

Student Affairs Preparation Programs:
Reported Learning Outcomes by Recent Graduates

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ABSTRACT

Professional preparation is important for individuals in any profession, as well as the profession itself. It is one of the hallmarks of any profession. Many sets of standards for the curriculum of student affairs preparation programs have been promoted throughout the years. Most recently the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) published a set of standards that outline areas of competency for student affairs professionals.

The purpose of this study was to measure the degree to which recent graduates of student affairs preparation programs reported learning about the important foundational elements of the profession. I examined learning based on standards for student affairs preparation programs defined by CAS and compared amounts of reported learning from alumni based on the programs' adherence to the CAS standards (compliant v. non-compliant). To that end, I administered a 67 item questionnaire to recent graduates from student affairs preparation programs.

The findings of the present study reveal that a majority of alumni from student affairs preparation programs report having a clear understanding of 57 of 60 identified foundational learning outcomes. Additionally, there was no statistically significant difference between reported learning of alumni from CAS compliant and non-compliant programs based on these foundational learning outcomes on 58 of the 60 items. Data suggest that alumni from CAS compliant programs are more likely to feel confidence in their preparation in 48 of the 60 outcomes presented in the survey. Additionally, the results indicated that alumni from non-compliant programs were more likely to report higher levels of learning based on involvement theory and understanding the level of data a variable in quantitative analysis.

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Dedication

This paper is dedicated to all the small-town dreamers, the disheveled, down, and out, and to those who hang on knowing that if they keep on fighting the future will be bright. It is dedicated to my younger brothers and sisters who will someday stop following my example and will become mine.

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Chapter One

Introduction

The emergence of student affairs as a profession requires professional training for future administrators (Caple, 1998). Although critics suggest that student affairs is not a profession per se, they will admit that progress has been made towards professionalization of the field (Bloland, 1992; Paterson & Carpenter, 1989). While this matter may still be debatable, the prevailing view is that student affairs is a profession (Caple, 1998; Bloland, 1992; Hirt & Creamer, 1998).

Professional preparation is important for individuals in any profession. Unless individuals can complete successfully the professional training course for their chosen field, they will likely not achieve full status as a member of that profession (Stuit, Dickson, Jordan, & Schloerb, 1949). Professional preparation is also important for the profession itself. It is one of the hallmarks of any profession (Young, 1994). Hesburgh, Miller, and Wharton (1973) described professional education as the introduction and updating of the theory, skills, and perspective for practitioners in the field.

Professional preparation programs in student affairs date back to 1913, when the first one was established at Teachers College, Columbia University (McEwen & Talbot, 1998). By the mid 1940s, approximately 50 programs provided graduate training in student personnel work. The curriculum of these programs was varied, which raised concerns among professional organizations of the time (Caple, 1998).

Critics of preparation programs in student affairs characterized them as lacking scholarly qualities, inconceivably inconsistent, and as offering diverse content with varying levels of quality (Keim, 1991). Such inconsistency raised concern and became a topic of discussion beginning in the early 1950s, when the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) Professional Standards Committee conducted a survey of 33 professional preparation programs. The committee hoped to develop standards for admission to graduate training programs (Caple, 1998). With the formation of this committee, researchers began a series of studies focused on the necessary components of graduate preparation programs in student affairs.

In 1955, the American Personnel and Guidance Association (AGPA) began a study of professional training, licensing, and certification, and reported that more than

205 institutions had preparation programs for counselors (Caple, 1998). Subsequently, the findings of this study led to the 1961 publication of “Standards for the Preparation of School Counselors.”

In 1963, the Council of Student Personnel Associations in Higher Education (COSPA) appointed a committee on Professional Development to study the need for and make recommendations on professional preparation (Caple, 1998; McEwen & Talbot, 1998). The study led to a report that was first presented in 1964, and then later in 1967 as the “Guidelines for Graduate Programs in the Preparation of Student Personnel Workers in Higher Education.” (Caple, 1998; McEwen & Talbot, 1998)

Several subsequent attempts to determine standards to outline an appropriate curriculum materialized in the years that followed (Keim, 1991). The responses of chief student personnel officers to a survey on professional education in student affairs formed the basis of a curriculum for professional preparation programs (Hoyt & Rhatigan, 1970). In 1970, Miller’s 10 fundamental subject matter areas for student affairs preparation programs became a set of guidelines for design of program curriculum (Miller, 1970).

The revisions of these guidelines, and in particular the 1967 COSPA statement, resulted in a 1986 set of standards developed for preparation programs at the master’s level for student affairs professionals by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) (McEwen & Talbot, 1998). CAS is a consortium of 34 professional organizations concerned with the promotion of quality in programs and services related to higher education (Council for the Advancement of Standards, 2003). The standards for graduate students in professional preparation programs in student affairs were developed to equip aspiring professionals with the minimum level of education for student affairs practice (McEwen & Talbot, 1998).

Outcomes of graduate education have been studied across many fields (Abbey, et al., 1997; DeCoux, Rachal, Leonard, & Pierce, 1992; Maher, 2001; Wesson, Holman, Holman, & Cox, 1996). These studies show that graduate students report positive outcomes from their learning experiences.

Graduate studies in student affairs have also been studied (Harrow & Mann, 1996; McEwen & Roper, 1994). Learning outcomes of graduate students in student affairs preparation programs have been limited to studies of specific aspects of their preparation

program, such as interracial experiences (McEwen & Roper, 1994) or a certain course included in the curriculum (Harrow & Mann, 1996). Standards were created so that preparation programs could ensure certain learning outcomes among their graduates. This is an area that needs further study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to measure the degree to which recent graduates of student affairs preparation programs reported learning about the important foundational elements of the profession. I examined learning based on standards for student affairs preparation programs defined by CAS and compared amounts of reported learning from alumni based on the programs' adherence to the CAS standards (compliant v. non-compliant).

The CAS standards outline the critical components that a master's degree program should contain. The Foundation Studies area addresses the basic concepts that any student affairs preparation program should include in its curriculum. Data were collected by means of an instrument designed to allow participants to rate specific aspects of their graduate preparation programs along each of the Foundation Studies assessment criteria. Questionnaires were distributed to those who had graduated within two years of the data collection period.

Research Questions

More specifically, the study answered the following research questions:

1. To what extent do recent graduates of student affairs preparation programs report learning based on the Foundation Studies area of the CAS standards?
2. What differences are there in reported learning based on programs' adherence to the CAS standards (compliant v. non-compliant)?

Significance of the Study

The study had significance for future practice, research, and policy. In terms of practice, it had significance for coordinators of graduate preparation programs in student affairs. The research provided coordinators with data about the extent to which recent graduates reported learning about certain matters. Coordinators might use the data to examine the courses they offer and the content of those courses.

Also, the present study had significance for professional associations in student affairs. It provided data on the learning outcomes of recent alumni of student affairs preparation programs based on program adherence to the CAS standards. Professional associations might use these data to further refine and promote standards for preparation of professionals.

Prospective graduate students may also benefit from the knowledge of student affairs preparation programs provided by this study. The research provided students with data about the extent to which learning was reported based on the CAS standards. If differences arise, prospective students might use the data to aid in the selection of the preparation programs they choose to attend.

Another constituency for which the study might have significance is employers of recent graduates of preparation programs. The findings provide employers with data about the extent to which recent graduates reported learning about certain matters. Employers might use the data to supplement professional development in the areas where limited amounts of learning might have been reported. They could also use this information to focus their recruitment efforts towards the types of programs that might result in greater learning.

The study also had significance for future research. I measured the learning recent graduates reported based on the CAS standards, but included only graduates currently employed in student affairs. Future research could investigate the learning that occurred for those who are not employed in the field of student affairs. Such a study would help preparation program coordinators understand the impact of their programs on those graduates who pursue other careers.

Other future research might explore the curricula of preparation programs. This study measured how much recent graduates of preparation programs reported learning in their programs. A qualitative study of how programs are formed and how CAS standards are incorporated into curriculum design could provide insight into how the standards are employed in designing preparation programs.

Since this study measured the extent to which recent graduates reported learning based on the CAS standards, a qualitative study of how students perceive their graduate

preparation experience is another area for possible future research. Such research might provide a deeper understanding of students' experiences in preparation programs.

Finally, the study had significance for future policy. I measured reported learning outcomes of recent graduates in student affairs preparation programs. One group of policymakers for whom this has significance consists of student affairs preparation program coordinators. The data provided coordinators with information on how recent graduates reported learning based on certain criteria. These data could be used for curriculum review and for implementation in future curriculum development.

Another important implication for policy is for CAS itself. The study measured how much recent graduates of preparation programs reported learning based on the CAS standards. CAS can use the findings in assessing the standards it has established and can use them to promote selected standards.

Finally, a group for whom this study had significance is the potential employers of recent graduates from preparation programs. I assessed reported learning outcomes based on the foundation studies components of the CAS standards. Potential employers of alumni of student affairs preparation programs could use the data to develop policies concerning future employees based on their knowledge in areas identified by the CAS.

Limitations

As with all research, the study had inherent limitations. The first limitation related to the technique used to collect data for the study. I used a quantitative technique in surveying recent graduates. I selected and formulated the questions based on the framework set up by the Foundation Studies area of the CAS standards. Nonetheless, I might not have included all the items on the survey that were needed to adequately allow recent graduates to rate their learning. If this occurred, the results might have been skewed.

The second limitation related to the sample used to collect data for the study. Only those graduates currently employed in the field of student affairs were studied. These graduates might be the people who found higher levels of satisfaction with the field of student affairs, and might rate their learning higher. Conversely, there may be graduates who are unhappy with their current positions and might rate levels of understanding lower. If either of these occurred, the results might contain a level of bias.

A third limitation of this study also concerned the sample providing data for the study. Participants reported the extent to which they learned about certain elements of the CAS standards in their graduate preparation programs. These individuals could have reported high levels of learning to bolster the image of the program from which they graduated. This type of response could have skewed the results of this study.

Another limitation of this study related to the selection of participating institutions. The programs in the sample selection included only the preparation programs listed in the ACPA Directory of Graduate Preparation Programs Preparing Student Affairs Professionals. Programs not listed in this directory did not receive consideration for selection. The programs reporting to ACPA could be more likely to be concerned about adherence to CAS standards. This could have skewed the results of this study.

Finally, a limitation of this study concerned the programs selected for participation in the study. Participation was voluntary, and as such, not all programs responded to the request. If a program chose not to participate in the study, the learning outcomes of a large group of potential respondents would not be collected. If this occurred, there could be a bias in the data set.

Despite these limitations, the study was worthwhile. It provided information about the learning that occurs in graduate preparation programs based on the CAS standards, an area about which research has been limited.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized in five chapters. Chapter One introduced the purpose of the study, its research questions, and its significance. Chapter Two examines the literature available on preparation programs in student affairs, the CAS standards, and learning outcomes of graduate students. Chapter Three describes the methodology of the study, including the data collection and data analysis techniques. Chapter Four reports the results of the study. Chapter Five discusses those results and their implications for future practice, research and policy.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

To explore reported learning for alumni of preparation programs in student affairs, I first examined the literature on preparation programs in student affairs. Secondly, I examined the CAS standards and their proposed use. To understand the subject more fully, I examined the research on learning among graduate students. These three categories and their corresponding subtopics comprise the organization of this review of the literature.

Preparation Programs in Student Affairs

For student affairs as a profession to have well-trained professionals, graduate preparation programs have been developed. As I reviewed the literature on preparation programs in student affairs, two groups of studies emerged: (a) studies that described preparation programs and (b) articles that outlined standards for preparation programs.

Preparation Programs in Student Affairs

Student affairs preparation programs are varied in name and curriculum (Badders, 1998; Keim, 1991; Meaborn & Owens, 1983; Sandeen, 1982). An early study of student affairs preparation programs characterized them as lacking identity and still being connected to their counselor education roots (Meaborn & Owens, 1983). A more recent regional study of the differences in student affairs preparation programs gives a thumbnail sketch of the national picture. The results of a study of 39 institutions in the Southern Association for College Student Affairs (SACSA) highlight the many differences in program length, curriculum, types of master's degrees conferred, and names of degrees (Badders, 1998).

