiences of new professionals in student affairs. *NASPA Journal, 44*(2), 367-391. Saunders, S.A., & Cooper, D. L. (2009). Orientation in the socialization process. In A. Tull, J. Hirt, & S.A. Saunders (Eds.), *Becoming Socialized in Student Affairs Administration* (pp. 109-128) Sterling, MA: Stylus.
Week 3	Key Relationships	Gabarro, J. & Kotter, J. (2007). Managing Your Boss. http://www.businessweek.com/managing/content/oct2007/ca2007102_963954.htm Horovitz, J. (2005). 10 Rules to Manage Your Boss. http://www.rediff.com/money/2005/aug/12spec.htm (#5 is my favorite!!!) Lencioni, P. (2009). How to Manage Your Boss. http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123090863169649129.html Jensen, D. G. (2006). Managing Your Boss: Your Role in This Critical Relationship. http://www.careertrax.com/PDFs/advanced/Managing-Your-Boss.pdf
Week 4	Supervision	Schneider, R. (1998). Supervisor as Architect, Catalyst, Advocate and Interpreter. Beginning Your Journey: A Guide for New Professionals In Student Affairs Tull, A. (2009). Supervision and Mentorship in the Socialization Process. Becoming Socialized in Student Affairs Administration

		Shupp, M. & Arminio, J. (2012). Synergistic Supervision: A Confirmed Key to Retaining Entry-Level Student Affairs Professionals. Tull, A. (2009). Supervision and mentorship in the socialization process. In A. Tull, J. Hirt, & S.A. Saunders (Eds.), *Becoming Socialized in Student Affairs Administration* (pp. 109-128) Sterling: Stylus.

Assignment

 Environmental Scan Assignment
Components:
- Environment Observations
- Reflection Paper

Please identify a functional area/department/professional setting that you potentially would like to work in after graduation. After gaining permission, please spend 10 hours in the environment specifically looking to understand how the realms of professional practice (Hirt & Creamer, 1998) are enacted in a professional environment. Can you identify the characteristics of the environment including the stakeholders, information holders, key relationships, benefits and challenges? It is recommended these hours be broken up and occur at different parts of the work day to gain a broad perspective. Please take notes on your observations for use with the reflection paper.

After your observations, please write a 12-15 page four part reflection paper.
Part #1- Setting
Explain your overall observations including describing the characteristics if the environment. Help the reader understand the setting as if they were standing there themselves.
Part #2-Application
Apply how the realms of professional practice played out in the setting.
Part #3- Personal Reflection
Based on your observations and time spent in the environment, do you see yourself working in that setting? What did you like about the work environment? What else would you need in a professional environment that maybe did not show up in your observations? How are you going to identify the realms of professional practice in your own positions beyond graduate school?
Part #4-Creating Change
Based on your observations, are there areas for change? (you may refer to best practices, professional competencies and other supporting literature from your time in the program) How would you create change in this environment? How much is possible? What are the key components to implementing changes? Who are the stakeholders? What is an anticipated (and realistic) timeline to implement a change?

Socialization Stage #3- Informal: "How do I do my job with my own style?"
(4 weeks)

	Topic	Readings
Week 1	What is my style of student affairs?	Lovell, C. D., & Kosten, L. A. (2000). Skills, knowledge, and personal traits necessary for success as a student affairs administrator: A meta-analysis of thirty years of research. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, *37*(4), 250-269.

		Pope, R. L., & Reynolds, A. L. (1997). Student affairs core competencies: Integrating multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills. *Journal of College Student Development, 38*(3)*, 266-277.*
Week 2	Developing Your Own Professional Values	Where Do Values Come From? http://breakoutcreativecompany.com/2011/05/core-values-where-do-they-come-from/ The Power of Prime http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-power-prime/201205/personal-growth-your-values-your-life Values, Decisions, and Inner Peace http://faculty.weber.edu/molpin/healthclasses/1110/bookchapters/valueschapter.htm
Week 3	Styles of Leadership	Overview of Styles of Leadership http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_84.htm Core Leadership Theories http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/leadership-theories.htm Relational Leadership http://www.uta.edu/leadership/_downloads/The-Relational-Model.pdf Servant Leadership https://greenleaf.org/what-is-servant-leadership/ Hershey-Blanchard Situational Leadership http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_44.htm Strengths-Based Leadership http://www.stevegladisleadershippartners.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Strengths-Based-Leadership-FINAL.pdf Emotionally Intelligent Leadership http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_45.htm Authentic Leadership http://www.forbes.com/sites/kevinkruse/2013/05/12/what-is-authentic-leadership/
Week 4	Need for Reflection	Komives, S. R., & Carpenter, S. (2009). Professional development as lifelong learning. In G. S. McClellan, J. Stringer, and Assoc. (Eds.), *The Handbook of Student Affairs Administration* (pp. 371-387). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Assignment

Student Affairs Leadership Style Assignment

In the last four weeks, we have been focusing on learning more about your student affairs style through understanding your strengths, values, and expectations of yourself. In this assignment, you will reflect on what you have learned about yourself in a 5-10 page paper.

Please address the following questions:
- Which strength resonates with you most/least? How might these impact your professional style in student affairs?
- Identity 3 values you feel are important to incorporate in your work as a student affairs practitioner. What actions will you take to display these values in a professional setting?