These differences persist and change over time has only been "moderate" (Keim, 1991). The number of part-time faculty associated with programs increased from the 1971 to 1986 time period, yet enrollment figures for students and the number of full-time faculty dropped during that same time period. An increasing number of women have entered programs. Women comprised 46% of graduates of master's programs in 1971 and 64% of graduates in 1986. Even more dramatic was the increase in the percentage of women as doctoral graduates. In 1971, 16% of graduates of doctoral programs were women and in 1986, 59% were women.

Among the descriptive studies of preparation programs, a study examined the campus attitude towards student affairs preparation programs. Program chairs, chief student affairs officers (CSAOs), and deans of education at 144 institutions that had a student affairs preparation program reported their perception of the campus attitude towards the preparation programs, their attitudes toward accreditation of the programs, and the body that should carry out accreditation (Ebbers & Kruempel, 1992). All three groups expressed favor with the student affairs preparation programs. Although the CSAOs favored accreditation, there was no agreement among the groups as to the question of who should be responsible for such accreditation. Ninety-one percent of CSAOs, 74% of the chairs, and 66% of the deans agreed that accreditation should be a joint venture between the professional organization and the program faculty, rather than the faculty or professional organization alone. The professional organizations mentioned most frequently by program chairs were CACREP (31 %) or ACPA (22%), while CSAOs most frequently chose NASPA (35%) or a new unspecified organization representing one or more professional associations (38%). No CSAO mentioned CACREP. Deans were not included in this question as most did not belong to a major student affairs professional organization. While there was not overwhelming evidence of the need for accreditation of preparation programs, the authors recommended that professional associations encourage programs to follow CAS standards to enhance the overall quality.

Standards for Preparation Programs

The call for a set of standards for preparation programs began in the middle of the 20th century. In the early 1950s, the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) Professional Standards Committee surveyed 33 preparation programs about their standards for admissions (Caple, 1998). By 1955, a committee of the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA) studied professional training, licensing, and certification. This study led to the 1961 publication of “Standards for the Preparation of School Counselors.”

In 1964 the Council of Student Personnel Associations in Higher Education (COSPA) prepared a set of standards for graduate preparation programs in student affairs. In 1967, COSPA revised that earlier work, and published the “Guidelines for Graduate Programs in the Preparation of Student Personnel Workers in Higher Education.” (Caple,

1998, McEwen & Talbot, 1998) Several other sets of minimal standards have been created to give preparation program coordinators guidelines to follow when designing and reviewing curricula.

For example, Miller (1970) outlined a list of “10 fundamental subject matter areas” for student affairs preparation programs. These fundamental areas included: (a) being introduced to the field in such a way to obtain a meaningful orientation to student personnel work, (b) obtaining a clear understanding of the contexts and foundations of higher education in America and elsewhere, (c) bridging the gaps between the academic disciplines and practical application to work with students, (d) learning the psychological and sociological bases of behavior and general characteristics of the college age student, (e) developing the human helping relationship concepts and attitudes essential to individuals in a helping profession, (f) obtaining a comprehensive grasp of research and evaluation, to understand their value and function for college student personnel, (g) understanding the basic principles and practices necessary to implement and coordinate student personnel programs, (h) becoming skillful in methods and approaches used by counselors and educators in working with students in formal and informal, group, and individual situations, (i) assimilating and integrating the theoretical with the practical by way of supervised practicum field work experience, and (j) having ample opportunity to obtain a grasp of certain of the specialized substantive areas of student personnel work. These standards were proposed with the purpose of educating future leaders of a professional calibre, rather than technicians or specialists. To give the students ample time and opportunity to assimilate and integrate the knowledge, skills, and attributes necessary, the set of standards suggested that programs should last at least two years, or four semesters (Miller, 1970).

Another set of standards for the graduate education of the student affairs professional emerged in the mid-80s (Brown, 1985). This graduate education model for the student development educator was developed as a result the perceived growth and variety of programs for aspiring student affairs professionals. This set of standards was designed as a plan for the long-term needs of student personnel administrators. This model for graduate preparation programs centered around three learning levels: (a) basic

knowledge, (b) knowledge of intervention/change strategies, and (c) experiential learning.

The first learning level, basic knowledge, focuses on knowledge and comprehension along three dimensions: self, students, and systems (Brown, 1985). Brown (1985) described basic knowledge of self by identifying competencies as self-assessment strategies, intellectual development, and interpersonal development. Knowledge of students includes learning theory, developmental theory, and vocational theory. An understanding of the systems includes organizational behavior, higher education history and philosophy, student affairs history and philosophy, and person-environment theory. The process goal for this learning level is program prescription blended with self-assessment and negotiation (Brown, 1985).

Learning level two seeks knowledge of intervention and change strategies, more specifically, application and analysis of ideas along each of the three dimensions (Brown, 1985). Key components of the dimension of the self are personal goal setting and personal change strategies. The dimension of knowledge of students describes knowledge of group counseling practices, one-to-one consulting, and instructional strategies. Examples of the competencies related to systems include management, consulting, and organization development. The process goal for the second learning level is mutual determination of needs and reality testing and feedback (Brown, 1985).

Experiential learning characterizes learning level three, with a focus on synthesis and evaluation (Brown, 1985). A mentoring relationship with the advisor is a key component of the dimension of self. Learning along the second dimension, students, includes teaching, program planning, and group work. An understanding of systems through experiential learning includes internship opportunities in consulting, evaluation, and research. At this level, the student integrates and evaluates concepts and models through testing them in professional contexts. Mutual respect for classmates and autonomy are process goals for this learning level (Brown, 1985). This set of standards was created as a guideline for existing graduate preparation programs to expand offerings or remodel current structures to form an integrated, functional, and theoretically congruent program.

Following these earlier cues, a formal set of standards and guidelines for student affairs preparation programs at the master's degree level was developed by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) in 1986 (McEwen & Talbot, 1998). CAS is a consortium of 34 professional organizations (CAS, 2003) whose concern is the promotion of quality in programs and services related to higher education. Since 1986, the CAS standards for graduate preparation programs have undergone several revisions, the last in 1997.

Even after the CAS standards for student affairs preparation programs emerged, studies have been done that suggest areas for further refinement in these standards. Researchers examined the extent to which values education is important, how values are taught formally and informally, and which values are being taught in student affairs master's degree programs (Young & Elfrink, 1991). Seventy-two student affairs professionals comprised the respondents to the survey. Of those who responded, 96 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the essential values of the field should be included in professional education and 85 percent thought that values education was as important as education about knowledge and skills for student affairs professionals. Thirty-two respondents were teaching in graduate programs at the time of the study, and 94 percent of them believed that they taught students about professional values. A total of 66% included values education in their formal lesson plans. Based on the study, the researchers devised a list of essential values in student affairs practice: (a) altruism, (b) equality, (c) aesthetics, (d) freedom, (e) human dignity, (f) justice, (g) truth, and (h) community. Given the apparent consensus of the respondents on the values of the field and, in particular, the importance of values education in student affairs preparation programs, the researchers called for professional associations, such as CAS, in to make values education an important part of the student affairs curriculum.

As preparation programs in student affairs have developed, standards for the education of the graduate students enrolled in these programs have been proposed and implemented to varying degrees. CAS has outlined a comprehensive set of standards for programs in student affairs, including master's level student affairs preparation programs. To understand the scope and impact of the CAS standards in student affairs, it is important to study their design and use.

CAS Standards

CAS was chartered as the Council for the Advancement of Standards for Student Services/Development Programs in 1980 to bring about the important professional changes in the field of student affairs and related educational endeavors (Miller, 1984). CAS was established as a direct result of several professional associations' dissatisfaction with a specific set of standards to guide preparation and practice. The original purposes of CAS included: (a) to improve and advance student services, developmental programs, and educational opportunities in institutions of higher education, (b) to promote cooperative interassociation efforts to improve the quality of services offered to students by establishing, adopting, and recommending standards for preparing professionals for these fields, (c) to encourage accreditation agencies to use standards for student services and developmental programs, (d) to provide professional standards and consultation to assist institutions of higher education in the evaluation and improvement of their student services and developmental programs, and (e) to increase awareness of the importance of professional standards and developmental programs and activities (CAS, 1980).

To fulfill these purposes, CAS published, in 1986, a comprehensive set of standards and guidelines for student services and development programs. These standards and guidelines addressed 17 functional areas in student affairs (CAS, 1986). These areas included in the CAS standards were: (a) general standards, (b) academic advising, (c) career planning and placement, (d) college unions, (e) commuter student programs and services, (f) counseling services, (g) disabled student services, (h) fraternity and sorority advising, (i) housing and residential life programs, (j) judicial programs and services, (k) learning assistance programs, (l) minority student programs and services, (m) recreational sports, (n) religious programs, (o) research and evaluation, (p) student activities, (q) student orientation programs, and (r) preparation standards at the master's degree level for student services professionals in postsecondary education.

The literature has since addressed potential use and implementation of these standards in practice and professional preparation. In an introduction to an article highlighting the standards for commuter student programs, the authors explain how to interpret the standards (Jacoby & Thomas, 1986). The authors begin by describing the CAS standards as probably the most important professional statements of purpose that

have evolved in student affairs. They explain that the standards represent the best and most current thinking of leaders in the field, that the standards can be used to aid institutions undergoing regional accreditation, that the standards are essential components of acceptable practice, that no particular structure is mandated, and that the standards and guidelines apply to all types of postsecondary institutions.

Paterson and Carpenter (1989), in a discussion of the emerging student affairs profession, refer to the completion of the CAS standards as a major step toward becoming a profession. While this is an important first step, they contend that to become a profession, formal and informal standards must exist. These standards would address entry into the profession, and provide minimally acceptable levels of professional practice. They suggest that CAS or one of the major professional organizations, such as ACPA or the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, should create some sort of accreditation process for student affairs preparation programs.

In 1991, New Directions for Student Services published a volume, *Using Professional Standards in Student Affairs*, designed to assist student affairs professionals in becoming more knowledgeable about professional standards, particularly the CAS standards (Bryan, Winston, & Miller, 1991). The volume consists of six chapters and addresses the concept and application of CAS and other professional standards. Chapter one explores professional standards and their relation to accreditation, credentialing and other regulatory functions (Mable, 1991). It contains a history of the development of the student affairs profession and the adoption of a set of professional standards in the field. A description of the development of the CAS standards follows this history.

The second chapter addresses the use and value of standards and interpretive guidelines as the basis of self-studies throughout an institution's accreditation process (Jacoby & Thomas, 1991). The authors provide specific examples of the use of standards in the accreditation process and then review potential issues that come with the use of standards.

In chapter three, the operationalization of the CAS standards for monitoring performance and improving student services programs is the focus (Bryan & Mullendore, 1991). The chapter includes strategies for using the standards as program planning tools

within student affairs departments. An annual program review based on the CAS standards serves as an example as how the standards can be operationalized.

Chapter four is both a description and a critique of the CAS standards for professional preparation at the master's level (Miller, 1991). It focuses on the three tracts contained in the CAS standards at the time: (a) administrative, (b) counseling, and (c) developmental. The accreditation process for academic programs receives attention as well as the educational value of statements of ethical standards of professional practice, although the chapter's primary focus is on standards for professional preparation.

Outcomes assessment in student affairs is the topic of chapter five, and a model for conceptualizing such an assessment is presented (Winston & Moore, 1991). Outcomes assessment using the CAS standards is the main focus, while issues surrounding the methodology surrounding such assessments receive attention. The authors present a selection of instruments and techniques that may be useful in conducting outcomes assessment.

The sixth and final chapter highlights the varied uses of the CAS standards at seven colleges and universities (Marron, 1991). Issues and successes in their implementation form the descriptions of each institutional case study. In all cases, the CAS standards were employed in diverse and creative manners, to the benefit of each institution.

The impact that the CAS standards has had on student affairs has also been assessed through empirical research. One hundred fifty CSAOs nationwide completed a survey designed to assess the impact the CAS standards on their campuses (Mann, Gordon, & Strode, 1991). Over half of all respondents reported that they were not using them; 16% reported that they were not aware of the standards. Of those institutions reporting the use of the CAS standards, the majority of respondents reported little or no perceived change as a result of the use of the CAS standards.

Further research resulted in a study of CSAOs and their perception of the importance of the orientation standards of the CAS standards. CSAOs widely agreed on the importance of the orientation standards set forth by CAS (Nadler & Miller, 1997). One hundred five CSAOs rated their agreement with each of the 18 "must statements" in the orientation standards on a 1-to-5 Likert-type scale, 5 indicating, "strongly agree."

Fifteen statements achieved a group mean rating of 4.0 or higher and were rated as strongly agree or agree by at least 80% of the respondents.

In a more recent study of the perceived importance of CAS standards, 108 student affairs practitioners and members of the Southern Association for College Student Affairs (SACSA) responded to a questionnaire based on the CAS general standards (Cooper & Saunders, 2000). The questionnaire assessed the perceived importance of each of the “must statements” in the general standards section of the CAS standards. Respondents also reported whether they felt they had the knowledge and training necessary to address successfully the issues covered in each standard. Results showed that all the items were of some importance as means ranged from 3.42 (SD=1.21) to 4.61 (SD=0.79) out of 5. None of the areas pointed to perceived training needs, as the means ranged from 3.38 (SD=1.10) to 4.70 (SD=.70).

Research using the CAS standards for professional preparation at the master’s level came soon after the original publication of those standards. The curriculum of the master’s program in student services at the University of Arizona was compared with the newly-formed CAS standards (Von Destinon, 1986). Results showed that the masters program offered coursework in each of the areas. The study also compared the development of the standards to the Conrad and Pratt curricular decision making process. This process consists of curriculum design around three areas: societal factors, institutional characteristics, and student culture. Results indicated that the procedural method of development and implementation of the CAS standards was appropriate according to this model.

Since the original CAS standards were developed in 1986, the latest edition (2001) of *The Book of Professional Standards for Higher Education*, referred to generically as the “CAS blue book,” represents the fourth iteration of professional standards generated and promulgated by CAS (CAS, 2001). This latest version of the CAS standards contains 28 functional area standards: (a) academic advising, (b) admission programs, (c) alcohol & other drug programs, (d) campus activities, (e) campus information and visitor services, (f) career services, (g) college health programs, (h) college unions, (i) commuter student programs, (j) counseling services, (k) disability support services, (l) educational services for distance learners, (m) financial aid

programs, (n) fraternity & sorority advising, (o) housing & residential life programs, (p) international student programs & services, (q) judicial programs, (r) learning assistance programs, (s) lesbian, gay, bisexual, & transgender programs, (t) masters level student affairs administration preparation programs, (u) minority student programs, (v) outcomes assessment & program evaluation, (w) recreational sports programs, (x) registrar programs & services, (y) religious programs, (z) student leadership programs, (aa) student orientation programs, and (bb) TRIO and other educational opportunity programs.

The standards for student affairs preparation programs have gone through revisions, the latest in 1997. The latest revision of the CAS standards for master's level preparation programs in student affairs outline 10 requirements for programs in general: (a) mission and objectives, (b) recruitment and admission, (c) curriculum policies, (d) curriculum requirements, (e) foundation studies, (f) professional studies, (g) supervised practice curriculum, (h) equal opportunity, access, and affirmative action, (i) academic and student support, and (j) professional ethics (CAS, 1998). These standards also go into more detail, outlining more specific criteria for what key aspects the curriculum should include.

Learning Among Graduate Students

Graduate students continue their studies beyond the baccalaureate to acquire the additional knowledge that they will need to pursue their chosen careers. In this section, I arranged information on learning by graduate students into two categories: (a) learning outcomes of graduate students in fields other than student affairs programs and (b) learning outcomes of graduate students in student affairs preparation programs.

Graduate Students in Fields other than Student Affairs

Studies done on graduate students in fields other than student affairs have identified several factors that influence their learning. One of these factors is group or cohort cohesiveness (Maher, 2001; Wesson, et al., 1996). Students in a master's of education program reported learning in the cohort was associated with stress; conflict and cohesion were part of the learning experience (Maher, 2001). After five months in the program, however, student learning was characterized by shared understandings. After 10 months in the program, increased peer interaction, feedback discourse, and different

perspectives were important to participants. Stress and small group participation were important aspects of the learning process throughout the duration of the program.

Seven doctoral students in education related their collective experience through their comprehensive exam (Abbey, et al., 1997). The research takes the shape of a “phenomenological study” (Abbey, et al., 1997, p. 102) wherein interpretations of the lived experiences of the participants relate to their collaborative work together. These seven students transformed a potentially disempowering comprehensive examination into a process that led to emancipatory knowledge and transformational experience. The group met regularly over a period of a year and a half to study for the comprehensive examination. After they had all written these comprehensives, they came together to ask why they kept meeting, and what impact that had on their ability to pass. They concluded that the ability to come together as a group helped them understand diverse points of view and highlighted the importance of a collaborative process. These conclusions sprung from grounded theory analysis and led to the emergence of four elements of collaboration: (a) logistics, (b) social dynamics, (c) empowerment, and (d) change. The collaborative process had implications for academic administrators and challenged them to examine current policies to ascertain the extent that they encourage personal autonomy and cooperative learning approaches.

A cohort of doctoral students in an educational leadership program reported learning outcomes linked to the cohesion or collusion of the cohort (Wesson, et al., 1996). Four cohorts containing 10 to 15 doctoral candidates in an educational administrator training program made up the sample. Each year, members of the cohort received an evaluation in which they assessed the quality of the program and their experience in the cohort. Combined with this, each doctoral candidate reported opinions and free associations in a one-time interview. Results came from emergent theme encoding.

Cohort cohesion enhanced learning outcomes, marked by higher levels of mental processing and new ways of constructing knowledge (Wesson, et al., 1996). Group collusion shut down learning when a group chose to collude as a way to achieve some sort of closure on group dissonance. For example, some students colluded by not participating in group projects while others adopted the converse by doing extra work for

and on behalf of other group members rather than holding them accountable. This inappropriate closure to dissonance created unfavorable learning environments among these doctoral candidates.

While learning has been observed among graduate students in groups, studies have also been conducted to give students an opportunity to report the amount of their learning. To make sense of what students might report, these surveys have been based on existing standards or theories.

Researchers examined the correlation between principles of adult learning and adult education methodology among graduate students enrolled in a course on principles of adult education (DeCoux, Rachal, Leonard, & Pierce, 1992). One hundred eleven graduate adult education students responded to three surveys designed to evaluate educational principles, educational philosophy, and educational orientation of the participants. The surveys were the Principles of Adult Learning Scale (PALS), Educational Orientation Questionnaire (EOQ), and Philosophy of Adult Education Inventory (PAEI). Correlation tests were run within the differing scales of the instruments. The PALS examines educational philosophy by examining one's congruence with adult learning principles. The approach of the PALS focuses on the adult learner as a full partner in the learning experience. The EOQ measures adult educators' positions on the continuum from pedagogy to andragogy. Four major assumptions about adult learners underscore andragogy: (a) as individuals mature, their self-concept moves from that of a dependent personality toward that of a self-directed human being, (b) adults accumulate a growing reservoir of experience which is a rich resource for learning, (c) adults' readiness to learn is closely related to the developmental tasks of their social roles, and (d) with maturity, there is a change in time perspective, from one of future application of knowledge to immediacy of application, turning adults' orientation from subject-centered to problem-centered (DeCoux, Rachal, Leonard, & Pierce, 1992). The PAEI examines philosophical orientation relative to adult education practice. Results of the study indicated a strong correlation between the PALS and the EOQ; congruence with principles of adult learning suggests an andragogical inclination.

Graduate Students in Student Affairs

Learning outcomes of graduate students in student affairs preparation programs have been based on studies that use various sources of data to assess outcomes. One way students in these programs have identified their learning outcomes is through course evaluations. Master's students in a student affairs preparation program who were enrolled in a graduate course on ethics and inquiry in higher education reported that they viewed the course as a valued addition to the curriculum (Harrow & Mann, 1996). When asked to assess the course the students responded that they felt like they were allowed to engage in open, honest dialogue. They noted that class debates and working in teams stimulated new ways of thinking and that the course was very thought-provoking.

Further research assessed learning outcomes of recent graduates from student affairs preparation programs by asking CSAOs, directors of housing and faculty from these programs to rate graduates' learning (Hyman, 1985). Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which recent graduates had the competencies in the five areas outlined in the Tomorrow's Higher Education (THE) model. The response sample included 91 CSAOs, 94 directors of housing, and 75 faculty. Results showed that there were significant differences between the faculty and each of the other two groups' perceptions of possessed competencies in the five areas of the THE. The faculty rated the possession of competencies significantly higher than did either CSAOs or directors of housing.

Another way to measure graduate students' reported learning is to use an instrument specifically designed to assess certain aspects of their learning experience. One such study based its learning outcomes on the Survey of Graduate Student Interracial Experiences (SGSIE) (McEwen & Roper, 1994). This instrument was designed to gather information regarding students' racial experiences in their preparation program in student affairs. Respondents included 453 master's degree students from 28 student affairs preparation programs. They answered 12 questions regarding their background experiences related to persons of color. Most (93.8%) had attended predominantly white institutions for their undergraduate degrees. While the large majority reported at least some interaction with persons of color, approximately 10 percent indicated that they had very little or no experience working with students of color. The Interracial Knowledge section of the survey instrument asked participants to rate how they felt about their

knowledge of the needs of students of color, how they had acquired information of other races and cultures, how they would learn best about other races, and how they believed graduate students should gain information about other races, as well as 24 concepts, books, and kinds of knowledge related to interracial understandings. Results indicated that 31 percent of respondents felt comfortable with their knowledge, while 61.8 percent felt in need of more knowledge. They reported having gained their information through a variety of sources, including personal experiences (94.7%), classroom learning (64.5%), self-teaching (61.8%), workshops (53.2%), and professional conferences (35.3%). Most respondents (79.8%) indicated that learning about other races occurred through direct interaction with people of other races. Black students' knowledge was significantly higher than that of white students of the 24 concepts, books, and knowledge related to interracial understandings.

Forney (1994) studied master's students in student affairs preparation programs. Graduate students responded to Kolb's Learning Style Inventory (LSI). This instrument consists of 12 items related to learning in which respondents are asked to rank four responses based on how they believe they learn best. Each of the four responses represents one of the learning modes described in Kolb's theory of experiential learning: (a) accommodative, (b) assimilative, (c) divergent, and (d) convergent (as cited in Forney, 1994). Participants included graduate students enrolled in 16 randomly selected student affairs preparation programs that had more than 10 students and required more than a year to complete. The modal learning style was that of accommodator, a style characterized by concrete experience and active experimentation while the least represented was that of assimilator, a style characterized by reflective observation and abstract conceptualization.

In summary, a wide assortment of student affairs preparation programs exists (Badders, 1998; Ebbers & Kruempel, 1992; Keim, 1991; Meaborn & Owens, 1983; Sandeen, 1982). Along side this variety in programs, a movement to establish common standards for these programs has persisted (Caple, 1998; McEwen & Talbot, 1998; Young & Elfrink, 1991; Brown, 1985; Miller, 1970). CAS has outlined standards for many student services programs and their proposed use (Cooper, 2000; Nadler & Miller, 1997; Bryan, Winston, & Miller, 1991; Mable, 1991; Jacoby & Thomas, 1991; Bryan &

Mullendore, 1991; Miller, 1991; Winston & Moore, 1991; Marron, 1991; Mann, Gordon, & Strode, 1991; Paterson & Carpenter, 1989; CAS, 1986; Jacoby & Thomas, 1986; Miller, 1984; CAS, 1980) including preparation programs in student affairs (CAS, 1998; Miller, 1991; Von Destinon, 1986). Graduate students report positive learning outcomes in many fields (Abbey, et al., 1997; DeCoux, Rachal, Leonard, & Pierce, 1992; Maher, 2001; Wesson, et al., 1996), including certain aspects of student affairs (Harrow & Mann, 1996; Forney, 1994; McEwen & Roper, 1994; Hyman, 1985). Studies show positive correlations between theories and learning outcomes (Harrow & Mann, 1996; DeCoux, Rachal, Leonard, & Pierce, 1992; Forney, 1994; McEwen & Roper, 1994; Hyman, 1985). There is limited information available on graduate students in student affairs preparation programs and their learning outcomes based on the CAS standards. This study addressed that gap in the literature.