- Name 3-5 expectations you have of yourself as a student affairs practitioner. How will you hold yourself accountable to those expectations
- When you become a professional, who might benefit from learning your values, strengths, and expectations? How will you share it with them?
- How do your strengths, values and expectations work on a team? How will you incorporate and adjust your style in a professional setting.

Socialization Stage #4- Personal: "My Professional Identity"
(4 weeks)

	Topic	Readings
Week 1	Ethics	Janosik, S. M., & Hirt, J. B.. (2002). Chapter 5: Legal and ethical issues. McWhertor, T. & Guthrie, D. (1998). Toward an Ethic for the Profession. Beginning Your Journey. Reybold, L., Halx, M. & Jimenez, A. (2008). Professional Integrity in Higher Education: A Study of Administrative Staff Ethics in Student Affairs.
Week 2	Reflection Class	Class time will be dedicated to discussion on experiences throughout the semester is preparation for final assignment.
Week 3	Presentations	
Week 4	Presentations	
Assignment		

Student Affairs Philosophy Project

Defining your values, beliefs, actions and ethics for your future practice in student affairs is an essential piece of professional identity development. In this project, you will creatively depict your philosophy for practice in student affairs. To complete this project, you will need to reflect on your own experiences in this class, in student affairs practice and the values and philosophies we have talked about this semester and bring them together in a piece that, for you, defines your philosophy for practice in student affairs.

Projects should articulate and define your values clearly. Projects should include stories and experiences that helped shape your values and/or philosophy. You are encouraged to make the philosophy something you could put in a future office to remind you and show others your philosophy of work.

In addition to a project, each student will have 5-minute to present their philosophy statement in class. This should be short, like an elevator speech, they could explain to someone in an answer to an interview question. It should be rich with meaning and depth, but also short not to lose the audience.

APPENDIX I

EXAMPLE CHART FOR RESEARCHER NOTES

Interview Notes Sheet
Participant: _____ Date: _____
Location: _____

	Examples	Notes
Metaphors (including any symbols, stories, or interactions)		
Repeated Statements (including anything they keep stating over and over again; ore refer back to)		
Rituals (including any actions, stories, experiences influencing to the participant)		

APPENDIX J

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Student affairs. For the purpose of this paper, I defined student affairs as the functional areas at a given institution falling under the reporting structure of a chief student affairs officer. Functional areas may include, but are not limited to the following functional areas: admissions, financial aid, first year and orientation programs, residence life, student activities, student health and wellness, student conduct and conflict resolution, career services, academic advising to name a few. At the institutions in this study, there was more than one chief student affairs officer reporting directly to a provost.

In addition to understanding functional areas considered under student affairs, there are two professional associations heavily involved with the development and guidance of student affairs. The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, commonly referred to as NASPA, was established in 1919 to support the needs of student affairs professionals at the time. The American College Personnel Administrators, commonly referred to as ACPA, was established in 1924 to also support the needs of student affairs professionals. Both organizations exist today to help support the research and practice of student affairs work.

New professionals. For the purposes of this dissertation, I defined a new professional as someone who is working in their first professional position, has been in the profession for 1-5 years, and was a recent graduate of a master's program (Evans & Phelps Tobin, 1993; Hirt, 2006). Depending on the new professionals' experiences, most were in their 20's and were closer in age to an undergraduate student population than their departmental colleagues in some circumstances (Hirt, 2006). Many entered the profession between 1-5 years after graduating with a bachelor's degree (Evans & Phelps Tobin, 1993).

Portraiture methodology. Developed by Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, portraiture methodology was created to infuse science and art together for research. In her book, *The Art and Science of Portraiture,* Lawrence-Lightfoot (2000) explained her process of combining an artistic writing style and the scientific rigor of research created portraiture methodology. Portraiture was designed to "capture the richness, complexity, and dimensionality of human experience in social and cultural context, conveying perspectives of the people who are negotiating those experiences" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002, p. 3). The methodology was based in relationships between the researcher and participants in a co-construction of the portrait. In order for this to happen, I as the researcher was intentional with every interaction with each participant listening not only to a story, but for a story to emerge.

The writing process in portraiture was just as rigorous as the research process. The portraitist, in this case me, was responsible for creating a portrait of each participant's experiences through their own voice all while connecting themes woven throughout each portrait. My intention was that the overall product was a beautifully and intricately crafted narrative telling the experiences of new professionals.

Goodness. Portraiture methodology was based in goodness of research, meaning the researcher was looking at the positive impacts of experiences. Goodness research concentrated on unearthing positivity and highlighting successes, while recognizing that imperfections will always be present within a social system (Hackmann, 2002). My role in goodness research was to ask "what is good here?" in order to understand more about both the positive experiences and the weaknesses within them (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 2002).

Positive psychology. Positive psychology was defined as "the study of the conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing or optimal functioning of people, groups, and institutions" (Gable & Haidt, 2005, p. 104). Positive psychology aimed to "catalyze a change…from a preoccupation with only repairing the worst things in life to also building the best qualities in life" (Seligman, 2002b, p. 3). The work of positive psychology had focused empirical research on nurturing talent and strengthening people to live more productive, fulfilling lives. I believe many hear this and think positive psychology was just trying to create a "Pollyanna" view of the world, however, positive psychology was just "as concerned with strengths as with weakness, interested in building the best things in life as in repairing the worst, and as concerned with making the lives of normal people fulfilling and with nurturing high talent as with healing pathology" (Seligman, 2004).