Chapter Three

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to measure the degree to which recent graduates in the student affairs reported learning about the foundational areas in their professional preparation program. The study examined learning based on standards for graduate preparation programs as defined by the CAS standards. The CAS standards outline foundational criteria that master's degree program curricula should address in the Foundation Studies area.

Participants reported learning about foundational studies in their graduate preparation programs by responding to a questionnaire designed by the researcher. I distributed questionnaires to those who had graduated within two years of the data collection period. Specifically, the questionnaire was designed to address the following research questions:

1. To what extent do recent graduates of student affairs preparation programs report learning based on the Foundation Studies area of the CAS standards?
2. What differences are there in reported learning based on programs' adherence to the CAS standards (compliant v. non-compliant)?

Instrument Development

This instrument's validity was enhanced through its development. When administering an instrument, standard research practice requires reporting the validity and reliability of that instrument. Validity in quantitative research refers to the appropriateness and usefulness of the inferences made from test scores. It determines the level to which the instrument measures what it was designed to measure. Validity is how well the measures of the instrument define a concept (Creswell, 1994).

The first step of the development of the instrument was through focus groups. These focus groups were comprised of current master's degree students in a CAS compliant program. Group members identified learning outcomes in each of the six criteria in the Foundation Studies section of the CAS standards. The two resulting focus groups generated outcomes. After generating them, they reviewed and revised the proposed outcomes. The focus groups generated 94 total items for all of the criteria

areas. The number of items in each area ranged from 12 (Sociological Foundations) to 20 (Psychological Foundations).

Secondly, I asked a panel of experts to review the learning outcomes generated by the focus groups and to provide feedback on how to improve them. The experts were all current faculty, full-time and adjunct, in a CAS compliant student affairs preparation program. I asked the experts to identify the 10 items that best represented each of the criteria areas, based on which items they deemed most important as foundational learning outcomes in a student affairs preparation program. Also, experts refined learning outcomes and suggested new ones if they were unable to identify 10 from the original list. I recorded the items the experts identified as the most important. Using this information, I reduced the number of items in each criteria area to 10. This expert review enhanced the face validity of the instrument.

Reliability in quantitative research indicates the extent to which an instrument measures similar phenomena regardless of time or population. If a high degree of reliability is present, multiple measures will be consistent in their values (Creswell, 1994).

Reliability for this instrument was established by running an alpha coefficient on the data set after it was collected. Other measures of reliability on this instrument were not available at the time it was administered.

Instrumentation

I collected the data for the present study by administering an online instrument based on the Preparation Program Standards for Student Affairs in Higher Education Standards and Guidelines Self-Assessment Guide (SAG) published by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). The guidelines outline 11 components that a preparation program should contain. The component that addresses foundational areas in the curriculum is the Foundational Studies area. This area of the curriculum served as the basis for the survey instrument.

The instrument contained two sections. The first was a demographic section containing seven items that gathered information about the participants and the programs they attended. The second section of the instrument contained the questions based on the

Foundation Studies area of the CAS standards. The Foundation Studies section of the instrument contained 60 items.

The first section was a demographic section in which the participants were asked to report background information. The section contained the following: name of institution from which they graduated, year of graduation, completion of degree requirements (completed or not completed), age, sex, race, and current employment (employed in student affairs or not employed in student affairs). This information was used to sort responses for analysis.

The second section of the survey instrument contained six areas that were based on the six criteria found in the Foundation Studies section of the SAG. Respondents were asked to report learning based on the assessment criteria found in the SAG. The six criteria were: (a) historical foundations, (b) philosophical foundations, (c) psychological foundations, (d) cultural foundations, (e) sociological foundations, and (f) research foundations.

The first area was the historical foundations area. It contained 10 items that elicited responses on the history of higher education and student affairs. For instance, one item asked respondents if they had a clear understanding of the origin of higher education in the United States while another asked if respondents had a clear understanding of the origin and evolution of student affairs in American higher education.

The second area was the philosophical foundations area. This area contained 10 items that elicited responses on the philosophical foundations of student affairs in higher education. One item asked respondents if they had a clear understanding of the major guiding documents of student affairs. Another item asked respondents if they had a clear understanding of their own personal educational philosophy.

Third, the psychological foundations area contained 10 items that elicited responses regarding the psychological foundations of student affairs. For example, one item asked the respondent to rate the extent to which he or she had a clear understanding of student development theory while another asked the respondent to rate the extent to which he or she had a clear understanding of how to bring about developmental change.

The fourth area was the cultural foundations area. It contained 10 items that elicited responses on the cultural context of higher education and student affairs. For instance, one item asked respondents if they had a clear understanding of how the historical role of access contributes to the culture of an institution while another asked if respondents had a clear understanding of the historical context of multiculturalism in American higher education.

The fifth area was the sociological foundations area. This area contained 10 items that elicited responses on the sociological foundations of student affairs in higher education. One item asked respondents if they had a clear understanding of group theory. Another item asked respondents if they had a clear understanding of supervisory and administrative practices.

Sixth, and finally, the research foundations area contained 10 items that elicited responses regarding the research foundations in higher education and student affairs. For example, one item asked the respondent to rate the extent to which he or she had a clear understanding of the differences between the different research paradigms while another asked the respondent to rate the extent to which he or she had a clear understanding of how to write a review of the literature.

Throughout this second section of the inventory, participants rated items on a Likert-type scale with responses ranging from 1 to 4. A response of 1 indicated that the statement was not true, while a response of 4 indicated the statement was very true. For each of the items, the participants assessed the degree to which their graduate preparation program had influenced their understanding of the learning outcome addressed in the item. A copy of the instrument used in the study can be found in Appendix A.

Sample Selection

A convenience sample was used in collecting the data. Data were collected from recent graduates of student affairs preparation programs who were employed in student affairs at the time the data were collected.

First, the ACPA Directory of Graduate Programs Preparing Student Affairs Professionals (ACPA, 2002) was consulted to obtain a list of preparation programs in student affairs. Using the information in this list, I was able to sort each of the 98 schools into two groups: CAS compliant v. non compliant. According to the Preparation

Program Standards for Student Affairs Professionals (CAS, 1998), student affairs preparation programs must have one full-time faculty member dedicating 100% of his or her time to the program, and the equivalent of one other full-time faculty member. Programs also must require two separate practical experiences totaling a minimum of 300 hours. These were the two selection criteria for inclusion in the CAS compliant category. Other criteria did not receive inclusion for selection, as these two criteria were the most objective and rigorous given the information available on the Internet. I gathered this information from the ACPA directory or, if the information was not available, the program's web site.

After separating programs into two lists, CAS compliant and non-CAS compliant, I assigned each preparation program a number. I used this numbering system to randomly select 10 preparation programs from each of the two lists. I entered each number range into SPSS and used the random number selection function to randomly select 10 numbers from each of the number ranges of the two CAS compliance lists. The numbers that SPSS generated corresponded to preparation programs on each list. This resulted in 10 random numbers that determined the 10 preparation programs from each list and generated the two new lists: one containing 10 programs that were CAS compliant and the other containing 10 programs that were non-compliant.

Using the ACPA Directory of Graduate Programs Preparing Student Affairs Professionals (ACPA, 2003), I located the contact information for each of the preparation programs in each of the new lists. I called each of the contact people and explained the study, asking them if they would be willing to participate. Participation included sending a series of three e-mails to recent graduates from their program from the past two years. Also included, as a condition of participation, was the release of the number of individuals to whom the program contact person would send the e-mail. I used this information to determine initial sample size and to calculate the response rate.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection consisted of several steps. First, I sought permission to conduct the study from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at my home institution. Upon approval from the IRB, data collection commenced.

I prepared an explanatory e-mail for each preparation program contact person's use to send to the recent graduates of the program. The e-mail contained an introductory message explaining and endorsing the study. Recent graduates were alumni who graduated within two years of the time of data collection. I prepared the e-mail message and forwarded it to the contact person, who then used it to contact alumni from the selected graduate preparation programs.

I designed the survey as an online instrument, and the preparation program contact person via e-mail contacted respondents. When the contact person sent the e-mail to the participants, they received the URL to the online survey. Alumni received a follow-up e-mail from the program contact person, serving as reminders as to the timeline of the data collection process. I sent the original introductory e-mail message on February 1, 2004. The data collection period for each program lasted a month from the date the program contact person received the introductory e-mail. The data collection period ended on May 1, 2004.

Data Analysis Procedures

Once data were collected, I began to analyze the data. I entered them for analysis into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

The first research question that this study sought to answer was the reported amount of learning by recent graduates of student affairs preparation programs. I ran a frequency distribution of the scores, reporting the percentage of respondents that either agreed or disagreed with each learning outcome. This distribution of responses for the second section of the instrument identified how alumni reported learning about the foundational studies in their graduate preparation programs.

The second research question looked to determine if there were differences in reported learning based on program type (CAS compliant or non-CAS compliant). I sorted the data into two groups: CAS compliant and non-compliant. Next, I collapsed the data set by combining all responses that represented agreement (Strongly Agree and Agree) among the responses and all responses that represented disagreement (Strongly Disagree and Disagree). I then ran chi-square tests to determine if there were any significant differences in reported learning between the groups.

In conclusion, I administered a 67-item questionnaire to recent graduates from student affairs preparation programs. I analyzed the results to examine potential differences based on adherence to CAS standards. The methodology described in this chapter was deemed sufficient to enable me to answer the research questions posed in this study.

Chapter Four

Results

The purpose of this chapter is to report the findings of the study. The chapter begins by describing changes to the data collection procedures. A description of the sample follows. Finally, the data analyses, which are organized around the two research questions presented in this study, are reported.

Changes in Data Collection Procedure

There were changes in the data collection procedure from that which was outlined in Chapter Three. The present study relied on voluntary cooperation from the program coordinators of the student affairs preparation programs contacted for participation. The matched sample generated 10 CAS compliant and 10 non-compliant schools marked for inclusion in the study. After contacting the matched sample, only five programs agreed to participate in the study. I determined, based on the limited success of the initial contact, that to reach the number of respondents necessary for the study to have significance, all 98 programs listed in the ACPA directory would be contacted and invited to participate. Due to the involvement of Virginia Tech master's candidates in the development of the instrument, I excluded that program.

It is also important to note that the number of programs that participated in the study was far less than anticipated. I sought to include 20 programs, 10 CAS compliant and 10 non-CAS compliant, in the study. After contacting every program in the ACPA Directory, only 13 preparation programs consented and followed through with the data collection procedures. In many cases, the inability of a program to participate was due to the lack of a list of alumni e-mails. In other instances, preparation programs were very recently developed, and thereby had yet to graduate alumni. Yet another reason for failure of a program to participate resulted from some programs administering some other assessment to their alumni. These programs were unwilling to send along another survey instrument to their alumni as not to overtax them in this manner. Additionally, a number of programs agreed to participate in the data collection, but the contact person from the student affairs preparation program failed to forward the introductory e-mail along to the program's alumni. Finally, some programs did not participate due to incorrect contact information contained either on the ACPA directory or on the program's web site. As a

result, fewer preparation programs participated, a fact that may have had an effect on the results of the study.

Description of the Sample

A total of 98 student affairs preparation programs were listed in the ACPA directory. The final sample included 13 programs, representing 13.3% of the potential participating programs. Those 13 programs included four non-compliant programs and nine CAS compliant programs. A description of participant programs using information gathered from the ACPA Directory of Graduate Programs Preparing Student Affairs Professionals follows.

Non-compliant Programs

Institution 1 enrolls 42 first and second year master's candidates, 98% of which attend full-time. The curriculum requires one practical experience for completion of the program of study. The faculty includes two professors that dedicate 100% of their time to the program. This institution is not compliant with the CAS Standards for master's level student affairs preparation programs.

Sixty master's candidates comprise enrollment for Institution 2, 67% of which attend full-time. The curriculum requires one practical experience for completion of the program of study. The faculty includes two professors that dedicate 100% of their time to the program and the equivalent time of one additional faculty member. This institution is not compliant with the CAS Standards for master's level student affairs preparation programs.

Institution 3 enrolls 30 master's candidates, 73% of which attend full-time. The curriculum requires one practical experience for completion of the program of study. The faculty includes no full-time professors dedicating 100% of their time to student affairs, but includes the equivalent of four full-time faculty members. This institution is not compliant with the CAS Standards for master's level student affairs preparation programs.

Thirty master's candidates comprise enrollment for Institution 4, 75% of which attend full-time. The curriculum requires one practical experience for completion of the program of study. The faculty includes no full-time professors dedicating 100% of their time to student affairs, but includes the equivalent of 2 full-time faculty members. This

institution is not compliant with the CAS Standards for master's level student affairs preparation programs.

Compliant Programs

Institution 5 enrolls 34 first and second year master's candidates, 95% of which attend full-time. The curriculum requires two practical experiences for completion of the program of study. The faculty includes two full-time professors dedicating 100% of their time to student affairs. This institution is in compliance with the CAS Standards for master's level student affairs preparation programs.

Thirty-eight master's candidates comprise enrollment for Institution 6, 80% of which attend full-time. The curriculum requires two practical experiences for completion of the program of study. The faculty includes two full-time professors dedicating 100% of their time to student affairs and the equivalent of one other full-time faculty member. This institution is in compliance with the CAS Standards for master's level student affairs preparation programs.

Institution 7 enrolls 62 master's candidates, 82% of which attend full-time. The curriculum requires two practical experiences for completion of the program of study. The faculty includes five full-time professors dedicating 100% of their time to student affairs as well as the equivalent of two additional full-time faculty members. This institution is in compliance with the CAS Standards for master's level student affairs preparation programs.

Forty-eight master's candidates comprise enrollment for Institution 8 each year, 93% of which attend full-time. The curriculum requires four practical experiences for completion of the program of study. The faculty includes three full-time professors dedicating 100% of their time to student affairs and the equivalent of one additional full-time faculty member. This institution is in compliance with the CAS Standards for master's level student affairs preparation programs.

Institution 9 enrolls 28 master's candidates each year, 54% of which attend full-time. The curriculum requires two practical experiences for completion of the program of study. The faculty includes two full-time professors dedicating 100% of their time to student affairs in addition to the equivalent of one other full-time faculty. This institution

is in compliance with the CAS Standards for master's level student affairs preparation programs.

One hundred three master's candidates comprise enrollment for Institution 10 each year, 76% of which attend full-time. The curriculum requires two practical experiences for completion of the program of study. The faculty includes five full-time professors dedicating 100% of their time to student affairs in addition the equivalent of one full-time faculty member. This institution is in compliance with the CAS Standards for master's level student affairs preparation programs.

Institution 11 enrolls 47 master's candidates each year, 75% of which attend full-time. The curriculum requires two practical experiences for completion of the program of study. The faculty includes three professors dedicating 100% of their time to student affairs as well as the equivalent of one additional faculty. This institution is in compliance with the CAS Standards for master's level student affairs preparation programs.

Forty-three master's candidates comprise enrollment for Institution 12 each year, 95% of which attend full-time. The curriculum requires two practical experiences for completion of the program of study. The faculty includes two full-time professors dedicating 100% of their time to student affairs. This institution is in compliance with the CAS Standards for master's level student affairs preparation programs.

Institution 13 enrolls 50 master's candidates each year, 60% of which attend full-time. The curriculum requires two practical experiences for completion of the program of study. The faculty includes two full-time professors dedicating 100% of their time to student affairs along with the equivalent of two full-time professors. This institution is in compliance with the CAS Standards for master's level student affairs preparation programs.

A total of 191 respondents completed the survey instrument. This represented 36.2% of the 527 alumni to whom the e-mails were sent. Of the respondents, 153 were graduates from 2002 or 2003. Of those respondents, 92 (60.1%) were from CAS compliant schools and 61 (39.9%) were alumni from non-compliant schools. Table 1 shows the frequency distribution of respondents broken down by number of respondents from each institution.

Table 1

Frequency distribution of respondents to the CAS Foundation Studies Instrument by institution (N=153)

Institution	Number of Respondents n (%)
Institution 1	21 (3.7)
Institution 2	19 (12.4)
Institution 3	11 (7.2)
Institution 4	10 (6.5)
Institution 5	6 (3.9)
Institution 6	3 (2.0)
Institution 7	15 (9.8)
Institution 8	13 (8.5)
Institution 9	5 (3.3)
Institution 10	15 (9.8)
Institution 11	2 (1.3)
Institution 12	30 (19.6)
Institution 13	3 (2.0)
Total	153 (100.0)

Reliability

I evaluated the reliability of the foundation studies survey instrument by calculating a coefficient of internal consistency on the data set collected. The Chronbach's Alpha for the instrument was 0.98.

Results Reported by Research Questions

The following section describes the results of the study. The results are organized around the two research questions presented in this study. Because the study focused on reported learning from alumni who had graduated within two years of the time the survey was administered, results from respondents who reported graduation in any year other than 2002 or 2003 were discarded during analysis.

Results Regarding Reported Learning

The first research question in the study sought to identify the extent to which recent graduates of student affairs preparation programs report learning based on the Foundation Studies area of the CAS standards. Frequencies were calculated and used to address the question. The results of the frequency counts are shown in Table 2. The table includes the number of participants who responded to each item and the percentage of that subgroup that the number represents. A summary of the five highest and five lowest percentages follows.

Four items scored 94.5% agreement. The first was item two on the Historical Foundations section. This item focused on the origin and evolution of student affairs in American higher education. Of the 153 respondents, 146 (95.4%) reported to have a clear understanding of this concept.

Item three on the Historical Foundations section also shared the highest percentage. This question was about the evolution of higher education in the US. Of the 153 respondents, 146 (95.4%) indicated they had a clear understanding of this concept.

Item five on the Psychological Foundations section was another item with which respondents agreed most. This question focused on the factors that influence college student behavior. Of the 152 alumni, 145 (95.4%) indicated that they understood the factors that influence college student behavior.

Item one on the Cultural Foundations section was the final item, which shared the highest percentage. This question was about the meaning of "institutional climate." Of

Table 2

Frequency distribution of responses of the CAS Foundation Studies Instrument (N=153)

Section and item	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)
Historical Foundations		
1. I have a clear understanding of the origin of higher education in the US.	144 (94.1)	9 (5.9)
2. I have a clear understanding of the origin and evolution of student affairs in American higher education.	146 (95.4)	7 (4.6)
3. I have a clear understanding of the evolution of higher education in the US.	146 (95.4)	7 (4.6)
4. I have a clear understanding of the effects <i>in loco parentis</i> has had in the history of American higher education.	144 (94.1)	9 (5.9)
5. I have a clear understanding of the historical role of access in American higher education.	137 (89.5)	16 (10.5)
6. I have a clear understanding of the historical role of accountability in American higher education.	115 (76.2)	36 (23.8)
7. I have a clear understanding of the effects research has had on higher education.	132 (86.8)	20 (13.2)
8. I have a clear understanding of the Carnegie classification system of American higher education.	86 (56.2)	67 (43.8)
9. I have a clear understanding of the effects of major pieces of legislation on American higher education.	128 (84.2)	24 (15.8)
10. I have a clear understanding of the effects major social movements have had on higher education.	134 (87.6)	19 (12.4)

Table 2 (Continued)

Frequency distribution of responses of the CAS Foundation Studies Instrument (N=153)

Section and item	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)
Philosophical Foundations		
1. I have a clear understanding of the holistic approach to student development.	140 (91.5)	13 (8.5)
2. I have a clear understanding of the value of personal ethics in professional practice.	145 (94.8)	8 (5.2)
3. I have a clear understanding of the ethical documents from the major professional organizations in student affairs.	141 (92.8)	11 (7.2)
4. I have a clear understanding of the role of professional organizations in student affairs.	145 (94.8)	8 (5.2)
5. I have a clear understanding of my own educational philosophy.	141 (92.2)	12 (7.8)
6. I have a clear understanding of how the philosophy of pragmatism has influenced American higher education.	72 (47.4)	80 (52.6)
7. I have a clear understanding of how the philosophy of existentialism has influenced American higher education.	73 (47.7)	80 (52.3)
8. I have a clear understanding of how the philosophy of realism has influenced American higher education.	75 (49.0)	78 (51.0)
9. I have a clear understanding of how the philosophy of humanism has influenced American higher education.	86 (56.2)	67 (43.8)

Table 2 (Continued)

Frequency distribution of responses of the CAS Foundation Studies Instrument (N=153)

Section and item	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)
10. I have a clear understanding of the historical guiding documents of student affairs.	135 (88.8)	17 (11.2)
Psychological Foundations		
1. I have a clear understanding of student development theory.	145 (94.8)	8 (5.2)
2. I have a clear understanding of psychosocial and identity development theory.	143 (93.5)	10 (6.5)
3. I have a clear understanding of typology theory.	114 (74.5)	39 (25.5)
4. I have a clear understanding of cognitive development theory.	142 (92.8)	11 (7.2)
5. I have a clear understanding of the factors that influence college student behavior.	145 (95.4)	7 (4.6)
6. I have a clear understanding of how to bring about developmental change.	138 (90.2)	15 (9.8)
7. I have a clear understanding of the criticisms of student development theories.	130 (85.0)	23 (15.0)
8. I have a clear understanding of involvement theory.	129 (84.3)	24 (15.7)
9. I have a clear understanding of the appropriate use of theory.	140 (92.1)	12 (7.9)
10. I have a clear understanding of the foundations of counseling theory.	107 (69.9)	46 (30.1)
Cultural Foundations		
1. I have a clear understanding of what is meant by “institutional climate.”	146 (95.4)	7 (4.6)

Table 2 (Continued)

Frequency distribution of responses of the CAS Foundation Studies Instrument (N=153)

Section and item	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)
2. I have a clear understanding of what is meant by “institutional fit.”	144 (94.7)	8 (5.3)
3. I have a clear understanding of institutional culture from a student’s perspective.	145 (94.8)	8 (5.2)
4. I have a clear understanding of how the organizational structure influences the campus culture.	143 (93.5)	10 (6.5)
5. I have a clear understanding of how the physical layout of the campus impacts students.	143 (93.5)	10 (6.5)
6. I have a clear understanding of how the historical role of access contributes to the culture of an institution.	138 (90.2)	15 (9.8)
7. I have a clear understanding of how the historical role of accountability can influence institutional culture.	132 (86.3)	21 (13.7)
8. I have a clear understanding of the influence of generational differences on campus climate.	141 (92.2)	12 (7.8)
9. I have a clear understanding of how belonging to a particular demographic (race, sexual orientation, religion, gender, etc.) can impact an individual’s experience in college.	145 (94.8)	8 (5.2)
10. I have a clear understanding of the historical context of multiculturalism in American higher education.	140 (92.1)	12 (7.9)

Table 2 (Continued)

Frequency distribution of responses of the CAS Foundation Studies Instrument (N=153)

Section and item	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)
Sociological Foundations		
1. I have a clear understanding of the application of sociological theory to American higher education.	110 (72.4)	42 (27.6)
2. I have a clear understanding of supervisory and administrative practices.	140 (91.5)	13 (8.5)
3. I have a clear understanding of group theory.	128 (84.2)	24 (15.8)
4. I have a clear understanding of group dynamics.	139 (90.8)	14 (9.2)
5. I have a clear understanding of organization development theory.	127 (83.0)	26 (17.0)
6. I have a clear understanding of interaction theory.	109 (71.2)	44 (28.8)
7. I have a clear understanding of the manner in which a group may evolve.	134 (88.2)	18 (11.8)
8. I have a clear understanding of how the individual affects the group.	140 (91.5)	13 (8.5)
9. I have a clear understanding of the effects of differing individual communication styles on a group's interaction.	138 (90.2)	15 (9.8)
10. I have a clear understanding of the exchange between institutions of higher education and community at large.	134 (88.2)	18 (11.8)
Research Foundations		
1. I have a clear understanding of the qualitative research paradigm.	126 (82.4)	27 (17.6)
2. I have a clear understanding of the quantitative research paradigm.	124 (81.0)	29 (19.0)

Table 2 (Continued)

Frequency distribution of responses of the CAS Foundation Studies Instrument (N=153)

Section and item	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)
3. I have a clear understanding of the differences between qualitative and quantitative methods in research.	137 (89.5)	16 (10.5)
4. I have a clear understanding of how to write in a scholarly style appropriate for journal articles.	125 (81.7)	28 (18.3)
5. I have a clear understanding of the difference between process goal or objective and an outcome goal or objective.	114 (74.5)	39 (25.5)
6. I have a clear understanding of the design of research methods to match the appropriate level of analysis.	104 (68.0)	49 (32.0)
7. I have a clear understanding of the level of data represented by a variable in a quantitative analysis (nominal, ordinal, interval, or ratio data).	87 (56.9)	66 (43.1)
8. I have a clear understanding of how to select an appropriate statistical analytical method that matches the different levels of data with which I am working.	82 (53.9)	70 (46.1)
9. I have a clear understanding of how to write a literature review.	131 (85.6)	22 (14.4)
10. I have a clear understanding of how to develop appropriate research questions to study a particular phenomenon.	129 (84.9)	23 (15.1)

the 153 respondents, 146 (95.4%) responded that they had a clear understanding of this concept.

Five items shared the next highest percentage. The first item was item two on the Philosophical Foundations section. This item focused on the value of personal ethics in professional practice. The next item was item four in the Philosophical Foundations section. This question was about the role of professional organizations in student affairs. The third item was the first item of the Psychological Foundations section. This item centered on an understanding of student development theory. Next was item three on the Cultural Foundations section. This question was about institutional culture from a student's perspective. The fifth and final item was number nine on the Cultural Foundations section. This item focused on how belonging to a particular demographic can impact an individual's experience in college. Of 153 respondents, 145 (94.8%) responded that they had a clear understanding of each of these concepts.

The item with which the least respondents agreed was item six on the Philosophical Foundations section. This item focused on how the philosophy of pragmatism has influenced American higher education. Of the 152 respondents, 72 (47.4%) responded that they agreed to have a clear understanding of this concept. Item seven on the Philosophical Foundations section was the next lowest item with which respondents agreed. This question focused on how the philosophy of existentialism has influenced American higher education. Of the 153 alumni, 73 (47.7%) indicated that they had this knowledge.

The third lowest item with which the least respondents agreed was item eight on the Philosophical Foundations section. This item focused on how the philosophy of realism has influenced American higher education. Of the 153 alumni respondents, 75 (49.0%) reported to have a clear understanding of the topic.

The fourth lowest item was number eight on the Research Foundations section. This question asked if respondents could select an appropriate statistical analytical method that matches the different levels of data with which one is working. Of the 152 alumni responding, 82 (53.9%) responded affirmatively.

Two items scored 56.2% agreement. The first was number eight on the Historical Foundations section. This item addressed the Carnegie classification system of American

higher education. The second was item nine of the Philosophical Foundations section. This question focused on how the philosophy of humanism has influenced American higher education. Of the 153 alumni, 86 (56.2%) indicated that they had a working knowledge of these concepts.

Results Regarding Difference Based on CAS Compliance

The second research question posed in the study examined differences in reported learning based on programs' adherence to CAS standards. Tables 3 through 8 report the percentage of respondents from each group, CAS compliant or non-compliant that agreed or disagreed with each item in the Foundation Studies instrument. Table 3 shows that graduates from CAS compliant programs felt better prepared in 9 of 10 learning outcomes linked to Historical Foundations. In Table 4, CAS compliant alumni reported higher percentages in 10 of 10 learning outcomes in the Philosophical Foundation section. Alumni from CAS compliant programs report, in Table 5, a higher percentage of agreement in 8 of 10 learning outcomes related to Psychological Foundations. Table 6 shows that graduates from CAS compliant programs felt more confident in 9 of 10 learning outcomes linked to Cultural Foundations. In Table 7, CAS compliant alumni reported higher levels of agreement with 8 of 10 learning outcomes in the Sociological Foundation section. Alumni from CAS compliant programs report, in Table 8, a higher percentage of agreement in 4 of 10 learning outcomes related to Research Foundations. While none of these differences in reported understanding is statistically significant, the data suggest that alumni from CAS compliant programs feel better prepared than their non-compliant counterparts in 5 of 6 foundations areas and in 48 of the 60 questions overall.

The results of the 10 chi-square analyses for each of the six foundation studies areas of the CAS Foundation Studies instrument are shown in Tables 3 through 8. The table indicates the chi-square test results, the degree of freedom, and the p value. Any chi-square test that resulted in p values less than 0.05 was deemed statistically significant.

I found two statistically significant differences between alumni in reported learning based on the identified foundation studies learning outcomes. The first was item eight in the Psychological Foundations area (Table 5), which focused on whether

Table 3

Results of Chi-Square Analysis on Historical Foundations section of the CAS Foundation Studies Instrument (N=153)

Item	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	x²	df	p
1. I have a clear understanding of the origin of higher education in the US (153)					
CAS Compliant	89 (96.7)	3 (3.2)	**		
Non-Compliant	55 (90.2)	6 (9.8)			
2. I have a clear understanding of the origin and evolution of student affairs in American higher education (153)					
CAS Compliant	89 (96.7)	3 (3.3)	**		
Non-Compliant	57 (93.4)	4 (6.6)			
3. I have a clear understanding of the evolution of higher education in the US (153)					
CAS Compliant	88 (95.7)	4 (4.3)	**		
Non-Compliant	58 (95.1)	3 (4.9)			
4. I have a clear understanding of the effects <i>in loco parentis</i> has had in the history of American higher education (153)					
CAS Compliant	87 (94.6)	5 (5.4)	**		
Non-Compliant	57 (93.4)	4 (6.6)			
5. I have a clear understanding of the historical role of access in American higher education (153)					
CAS Compliant	84 (91.3)	8 (8.7)	**		
Non-Compliant	57 (93.4)	4 (6.6)			
6. I have a clear understanding of the historical role of accountability in American higher education (151)					
CAS Compliant	74 (81.3)	17 (18.7)	3.358	1	0.067
Non-Compliant	41 (68.3)	19 (31.7)			

Table 3 (Continued)

Results of Chi-Square Analysis on Historical Foundations section of the CAS Foundation Studies Instrument (N=153)

Item	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	x²	df	p
7. I have a clear understanding of the effects research has had on higher education (153)					
CAS Compliant	82 (94.6)	10 (10.7)	1.068	1	0.301
Non-Compliant	50 (83.3)	10 (16.7)			
8. I have a clear understanding of the Carnegie classification system of American higher education (152)					
CAS Compliant	52 (56.5)	40 (43.5)	0.009	1	0.924
Non-Compliant	34 (55.7)	27 (44.3)			
9. I have a clear understanding of the effects of major pieces of legislation on American higher education (152)					
CAS Compliant	77 (94.6)	15 (5.4)	0.046	1	0.829
Non-Compliant	51 (85.0)	9 (15.0)			
10. I have a clear understanding of the effects major social movements have had on higher education (153)					
CAS Compliant	81 (88.0)	11 (12.0)	0.045	1	0.832
Non-Compliant	53 (86.9)	8 (13.1)			

** Chi-square was not calculated because frequency count in one or more cells was less than five.

Table 4

Results of Chi-Square Analysis on Philosophical Foundations section of the CAS Foundation Studies Instrument (N=153)

Item	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	x²	df	p
1. I have a clear understanding of the holistic approach to student development (153)					
CAS Compliant	87 (96.7)	5 (3.2)	2.783	1	0.095
Non-Compliant	53 (91.8)	8 (8.2)			
2. I have a clear understanding of the value of personal ethics in professional practice (152)					
CAS Compliant	88 (96.7)	4 (4.3)	**		
Non-Compliant	57 (93.4)	4 (6.6)			
3. I have a clear understanding of the ethical documents from the major professional organizations in student affairs (152)					
CAS Compliant	86 (94.5)	5 (5.5)	1.025	1	0.311
Non-Compliant	55 (90.2)	6 (9.8)			
4. I have a clear understanding of the role of professional organizations in student affairs (153)					
CAS Compliant	89 (94.6)	3 (5.4)	**		
Non-Compliant	56 (91.8)	5 (8.2)			
5. I have a clear understanding of my own educational philosophy (153)					
CAS Compliant	86 (94.5)	6 (5.5)	0.557	1	0.455
Non-Compliant	55 (90.2)	6 (9.8)			
6. I have a clear understanding of how the philosophy of pragmatism has influenced American higher education (152)					
CAS Compliant	48 (52.7)	43 (47.3)	0.001	1	0.972
Non-Compliant	32 (52.5)	29 (47.5)			

Table 4 (Continued)

Results of Chi-Square Analysis on Philosophical Foundations section of the CAS Foundation Studies Instrument (N=153)

Item	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	x²	df	p
7. I have a clear understanding of how the philosophy of existentialism has influenced American higher education (153)					
CAS Compliant	51 (55.4)	41 (44.6)	0.916	1	0.338
Non-Compliant	29 (47.5)	32 (52.5)			
8. I have a clear understanding of how the philosophy of realism has influenced American higher education (153)					
CAS Compliant	50 (54.3)	42 (45.7)	1.047	1	0.306
Non-Compliant	28 (45.9)	33 (54.1)			
9. I have a clear understanding of how the philosophy of humanism has influenced American higher (153)					
CAS Compliant	45 (49.5)	47 (50.5)	2.460	1	0.117
Non-Compliant	22 (36.1)	39 (63.9)			
10. I have a clear understanding of the historical guiding documents of student affairs (152)					
CAS Compliant	82 (90.1)	9 (9.9)	0.382	1	0.536
Non-Compliant	53 (86.9)	8 (13.1)			

** Chi-square was not calculated because frequency count in one or more cells was less than five.

Table 5

Results of Chi-Square Analysis on Psychological Foundations section of the CAS Foundation Studies Instrument (N=153)

Item	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	χ^2	df	p
1. I have a clear understanding of student development theory (153)					
CAS Compliant	89 (96.7)	3 (3.2)	**		
Non-Compliant	56 (91.8)	5 (8.2)			
2. I have a clear understanding of psychosocial and identity development theory (153)					
CAS Compliant	87 (94.6)	5 (5.4)	0.458	1	0.499
Non-Compliant	56 (91.8)	5 (8.2)			
3. I have a clear understanding of typology theory (153)					
CAS Compliant	72 (95.7)	20 (4.3)	1.710	1	0.191
Non-Compliant	42 (95.1)	19 (4.9)			
4. I have a clear understanding of cognitive development (153)					
CAS Compliant	87 (94.6)	5 (5.4)	0.083	1	0.773
Non-Compliant	55 (90.2)	6 (9.8)			
5. I have a clear understanding of the factors that influence college student behavior (152)					
CAS Compliant	88 (91.3)	4 (8.7)	**		
Non-Compliant	57 (93.4)	3 (6.6)			
6. I have a clear understanding of how to bring about developmental change (153)					
CAS Compliant	84 (91.3)	8 (8.7)	0.321	1	0.571
Non-Compliant	54 (88.5)	7 (11.4)			

Table 5 (Continued)

Results of Chi-Square Analysis on Psychological Foundations section of the CAS Foundation Studies Instrument (N=153)

Item	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	x²	df	p
7. I have a clear understanding of the criticisms of student development theory (153)					
CAS Compliant	80 (86.7)	12 (13.0)	0.715	1	0.398
Non-Compliant	50 (82.0)	11 (18.0)			
8. I have a clear understanding of involvement theory (153)					
CAS Compliant	73 (79.3)	19 (20.7)	4.303	1	0.038*
Non-Compliant	56 (91.8)	5 (8.2)			
9. I have a clear understanding of the appropriate use of theory (152)					
CAS Compliant	87 (94.6)	5 (5.4)	1.940	1	0.164
Non-Compliant	53 (88.3)	7 (11.7)			
10. I have a clear understanding of the foundations of counseling theory(153)					
CAS Compliant	66 (71.7)	26 (28.3)	0.357	1	0.550
Non-Compliant	41 (67.2)	20 (32.8)			

* Statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level

** Chi-square was not calculated because frequency count in one or more cells was less than five.

Table 6

Results of Chi-Square Analysis on Cultural Foundations section of the CAS Foundation Studies Instrument (N=153)

Item	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	x²	df	p
1. I have a clear understanding of what is meant by “institutional climate” (153)					
CAS Compliant	89 (96.7)	3 (3.3)	**		
Non-Compliant	57 (93.4)	4 (6.6)			
2. I have a clear understanding of what is meant by “institutional fit (152)					
CAS Compliant	87 (95.6)	4 (4.4)	**		
Non-Compliant	57 (93.4)	4 (6.6)			
3. I have a clear understanding of institutional culture from a student’s perspective (153)					
CAS Compliant	88 (95.7)	4 (4.3)	**		
Non-Compliant	57 (93.4)	4 (6.6)			
4. I have a clear understanding of how the organizational structure influences the campus culture (153)					
CAS Compliant	88 (95.7)	4 (4.3)	**		
Non-Compliant	55 (90.2)	6 (9.8)			
5. I have a clear understanding of how the physical layout of the campus impacts students (153)					
CAS Compliant	86 (94.5)	6 (5.5)	**		
Non-Compliant	57 (93.4)	4 (6.6)			
6. I have a clear understanding of how the historical role of access contributes to the culture of an institution (153)					
CAS Compliant	85 (92.4)	7 (7.6)	1.258	1	0.262
Non-Compliant	53 (86.9)	8 (13.1)			

Table 6 (Continued)

Results of Chi-Square Analysis on Cultural Foundations section of the CAS Foundation Studies Instrument (N=153)

Item	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	χ^2	df	p
7. I have a clear understanding of how the historical role of accountability can influence institutional culture (153)					
CAS Compliant	80 (87.0)	12 (13.0)	0.091	1	0.763
Non-Compliant	52 (85.2)	9 (14.8)			
8. I have a clear understanding of the influence of generational differences on campus climate (153)					
CAS Compliant	84 (91.3)	8 (8.7)	**		
Non-Compliant	57 (93.4)	4 (6.6)			
9. I have a clear understanding of how belonging to a particular demographic (race, sexual orientation, religion, gender, etc.) can impact an individual's experience in college (153)					
CAS Compliant	89 (96.7)	3 (3.3)	**		
Non-Compliant	56 (91.8)	5 (8.2)			
10. I have a clear understanding of the historical context of multiculturalism in American higher education (152)					
CAS Compliant	86 (90.1)	5 (9.9)	1.797	1	0.180
Non-Compliant	54 (86.9)	7 (13.1)			

** Chi-square was not calculated because frequency count in one or more cells was less than five.

Table 7

Results of Chi-Square Analysis on Sociological Foundations section of the CAS Foundation Studies Instrument (N=153)

Item	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	χ^2	df	p
1. I have a clear understanding of the application of sociological theory to American higher education (152)					
CAS Compliant	64 (70.3)	27 (29.7)	0.471	1	0.492
Non-Compliant	46 (75.4)	15 (24.6)			
2. I have a clear understanding of supervisory and administrative practices (153)					
CAS Compliant	85 (92.4)	7 (7.6)	0.234	1	0.629
Non-Compliant	55 (90.2)	6 (9.8)			
3. I have a clear understanding of group theory (152)					
CAS Compliant	81 (88.0)	11 (12.0)	2.575	1	0.109
Non-Compliant	47 (78.3)	13 (21.7)			
4. I have a clear understanding of group dynamics (153)					
CAS Compliant	84 (91.3)	8 (8.7)	0.057	1	0.811
Non-Compliant	55 (90.2)	6 (9.8)			
5. I have a clear understanding of organization development theory (153)					
CAS Compliant	77 (83.7)	15 (16.3)	0.078	1	0.780
Non-Compliant	50 (82.0)	11 (18.0)			
6. I have a clear understanding of interaction theory (153)					
CAS Compliant	64 (69.6)	28 (30.4)	0.317	1	0.574
Non-Compliant	45 (73.8)	16 (26.2)			

Table 7 (Continued)

*Results of Chi-Square Analysis on Sociological Foundations section of the CAS
Foundation Studies Instrument (N=153)*

Item	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	x²	df	p
7. I have a clear understanding of the manner in which a group may evolve (152)					
CAS Compliant	83 (90.2)	9 (9.8)	0.947	1	0.331
Non-Compliant	51 (85.0)	9 (15.0)			
8. I have a clear understanding of how the individual affects the group (153)					
CAS Compliant	84 (91.3)	8 (8.7)	0.012	1	0.914
Non-Compliant	56 (91.8)	5 (8.2)			
9. I have a clear understanding of the effects of differing individual communication styles on a group's interaction (153)					
CAS Compliant	84 (91.3)	8 (8.7)	0.321	1	0.571
Non-Compliant	54 (88.5)	7 (11.5)			
10. I have a clear understanding of the exchange between institutions of higher education and community at large (152)					
CAS Compliant	82 (90.1)	9 (9.9)	1.797	1	0.180
Non-Compliant	52 (85.2)	9 (14.8)			

Table 8

Results of Chi-Square Analysis on Research Foundations section of the CAS Foundation Studies Instrument (N=153)

Item	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	x²	df	p
1. I have a clear understanding of the qualitative research paradigm (153)					
CAS Compliant	79 (85.9)	13 (14.1)	1.964	1	0.161
Non-Compliant	47 (77.0)	14 (23.0)			
2. I have a clear understanding of the quantitative research paradigm (153)					
CAS Compliant	78 (84.8)	14 (15.2)	2.098	1	0.148
Non-Compliant	46 (75.4)	15 (24.6)			
3. I have a clear understanding of the differences between qualitative and quantitative methods in research (153)					
CAS Compliant	86 (94.5)	6 (5.5)	3.817	1	0.051
Non-Compliant	51 (83.6)	10 (16.4)			
4. I have a clear understanding of how to write in a scholarly style appropriate for journal articles (153)					
CAS Compliant	73 (79.3)	19 (20.7)	0.853	1	0.356
Non-Compliant	52 (85.2)	9 (14.8)			
5. I have a clear understanding of the difference between a process goal or objective and an outcome goal or objective (153)					
CAS Compliant	68 (73.9)	24 (26.1)	0.043	1	0.835
Non-Compliant	46 (75.4)	15 (24.6)			
6. I have a clear understanding of the design of research methods to match the appropriate level of analysis (153)					
CAS Compliant	64 (69.6)	28 (30.4)	0.268	1	0.604
Non-Compliant	40 (65.6)	21 (34.4)			

Table 8 (Continued)

Results of Chi-Square Analysis on Research Foundations section of the CAS Foundation Studies Instrument (N=153)

Item	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	χ^2	df	p
7. I have a clear understanding of the level of data represented by a variable in a quantitative analysis (nominal, ordinal, interval, or ratio data) (152)					
CAS Compliant	46 (50.0)	46 (50.0)	4.431	1	0.035*
Non-Compliant	41 (67.2)	20 (32.8)			
8. I have a clear understanding of how to select an appropriate statistical analytical method that matches the different levels of data with which I am working (152)					
CAS Compliant	46 (50.5)	45 (49.5)	1.054	1	0.305
Non-Compliant	36 (59.0)	25 (41.0)			
9. I have a clear understanding of how to write a literature review (153)					
CAS Compliant	76 (82.6)	16 (17.4)	1.701	1	0.192
Non-Compliant	55 (90.2)	6 (9.8)			
10. I have a clear understanding of how to develop appropriate research questions to study a particular phenomenon (152)					
CAS Compliant	77 (84.6)	14 (15.4)	0.011	1	0.915
Non-Compliant	52 (85.2)	9 (14.8)			

* Statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

respondents had a clear understanding of involvement theory. A significant difference appeared at the 0.04 level. Alumni from non-compliant programs were more likely to agree that they had a clear understanding of involvement theory than their counterparts from CAS compliant programs.

The second statistically significant difference was item seven in the Research Foundations section (Table 8), which sought to determine if alumni had a clear understanding of the level of data represented by a variable in a quantitative analysis. A significant difference appeared at the 0.04 level. Alumni from non-compliant programs were more likely to agree that they had a clear understanding of the level of data in quantitative analysis than their counterparts from CAS compliant programs.

In summary, I conducted frequency calculations on the 60 items included in the second section of the CAS foundation studies instrument to answer the first research question. I also conducted chi-square analyses for each of the 60 items to answer the second research question. The results provide useful information regarding student affairs preparation programs and their graduates. These findings and their implications for future practice and research are discussed in the final chapter of this study.

Chapter Five

Discussion

This study examined reported learning outcomes of recent alumni of student affairs preparation programs. I analyzed the data, collected through the administration of the CAS foundations survey instrument, using frequency calculations and chi-square tests.

The chapter is organized into six sections. The first section discusses the results of the study. The second section compares the results of this study to findings from previous research. The next section describes implications for future practice. The fourth section discusses the implications for future research. The fifth section considers the limitations of the present study. The final section outlines conclusions based on the results of this study.

Discussion of the Results

The first research question posed in this study explored the extent to which recent alumni from student affairs preparation programs report learning as a result of those programs. The results indicate that a majority of respondents report having a clear understanding on 57 of the 60 items on the CAS Foundation Studies instrument. Four of the six items which the participants least agreed with having a clear understanding were all part of the Philosophical Foundations area. The questions had to do with how a particular philosophical school of thought, such as existentialism, realism, pragmatism, or humanism has impacted American higher education.

One possible explanation for the findings is the way the items on the instrument are worded. I asked the respondent to report the level of agreement to having a clear understanding of a particular concept and its effect in American higher education. The results could show that a majority of respondents were familiar with these concepts but did not have a clear understanding of them. It could also be that the alumni had an understanding of these concepts but were unaware of their respective roles in the development of American higher education.

Another explanation may relate to the concepts themselves. The historical roles of philosophical schools of thought in American higher education are complex and require a meaningful understanding of the history of higher education in the U.S. As

many foundational subject areas may be taught concurrently, the respondents could have not had an adequate understanding of the history of American higher education to understand the roles of these schools of thought.

The next research question explored whether there were significant differences in reported learning based on the programs' adherence to CAS standards. Results of chi-square analysis indicate that there were no significant differences between responses from alumni of CAS compliant and non-compliant programs to 58 of the 60 items. This result is particularly interesting in that on the two items that showed a statistically significant difference, alumni from non-compliant programs were more likely to have a clear understanding of the concepts. The two items that showed a statistically significant difference were item number eight in the psychological foundations area and item number seven on the research foundations area. These two items have to do with involvement theory ($p = 0.038$) and the level of data represented by a variable in a quantitative analysis ($p=0.035$) respectively.

It is possible that the results that surfaced in this study did so because the items included on the survey instrument were foundational studies areas. One reason there was no statistically significant difference in reported understanding of these foundational learning outcomes could simply be that they are the basic foundations for student affairs practice. It is possible that the non-compliant schools have tailored their curriculum to meet basic foundation studies standards proposed by CAS while not meeting all other requirements, such as practical experience requirements or number of full-time faculty. Even those programs that may not have paid attention to the CAS standards could be teaching these foundational subjects to provide a meaningful preparation for their students.

Another possible explanation could be that respondents from non-compliant programs were more likely to respond positively to items on the questionnaire out of pride for their respective programs. Alumni could have worried that to respond negatively would shed a bad light on the program from which they graduated. This could be a bigger concern for alumni that were aware that the program might not meet CAS standards, as they may perceive the reputation to be more in question than their counterparts from compliant programs.

While there were only two statistically significant differences in responses, the trend in the data is that the alumni from CAS compliant programs rated a higher percentage of understanding on 48 of the 60 items presented in the survey and in five of the six foundations areas. This trend in the data suggests that alumni from CAS compliant programs felt more confident in their preparation, although the difference was not statistically significant.

Overall, the majority of respondents indicated having a clear understanding of all items on the CAS Foundation Studies instrument but three. Additionally, while significant differences were revealed on only two of the 60 items between respondents from CAS compliant and non-compliant programs, the trend suggests that alumni from CAS compliant programs felt more prepared than their non-compliant counterparts in 48 out of 60 items on the survey instrument. The results rendered some interesting findings as well as implications for future practice and research.

Relationship of the Results to Previous Research

When the results of the present study are compared with prior studies, most findings support prior research. There is little in the present study to contradict previous research. This may be largely due to the lack of published research on learning outcomes based on CAS standards for student affairs preparation programs at the master's level.

There have been several studies conducted that the results of this study support. The present study revealed that alumni of student affairs preparation program report high levels of understanding based on the foundation studies outlined by the survey instrument. The results support the literature that proposes that CAS standards for preparation programs in student affairs be widely implemented (CAS, 1998; Miller, 1991; Von Destinon, 1986). The majority of respondents were from CAS compliant programs. The number of CAS compliant programs included in the study outnumbered non-compliant programs 9 to 4. Of the 98 programs contacted for inclusion in the study, 51 were CAS compliant.

Additionally, these results support research on learning outcomes of graduate students. Graduate students reported positive learning outcomes across a variety of fields (Abbey, et al., 1997; DeCoux, Rachal, Leonard, & Pierce, 1992; Maher, 2001; Wesson, et al., 1996). Graduate students in student affairs programs also reported positive learning

outcomes (Harrow & Mann, 1996; Forney, 1994; McEwen & Roper, 1994; Hyman, 1985). The findings related to learning outcomes based on agreement with items on the CAS Foundation Studies instrument show that alumni of student affairs preparation programs largely have a clear understanding of foundational subjects. Thus, the reported learning outcomes of alumni from student affairs preparation programs support the previous literature on learning outcomes of graduate students.

In terms of differences between alumni from CAS compliant and non-compliant programs, the present study suggests that there is very little evidence to suggest that there are significant differences on the foundational level. This is supported by the previous literature, as well, as a majority of all alumni have reported high levels of understanding of the foundational studies learning outcomes. All respondents attended a graduate program in student affairs and, as is suggested by previous literature (Wesson, et al., 1996; Forney, 1994; Hyman, 1985), alumni reported positive learning outcomes.

Three items on the CAS Foundations Studies instrument resulted in a majority disagreeing with having a clear understanding. These three items related to the role a specific philosophical paradigm had in the historical role of higher education in the US. The understanding of a philosophical role in the development of higher education is highly conceptual. This is supported by Forney (1994), who reported that master's students in student affairs programs were least likely to exhibit the learning style of assimilator, which is characterized by abstract conceptualization.

Implications for Future Practice

The present study has implications for both future practice and future research. In terms of practice, several constituencies may benefit from the results of this study. For example, the findings may be useful to coordinators of graduate preparation programs in student affairs.

The results indicate that all the items on the CAS Foundation Studies instrument but three of the philosophical foundations items were rated as being understood by program alumni. This information may help coordinators develop strategies for incorporating greater emphasis on the area of these foundational philosophical concepts. For example, courses in a curriculum that focus primarily on the philosophical foundations could be required of students in student affairs preparation programs. Such

courses may include sections that focus specifically on these philosophical schools of thought and their roles vis-à-vis the development of higher education in the US.

The results of the study may also be useful for prospective graduate students. The results of the study indicate that learning outcomes reported on foundational areas vary little between alumni from compliant and non-compliant programs. Additionally, alumni reported a broad understanding of foundational subject areas. With a wide variety of student affairs preparations available for prospective graduate students to choose from, these future master's candidates can use the information in making a decision as to which program to attend.

Another possibility may include CAS itself. CAS may use the results to further refine or broaden the proposed standards for preparation at the master's level. The data could also be used as a tool for benchmarking their progress toward the advancement of standards among student affairs preparation programs.

Finally, employers of graduates of student affairs preparation programs can use the data in making decisions with respect to staffing. The results show that alumni have a wide understanding of the foundations of the student affairs profession, irrespective of the program's adherence to the CAS standards. Decision makers who may be hiring graduates from preparation programs in student affairs can rely on the data that suggest that alumni will report understanding of foundational concepts; independent of the program they attended.

Implications for Future Research

While the study presents implications for practice with respect to multiple constituencies, it also has implications for future research. For example, the present study examined reported learning outcomes of recent alumni from student affairs preparation programs based on the programs' adherence to the CAS standards. There are other factors that may result in a difference in reported learning. Future scholars may wish to examine the differences in outcomes based on race, current employment, and professional experience prior to program enrollment. The results of such a study might provide insight into whether or not other personal differences could result in a significant difference in reported learning.

The present study examined differences in reported learning outcomes based on the foundation studies section of the CAS standards for preparation at the master's level. Future researchers may wish to create a similar instrument based on the professional foundations section of the CAS standards. Results of such a study might reveal differences based on the preparation program's adherence to the CAS standards.

Finally, future researchers may desire to examine the learning outcomes of recent alumni using a qualitative methodology. The present study only examined reported learning outcomes of recent alumni based on a survey that asked respondents to agree with a selected group of outcomes. Future research may reveal additional information about the graduate students experience and learning throughout the process of attending such a program.

Future researchers might want to consider the following if replicating this study or conducting a similar one. First, the sample in this study represents recent graduates from student affairs preparation programs. The short amount of time between graduation and response to the study might have had a 'halo effect' for the respondents. That is, respondents might not have been far enough removed from the experience to have a clear perspective on what they know or do not know. A greater amount of time between graduation and survey might reduce this 'halo effect' especially as it relates to self-reported data.

Additionally, many student affairs preparation programs declined participation in this study due to their lack of alumni contact information. Researchers interested in replicating this survey or conduct similar research might want to survey current student affairs professionals directly through a professional organization. The researcher could then categorize the respondents based on their preparation programs' compliance with the CAS standards. This could increase the size of the respondent group and may generate a more representative sample.

Limitations

The present study provided implications for both future practice and for future research. Additionally, as with all research, the study presented several limitations.

The first limitation had to do with the data collection procedure. After receiving an e-mail with an explanation of how to proceed, participants filled out an online survey.

Participants read the instructions from the e-mail from the program coordinator and from the web-page where the survey was located. If there were inconsistencies in the ways different program coordinators and respondents interpreted the instructions, the results of the study may have been affected.

Another limitation concerned the instrument. The items in the CAS Foundation Studies instrument asked participants to rate the degree to which they had a clear understanding of the items on the survey instrument. If respondents interpreted the statements differently than intended the results of the study may have been skewed.

The use of self-report data was another limitation of the present study. Through self-report, alumni from non-compliant programs could report higher levels of learning. Likewise, the self-reported data did not test actual knowledge, only self-confidence in that particular learning outcome. If this was the case, the results might have been affected.

Another limitation was the small respondent group. Many differences that exist between the CAS compliant and non-compliant groups may have not appeared due to small response size. In many cases, Chi-Square results were not calculated because the frequency count in cells was less than five. Also, a small respondent group may not be a representative sample of the general population. If these were the case, the results might have been skewed.

Finally, there was another limitation concerning the instrument. The possible responses for the present study included a Likert-type scale with one meaning strongly disagree and four meaning strongly agree. It is possible that these response options did not provide respondents with all the choices needed to adequately measure learning outcomes. If this occurred, the results might have been influenced.

Although the present study had several limitations, these limitations did not detract from the overall contributions of the study. The study was useful in that it expanded the body of literature regarding learning outcomes of alumni of student affairs preparation programs and learning outcomes based on the CAS standards.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of the present study reveal that a majority of alumni from student affairs preparation programs report having a clear understanding of 57 of 60

identified foundational learning outcomes. Additionally, there is no statistically significant difference between reported learning of alumni from CAS compliant and non-compliant programs based on these foundational learning outcomes on 58 of the 60 items. The results indicate that alumni from non-compliant programs are more likely to report higher levels of learning based on involvement theory and understanding the level of data a variable in quantitative analysis. Additionally, data suggest that alumni from CAS compliant programs are more likely to feel confidence in their preparation in 48 of the 60 outcomes presented in the survey.

These results suggest that learning on foundational levels as identified by CAS happens in programs that completely adhere to their standards as well as programs that do not. This may be regarded by some as good news for non-compliant student affairs preparation programs. While the results suggest that there is no significant difference in learning outcomes, there is still much research to be done. Additional research is needed in the professional studies area before any definitive conclusions can be drawn. It is important to note that the survey asked participants to rate their level of understanding of a particular learning outcome; it measured alumni confidence rather than actual learning outcomes.

Finally, it is important to realize that research on learning outcomes based on the CAS standard is scant and increased attention to this type of research will not only expand the body of literature, but will also help in understanding the experiences of graduate students in student affairs preparation programs and in the development of curricula. Further, by developing standards based on empirical results of research in this area, professional organizations, such as CAS, can promulgate standards with a greater assuredness that the standards will result in an improvement in education at the master's level.

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APPENDIX A:
CAS FOUNDATION STUDIES INSTRUMENT

CAS FOUNDATION STUDIES INSTRUMENT

Name of institution where you attended your Student Affairs Preparation Program: _____

Year of graduation: _____

Completion of all degree requirements: Completed Not Completed

Age: _____

Sex: _____

Race: _____

Current employment: Employed in Student Affairs Not Employed in Student Affairs

Based on what you learned in your Student Affairs Preparation Program, rate the extent to which the following statements are true: (1 = Not True, 2 = Somewhat True, 3 = True, 4 = Very True)

Historical Foundations:

I have a clear understanding of:

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The origin of higher education in the US. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. The origin and evolution of student affairs in American higher education. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. The evolution of higher education in the US. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. The effects <i>in loco parentis</i> has had in the history of American higher education. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. The historical role of access in American higher education. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. The historical role of accountability in American higher education. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. The effects research has had on higher education | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. The Carnegie classification system of American higher education. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. The effects of major pieces of legislation on American higher education. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. The effects major social movements have had on higher education. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Philosophical Foundations:

I have a clear understanding of:

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The holistic approach to student development. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. What it means to have personal ethics. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. The ethical documents from the major professional organizations in student affairs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. The role of professional organizations in student affairs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. My own educational philosophy. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. How the philosophy of pragmatism has influenced American higher education. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. How the philosophy of existentialism has influenced American higher education. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. How the philosophy of realism has influenced American higher education. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. How the philosophy of humanism has influenced American higher education. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. The historical guiding documents of student affairs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Psychological Foundations:

I have a clear understanding of:

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Student development theory. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. Psychosocial and identity development theory. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. Typology theory. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. Cognitive development theory. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. The factors that influence college student behavior. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. How to bring about developmental change. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. The criticisms of student development theories. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. Involvement theory. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. The appropriate use of theory. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. The foundations of counseling theory. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Cultural Foundations

I have a clear understanding of:

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1. What is meant by “institutional climate.” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. What is meant by “institutional fit.” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. Institutional culture from a student’s perspective. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. How the organizational structure influences the campus culture. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. How the physical layout of the campus impacts students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. How the historical role of access contributes to the culture of an institution. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. How the historical role of accountability can influence institutional culture. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. The influence of generational differences on campus climate. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. How belonging to a particular demographic (race, sexual orientation, religion, gender, etc.) impacts an individual’s experience in college. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. The historical context of multiculturalism in American higher education. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Sociological Foundations

I have a clear understanding of:

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The application of sociological theory to American higher education. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. Supervisory and administrative practices. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. Group theory. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. Group dynamics. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. Organization development theory. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. Interaction theory. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. The manner in which a group may evolve. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. How the individual affects the group. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. The effects of differing individual communication styles on a group’s interaction. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. The exchange between institutions of higher education and community at large. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Research Foundations

I have a clear understanding of:

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The qualitative research paradigm. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. The quantitative research paradigm. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. The differences between either of the different research paradigms. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. How to write in a scholarly style appropriate for journal articles. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. The difference between process goal or objective and an outcome goal or objective. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. The design of research methods to match the appropriate level of analysis. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. The level of data represented by a variable in a quantitative analysis. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. How to select an appropriate statistical analytical method based on the different levels of data with which I am working. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. How to write a literature review. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. How to develop appropriate research questions to study a particular phenomenon. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |