ABSTRACT

HALEY, KAREN JEAN. Graduate Education Experience and Career Paths of Women Faculty in Higher Education Administration. (Under the direction of Dr. John Levin.)

Although there has been a concerted effort on the part of colleges and universities to increase women’s representation as faculty in higher education, equal representation in all disciplines has not been realized. The purpose of this research is to increase our understanding of the graduate student experience of current women faculty, specifically, their experience as it relates to becoming a faculty member. The investigation of an exemplary case, Higher Education Administration, lends support to the graduate student literature that emphasizes faculty-student interaction as a primary factor in persistence and retention. This interaction is particularly important for Higher Education Administration students as many are enrolled in programs that do not have institutionalized support for future faculty. While most participants in this investigation did not follow the traditional academic career path that began as an undergraduate, they did display commonalities within the group. What characterized all of the participants was the ability to create their own path to the professoriate. Given the academy’s inequitable proportion of women in tenure-track ranks, especially noted in a number of program areas such as science and engineering, the example of Higher Education programs may have salience for institutions that purport to make the academy more equitable.
Graduate Education Experience and
Career Paths of Women Faculty in Higher Education Administration

by
Karen Haley

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
North Carolina State University
In partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of
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Approved by:

________________________________________  _______________________________________
John S. Levin                                        Audrey J. Jaeger
Chair of Advisory Committee                                    

________________________________________  _______________________________________
Colleen Aalsburg Wiessner                                         Cynthia Wolf Johnson
DEDICATION

To my son ZB – for his patience during the pursuit of my degree and for his
tolerance in my attending the “other” North Carolina university.
BIOGRAPHY

Karen Haley was born on November 4, 1956 in Chicago, Illinois while her father was attending college. Raised in Oregon and Washington, Karen watched both parents advance their lives and careers through education. Her Mother, Janet Tolman, has a bachelor’s in sociology and a master’s in public administration. Her father, Byron Haley, has a bachelor’s and a master’s in parks and recreation.

Karen began her own higher education at Washington State University and attained a B.A. in Mathematics in 1978. After working for several years she returned for a master’s in student personnel administration from Western Washington University. After her degree she held positions in residence life, career planning and placement, student activities, orientation, and retention at several universities. After moving to Raleigh, Karen changed careers and became a bookstore manager. She then spent eight years in desktop publishing. In a mid-life assessment, Karen decided to return to higher education and began the doctoral program in higher education administration. Future plans include pursuing a faculty position in higher education/student affairs.

Karen has one son, ZB Haislip, who is a high school student in Raleigh. He plans to pursue his own educational career at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2008.
AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have thoroughly enjoyed my graduate experience at North Carolina. I was fortunate to attain an assistantship in the National Initiative for Leadership and Institutional Effectiveness within the department of Adult and Higher Education. Through this experience I was able to develop relationships with all of the faculty and staff within the department, which was incredibly valuable during my graduate education. The faculty shared with me their experiences, asked me to assist with projects, and generally supported my education.

Dr. Audrey Jaeger provided opportunities for me to develop my teaching skills by allowing me to co-teach Student Development Theory with her. I will be eternally grateful for her mentoring and friendship.

Dr. John Levin, as my advisor and dissertation chair, provided inspiration and motivation to keep me moving forward. His patience and humor during our writing class set the tone for the rest of the process. He held high expectations of me and seemed to think I could write a dissertation and who was I to disagree?

I’d like to thank my additional committee members Dr. Colleen Aalsburg Wiessner and Dr. Cynthia Wolf Johnson who provided support and encouragement along the way. I’d also like to thank Dr. Karen Nunez who came from accounting to be the graduate school representative on my committee and listened to my version of qualitative research.

Kathy Lohr Miller and Alisa Nagler were my support group. We encouraged each other, talked about the feedback, and drank lots of coffee—all of great value in the process.
Finally, the research could not have been completed without the participants. They were open, welcoming, and forthright in their portrayal of their own graduate experience. I appreciate their candor and look forward to future encounters as colleagues.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background and Statement of the Problem

Over the past 30 years there has been a concerted effort on the part of colleges and universities, through affirmative action and recruitment, to increase women’s representation as faculty in higher education (Tierney & Rhoads, 1993; Wilson, 1979). The percentage of women faculty members has increased at some types of higher education institutions, notably community colleges (Perna, 2003) and in some, but not all, disciplines since the 1970s. However, even in disciplines where women have made major inroads, there are significantly fewer women in full professorships and significantly more in nontenure track positions than men (AAUP, 2004). Women students now represent over 50% of both the undergraduate and graduate student population, but with variations between disciplines. For example, education has the highest enrollment of women and the science and engineering fields have the lowest enrollment of women (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

Early research focused on the recruitment and retention processes of academe, claiming that if there were more women in the pipeline (as students), then there would be more women faculty (K. M. Moore & Sagaria, 1991; Simeone, 1987). Currently there are equitable numbers of women students, indicating that numbers in the overall academic pipeline are not the problem. Instead, the problem lies in the conversion of women doctoral students to faculty members (Hensel, 1991). The study of graduate experience of women may help to understand this problem. Graduate education, an important aspect of the socialization process of future faculty, has been criticized for not preparing graduate students appropriately for faculty positions (Austin, 2002b; Gaff, Pruitt-Logan, Sims, &
Denecke, 2003; Golde & Dore, 2001; Hinchey & Kimmel, 2000; Nerad, Aanerud, & Cerny, 2004; Nyquist, 2002; Nyquist, Abbott, & Wulff, 1989; Nyquist et al., 1999; Nyquist & Woodford, 2000). The literature shows that there are changing expectations of faculty that are not reflected in the preparation of future faculty (Austin, 2002b; Snyder & Elliot, 2005), but there is little distinction made based on gender. The literature does show that socialization depends on available role models, which for women tend to be women faculty—women seek out and express greater comfort with women faculty than with men faculty (E. M. Anderson & Shannon, 1988; Antony & Taylor, 2001; Berg & Ferber, 1983; Sandler, 1986), and more women in a department arguably provides a more collegial environment for women students (Stark, Lowther, & Austin, 1985). Where there are proportionately more women and more women in full professorships then the perceived treatment of female faculty is rated higher than departments where there are fewer women (Robst, VanGilder, & Polachek, 2003). While the number of women in a department may seem to make a difference (Ülkü-Steiner, Kurtz-Costes, & Kinlaw, 2000), others contend that it is actually the structure and culture of a department and/or institution that influence the environment to be receptive and rewarding toward women (Wolf-Wendel, 2000).

Women faculty have increased their ranks in most fields, however, there have been only small increases in engineering and physics (Lomperis, 1990), and women continue to be clustered in sex-segregated fields such as education and literature (K. M. Moore & Sagaria, 1991).

Affirmative action helped to increase women’s access and participation as faculty in higher education, but it did not create gender equity (Howie & Tauchert, 2002; Simeone,
Higher education, particularly the research university, is a gendered institution and to its detriment underutilizes the talent and expertise of women (Bond, 2000).

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this research is to increase our understanding of the graduate student experience of current women faculty, specifically, their experience as it relates to becoming a faculty member. This study will explore the experiences of women faculty members who attained doctorates and accepted faculty positions within a field that has an exceptionally high percentage of women faculty members—the field of Higher Education Administration. Higher Education Administration is generally found within a college, school, or department of education. While colleges of education have the same issues as the larger institution with women faculty representation—proportionately more women are at the assistant and associate professor level than at the full professor level (Evans & Williams, 1998)—they do have the most equitable proportion of men and women faculty in the university (Tierney, 2001). According to 1999 NCES data, 57.5% of the faculty in education are women, and of those faculty not in programs with a K-12 focus (including Higher Education Administration), 53.9% are women (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

Higher Education Administration is not a typical degree program. While the program is usually housed within education, it is distinctly different from programs related to primary and secondary education. There are no undergraduate majors to feed into the graduate program (Dressel & Mayhew, 1974; Tobin, 1998) and graduate programs accept students from all undergraduate disciplines (Brown, 1987). This means that students enter graduate school with no common theoretical base and no shared perspective of the field.
(Golde, Walker, & Associates, 2006; Tobin, 1998). In addition, there are two types of doctoral programs in Higher Education Administration. While there are exceptions, the Ed.D. program is generally for professionals in administration and is frequently offered as a part-time option for students as they continue to work full-time, whereas the Ph.D. attracts both administrators and future faculty, and is more likely to encourage students to enroll full-time (ACPA, 2005; ASHE, 2005). Both types of programs may be offered at the same institution and faculty members may hold either type of degree. In some cases the Ed.D. and PhD. programs are indistinguishable from one another (Golde et al., 2006).

Finally, there are few teaching assistant opportunities in the study of higher education due to the lack of undergraduate courses (Golde et al., 2006). The characteristics of Higher Education Administration as a field of study lend themselves to a unique case study—equitable number of women faculty, no undergraduates, few teaching assistantships, and multiple foci. While research conducted by faculty and students in the field of Higher Education Administration focuses on the broad field of higher education, there is little study of the field itself. Research at the departmental level has been identified as important to the understanding of graduate education as each discipline and each graduate student experience are different (M. S. Anderson & Swazey, 1998; Weidman, Twale, & Stein, 2001), therefore, there is value in studying the field of Higher Education Administration.

Higher Education Administration as a field of study is not disaggregated in the literature; therefore, it is unknown whether as a field it provides a more complete socialization process into academe or if there are other factors that contribute to an equitable conversion of women students to faculty. There are two primary research questions for this research: What are the experiences of women graduate students who
become faculty in Higher Education Administration? What are the factors that assisted in their conversion from student to faculty?

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study center on the study’s methodology and the nature of the field of Higher Education Administration. While the study focus is women, men in Higher Education Administration may or may not have similar experiences. The intention is to describe the experience of women, not to exclude men, nor to say that their experience is different. In addition, the study design does not seek to represent the demographics of all women faculty in Higher Education Administration fully. Although the study participants represent a diverse group based on race and sexual orientation, the data do not provide enough information to complete a full analysis based on these factors. The nature of Higher Education Administration programs defines the other study limitations. The special characteristics of the field such as, no undergraduate programs, students who come from a variety of undergraduate majors, and a field that educates both administrators and faculty, may limit the use of the results in an examination of other disciplines.

Significance of the Study

This case study expands our understanding of women’s experience in higher education, an environment that no longer excludes women, although it does not unequivocally embrace them (Morris, 2003; Sandler, 1986). This study provides a view into the graduate student experiences of women in the context of a program that recruits and retains an equitable number of women faculty members, specifically, the ways in which women graduate students in Higher Education Administration chose a faculty career choice and the paths they followed to attain their goals. In addition, the study provides
information to understand the field of Higher Education Administration and its context within higher education. While the results of this study may not be generalizable to other disciplines, they may be useful as a model for increasing the conversion rate of women graduate students to women faculty.

Theoretical Frameworks and Literature

Theoretical frameworks help both the researcher and the reader to place the literature into a context that informs the research (Maxwell, 1996). In this research project I identify my personal theoretical standpoint (poststructural feminism) in order to place myself within my research; the conceptual frameworks (career development and socialization) used in organizing the literature; and analytical frameworks (professionalization and graduate student socialization themes) for making sense of the data.

Theoretical Standpoint

Poststructural feminism is my underlying theoretical framework, and reflects my beliefs about what is important to study and how individuals construct knowledge. As a feminist I believe that women have not had the same opportunities as men, resulting in a lack of equality (Ropers-Huilman, 1998). Discrimination in turn determines some of the choices a woman makes, either because a particular career choice is perceived as not available to her as a woman or because the working environment would be toxic (Ropers-Huilman, 1998). Poststructuralism contends that there are no master narratives to describe events and phenomenon; rather there are multiple narratives (Middleton, 1993). Poststructural feminism avoids the threat of essentialism or defining women in one way without regard to race, ethnicity, or sexuality (Ropers-Huilman, 1998). Decisions and
choices are influenced by both the surrounding social structures as well as the variety of social discourse encountered (Weedon, 1997). Poststructural feminism emphasizes the plurality and diversity of women’s lives (Aveling, 2002). My theoretical standpoint implicitly overlays both the literature review and the data analysis of this study as evidenced in the generation and analysis of multiple perspectives.

**Conceptual Frameworks and Literature**

Career development and socialization theories offer frameworks for describing student experiences of graduate education. These theories help to categorize the ways in which students choose and identify with their future career. They also provide useful models for understanding the integration of newly minted graduates into their roles as faculty.

**Career Development**

While the concept of career development includes career choice and career adjustment, the theories based on career choice are of particular interest in this study. Women, similar to men, need a variety of major sources of satisfaction in their lives—family and achievement in the outside world (Betz, 1994). The achievement of meaningful life work is an ongoing process by which the individual matches work with core identities and values (Imel, 2002). Career choice theories outline potential environmental and individual barriers and facilitators that influence one’s career choice (Astin, 1976; Betz, 1994; Farmer & Associates, 1997). Perceived barriers may lead women to underutilize their abilities—strong academic skills are not necessarily reflected in career achievements (Betz, 1994). The barriers to choice tend to stereotype women’s perceived choices and limit effective adjustment to nontraditional fields.
Socialization

Socialization, as the process of norms and roles adoption, builds commitment and loyalty to the organization or, in the case of the academy, to the discipline (Schein, 1968). The process begins with the observation of the organization and continues with the imitation of group behaviors. Next, feedback from members of the organization provides a mechanism for modification of behavior to match the organization. Finally there is an internalization or adoption of the concepts and behaviors (Bragg, 1976). Anticipatory socialization aids the individual in attaining membership and eases adjustment in the desired group (Bess, 1978; Merton, 1957). Organizational socialization, which includes initial entry and role continuance (VanMaanen & Schein, 1979), begins when an individual is hired and may continue well into their tenure.

The literature on the socialization of graduate students implies that graduate school is the beginning of anticipatory socialization or “how nonmembers take on the attitudes, actions, and values of the group to which they aspire” (Tierney & Rhoads, 1993, p. 23) for future faculty roles (Austin, 2002b; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996). Socialization in higher education can be identified when 1) the professional educational program is highly goal oriented, 2) the goals are consistently transmitted to students and there are opportunities for students to try new behaviors, 3) role models are easily identifiable, and 4) the relative homogeneity of students leads to a peer subculture (Bragg, 1976).

Analytical Frameworks and Literature

Analytical frameworks provide the basis for the coding and display of the data. The frameworks or themes appropriate for the analysis of data in this investigation include the process of individual professionalization and graduate student socialization.
**Professionalization**

Professionalization is both a way to define an occupation as a profession and a process by which one attains professional status. According to Moore (1970), an occupation is defined as a profession by meeting the following six criteria: it is a full-time occupation; there is commitment to a calling; there is recognition from an organization; there is a set of esoteric but useful skills and knowledge based on specialized education; there is a service orientation; and there is individual autonomy. A more recent perspective of the culture of professionalism includes four elements: commitment to education and academic meritocracy; independent professional judgment and autonomy; balancing and synthesizing ideas of public importance; and continuity with earlier forms of professionalism (Brint, 1994). The original professions were law, medicine, the clergy and by many definitions, college teachers (Wilensky, 1964). Applied directly to faculty, Clarke (1987) outlines eight components of professionalism: research, strong disciplinary base, difference and hierarchy, variation by discipline and institution type, core values, control over work, career base, and the role of disciplinary associations. Not everyone agrees that college faculty at all levels are a profession, particularly if research is a defining component (Bucklow & Clark, 2000; Piper, 1994; Twombly, 2004). While academic individualism, or as Bennett (1998) states “insistent individualism,” is part of the attraction to a faculty career, it also puts into question the validity of college faculty as a profession. Insistent individualism is based on autonomy, and professions by definition have accountability to both the public and to a self-assessing association—faculty have neither (Bennett, 1998).
While professionalization identifies specific professions, the process of individual professionalization describes how an individual becomes a member of a profession or more generally a career. According to Moore (1970), there are five steps to individual professionalization: recruitment and selection, professional socialization, professional career, and modes of reinforcement. Recruitment and selection of a profession (or career) may be influenced by accident, individual ability, or by choice. For example, one may choose a profession by being in the right place at the right time—the choice is unplanned. Professions may be chosen because of family backgrounds and expectations or because of inherent or learned abilities. Professional socialization is the process of acquiring knowledge and skills through education and practice. The terms professional socialization and socialization are sometimes used interchangeably. During professional socialization one begins to form a professional identity based on peers, tasks, and technical language. The professional career stage may lead to growth through increased knowledge, to obsolescence, or to a change of career. Throughout the process there are modes of reinforcement that influence persistence in the profession. The expectations of others and licensure requirements may provide negative reinforcement while intrinsic or extrinsic rewards may provide positive reinforcement. Moore’s five steps to individual professionalization are used to display the data in Chapter 4.

**Graduate Student Socialization**

Within the graduate student context, the socialization process includes interactions between students and others in their environment (Austin, 2002b). Graduate students observe, listen to, and interact with faculty in formal and informal settings. In particular, mentoring and role modeling are frequently cited as the most influential factors in both
academic persistence and academic career choice (Keith & Moore, 1995). Interaction with peers is also an important part of graduate student socialization (Austin, 2002b). First-year students learn how to be graduate students by watching more advanced students. Graduate student socialization also depends on interactions with friends and family. Perceptions of family and friends influence how a student processes and integrates socialization into the academy. The themes within graduate student socialization, faculty, peer, and family/friends, are used to display data in Chapter 4.

Methods

Research Approach

There are two primary research questions for this research investigation: What are the experiences of women graduate students who become faculty in Higher Education Administration? What are the factors that assisted in their conversion from student to faculty? These research questions can be answered through a qualitative methodology, which is naturalistic, descriptive, and grounded in the experience of the participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Qualitative research focuses on the process of the phenomenon rather than the outcomes (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). As this study explores the experiences of individual women faculty in Higher Education Administration, it is appropriate to use qualitative methods. The qualitative case study method is a useful tool to explore the experience of these women as it provides an in-depth understanding of a particular situation and helps the researcher explore the meaning assigned to the situation by the participants (Merriam, 1998). Higher Education Administration, as a field of study, can be described as an exceptional case or exemplar (Yin, 1994) in the context of equitable hiring of faculty. Stake (2000) describes this kind of case as an intrinsic case study because the
researcher is less interested in how the case might represent other cases and more interested in this particular case. This case study explores and describes the experiences of individuals within an environment that appears to be more supportive of women students and faculty than other academic departments based on enrollment and retention rates of women graduate students and hiring rates of women as faculty.

Participants

The study population is women faculty and the case study selection includes women faculty in Higher Education Administration. The initial pool of 36 women was derived from an expert panel of faculty within the field of Higher Education. A diverse group of 18 participants was chosen from the initial pool based on the following criteria: race and ethnicity; size of doctoral program; type of doctoral program (administrative-oriented or faculty-oriented); institutional type; and length of time in faculty role (1-12 years). This selection offers a maximum variation from the study population (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Data Collection

Interviews are a necessary data collection method when researchers cannot observe how individuals interpret meaning (Merriam, 1998). Therefore, to gain an understanding of how women make sense of their graduate experience interviews were conducted in-person with the eighteen participants. Five interviews took place at the annual Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) professional meeting and 13 were conducted at the home or institutional site of the participant. Each interview lasted from one to three hours and was tape recorded with participant consent (see Appendix A for consent form and Institutional Review Board forms) obtained prior to the interview date (Kvale, 1996).
addition, the interviews were treated as conversations, with the expectation that knowledge evolved through dialogue (Kvale, 1996).

Finally, in order to provide a detailed context of the participants’ experience, I solicited a copy of each participant’s curriculum vitae (CV) and teaching philosophy. These documents provided clues to connect graduate experience with participants’ entry to academe. Public documents about graduate programs in Higher Education were mined for potential issues and to provide the context of graduate education (Merriam, 1998).

*Data Analysis*

The initial interviews were transcribed within a one-month period of time after all data were collected to maintain the researcher connection to the event. By transcribing all of the data I became immersed in the data and was able to recall each participant and their story. Data were initially coded based on a “start list” (Miles & Huberman, 1994) derived from the socialization literature. The initial coding list did not fully describe the data, thus the literature was reviewed for a more appropriate analytical framework. The second “start list” included graduate student socialization topics, Moore’s professionalization theory, and career development theory.

Data were then analyzed to find subcodes within each of the major categories. The next stage of coding included clustering the data to tease out new configurations and insights (Miles & Huberman, 1994), and finding linkages and relationships between the codes and constructs (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Once codes were deemed a fit to the data, broader themes were identified. The final themes of graduate student socialization, professionalization, and self-reliance provided the framework for the presentation of data.
Data Presentation

Chapter Four presents the data organized around the themes of graduate student socialization, professionalization, and self-reliance and their corresponding codes. Data are summarized and representative quotations are provided to explain and enhance the summaries. Where appropriate, participants are identified to provide a context for their responses (for example, program type or personal characteristic). The data are then re-presented as three composite narratives that summarize the three paths to the Higher Education Administration professoriate.

Overview of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into six chapters. Chapter 2 presents a review of the career development, socialization, graduate education, and new faculty literature. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology and includes the process of data collection, analysis, and presentation. The study data are detailed in Chapter 4 and organized around the primary themes of graduate student socialization, professionalization, and self reliance. Chapter 5 provides an analysis of the data as they relate to the literature as presented in Chapter 2. Chapter 6 concludes the investigation and puts forth the implications for theory, the implications for practice and future research.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The historical literature on women in academe includes both empirical research and anecdotal evidence of gender discrimination (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988). Although historical works are important for the context of women’s representation in higher education, this study is interested in the current elements of graduate education that contribute to increased representation of women as faculty.

Overall, the current literature is critical of the methods and outcomes of graduate education but makes few distinctions between the experience of men and women (Austin, 2002b; Gaff et al., 2003; Golde & Dore, 2001; Hinchey & Kimmel, 2000; Nerad et al., 2004; Nyquist, 2002; Nyquist et al., 1989; Nyquist et al., 1999; Nyquist & Woodford, 2000). The studies that do focus on gender differences tend to identify a particular issue, such as mentoring (Bruce, 1995; Ellis, 2001; Gilbert, 1985; Neumark & Gardecki, 1997; Robst, Russo, & Keil, 1996) or specific disciplines, such as science, mathematics, and engineering (Hanson, 1996; Henwood, 1996; Lips, 1992; Rayman & Brett, 1995). Several studies found that women have different experiences of graduate education (Maher, Ford, & Thompson, 2004; Nora, Cabrera, Hagedorn, & Pascarella, 1996); however, the results are mixed on persistence and degree attainment. Seagram, Gould, and Pyke (1998) found no significant gender difference on time to completion, whereas Maher et al. (2004) found that women tended to have more family issues during graduate school and therefore took longer to graduate. The reportedly gender-neutral environment of graduate education shifts to a more antagonistic perspective when women enter the academic profession (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996). The literature about the experience of women faculty, then, is important
in order to identify expectations generated from graduate school in contrast to experiences of faculty in their career.

Career development and socialization theories offer frameworks for describing student experiences of graduate education. These theories help to categorize the ways in which students choose and identify with their future career. They also provide useful models for understanding the integration of newly minted graduates into their roles as faculty. The theoretical frameworks are presented separately followed by the related literature on graduate students and new faculty.

Career Development

While the concept of career development includes career choice and career adjustment, the theories based on career choice are of particular interest in this review. Women, similar to men, need a variety of major sources of satisfaction in their lives—family and achievement in the outside world (Betz, 1994). Achieving meaningful life work is an ongoing process by which the individual matches work with core identities and values (Imel, 2002). According to Betz (1994) individual achievement is important in that childrearing is insufficient for life-long self realization. However, occupations continue to be sex segregated and the career aspirations of young women continue to focus on stereotypical female occupations, which tend to underutilize their skills and abilities (Almquist, 1974; Betsworth, 1999; Betz, 1994; Gerson, 1985). In addition, past experiences influence subsequent choices and achievement behaviors (Hackett & Betz, 1981).

Career choice theories outline potential environmental and individual barriers and facilitators that influence one’s career choice (Astin, 1976; Betz, 1994; Farmer &
Associates, 1997). Perceived barriers lead women to underutilize their abilities—strong academic skills are not necessarily reflected in career achievements (Betz, 1994). The barriers to choice tend to stereotype women’s perceived choices and limit effective adjustment to nontraditional fields (see Table 2.1). For example, environmental barriers that might limit women’s choices include gender bias in education, lack of role models, or race discrimination. Individual barriers might include low self esteem, low expectancies for success, and math avoidance. Environmental facilitators that would expand women’s perceived choices include a working mother, proactive encouragement, and work experience. Individual facilitators include a late marriage, strong academic self concept, and profeminist attitudes.

Table 2.1

**Barriers and Facilitators of Career Choice**

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<td>Gender bias in education</td>
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<td>Barriers in higher education</td>
<td>Girls school/Women’s college</td>
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<td>Lack of role models</td>
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<td>The null environment</td>
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<td>Gender-biased career counseling</td>
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<td>Family-career conflicts</td>
<td>Late marriage or single</td>
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<td>Math avoidance</td>
<td>One or few children</td>
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<td>Low self-esteem (academic)</td>
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<td>Weak expectations of one’s self-efficacy</td>
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<td>Low expectancies for success</td>
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Individual choices then, reflect an “interaction between socially structured opportunities and constraints and active attempts to make sense of and respond to these structures” (Gerson, 1985, p. 192). Gerson reports that women have competing choices around work and family. Career and work are negatively influenced by blocked workplace opportunities, stable relationships, and high spousal income. Therefore choices are not just which career to follow but whether or not to have a career outside the home.

Gottfredson’s Theory of Circumscription and Compromise is a comprehensive career development model that seeks to explain why and how children (and young adults) recreate the social order of their parents in employment even before they enter the workforce (Gottfredson, 1981, 1996, 1997, 2005). Gender is the first element of self-concept that is checked against the desirability of an occupation and gender is the least likely factor to be violated in making vocational choices. Career development then is the matching of self to an occupation, identifying options, weighing alternatives, and then finding entry into the field. The four developmental processes of Gottfredson’s theory are 1) age-related cognitive ability, 2) self-directed development (self-creation), 3) circumscription—the process of eliminating unacceptable alternatives to create a zone of acceptable alternatives in relation to self concept (narrowing), and 4) compromise—the process of letting go of preferred alternatives for less compatible but more accessible ones in response to anticipated or external barriers. The goal then of career counseling is to facilitate exploration of career options and construction of realistic goals (Gottfredson, 1996). One of the limitations of Gottfredson’s model is that it does not account for changes in self-concept or society’s concept of acceptable occupations for women. In addition, the model does not help in understanding movement from one career to a different career.
One model that accounts for the effect of social change on individual career choice includes elements of both psychological and sociological theory. Astin (1984) proposes a need-based sociopsychological model of career choice and work behavior with four major principles. First, the motivation to work satisfies the basic needs of survival, pleasure, and contribution. The second is sex-role socialization—how children are socialized into the values of society through the role models of their parents. The third principle is based on the structure of opportunity. Structures of opportunity may change over time. For example, as the economy changes, more (or fewer) jobs are available; new jobs are created to suit a new industry, allowing new opportunities for careers. Expectations, the final principle, are developed through socialization and early perceptions of opportunity and can be shifted when structures of opportunity change. The motivation to work is the same for both men and women. However, the work expectations and outcomes, which are related to career choices, are different due to the differences in sex-role socialization and the structure of opportunity. While Astin’s model does not address how individual decisions are made, it does account for why and how an individual may progress into previously unavailable (implicit or explicit) careers.

Several studies focus on self-efficacy as a facilitator of choice and persistence toward goal achievement (Betsworth, 1999; Betz, 1994; Hackett & Betz, 1981; Juntunen, 1996). The concept of self-efficacy is based on Bandura’s (1997) social learning theory. “Perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (p. 3). Therefore if a woman does not believe she can attain a particular goal then she will probably not make an attempt. The lack of self-efficacy can be based in either one’s past experience or societal expectations.
(Betz, 1994). While self-efficacy may be important for goal setting it does not guarantee attainment.

**Academic Career Choices**

The literature specific to academic career choice focuses on two primary areas: the general study of the academic career path and the career path by discipline. Of particular interest is literature related to education as a field of study. Research on career choice in science, mathematics, and engineering (SME) is also presented to provide an example of fields with low female representation, both students and faculty.

**Academic Career Path**

Two independent types of career decisions are relevant for prospective faculty, the choice of disciplinary field and the choice of an academic career (Finkelstein, 1984). In addition there are two components that shape career decision-making, early developmental experiences and career specific sources of influence (Finkelstein, 1984). Most students choose their discipline during their early undergraduate years (by choosing a major) and up to 66% make the decision to become faculty by graduation (Lindholm, 2004). However, some “drift” into graduate school and an academic profession with little prior planning (Bess, 1978). Several studies cite the influence of faculty on an individual’s choice to become faculty and the need for continuing support and encouragement through graduate school (Antony & Taylor, 2001; Baird, 1992; Girves & Wemmerus, 1988; Tinto, 1993). Another model cites three modes for an academic career path (Bowen & Schuster, 1997). First, those who develop a “taste for serious learning” as an undergraduate and are encouraged by their faculty to continue immediately into graduate school and the academic life. The second group includes those who attain jobs after completing their undergraduate
Students are interested in academic careers for a variety of reasons. In general, they are attracted to research, ideas, teaching (Corcoran & Clark, 1984). Specific motivators include interest in teaching, working on campus, research, lifestyle, encouragement from a faculty member, and service (Golde & Dore, 2001). Students also identified the following motivations for joining the faculty ranks: desire for knowledge/research, desire to teach, engage in creative work, contribute to the discipline, interact with interesting people, and opportunity for meaningful work (Austin, 2002b).

One study that is particularly relevant to this research seeks to understand how doctoral students in education decide to pursue a career in the professoriate and how they characterize their socialization and transition (Reybold, 2003). While the underlying theme of transition is of confusion and anxiety, five identity “archetypes” are identified. The “anointed” pathway is characterized by a research apprenticeship with a mentor. The mentoring relationship is the focus of the path and provides an insider’s “track to success.” The “pilgrim” pathway is a consciously designed plan to a career in the professoriate. Students accumulate experiences as a means to their goal and mentoring relationships tend to be functional rather than relational. The “visionary” pathway is characterized by a sense of “calling” to the profession for the purpose of social change or educational reform. The “philosopher” pathway is a personal journey toward intellectual growth and enlightenment. The faculty role is idealized as a way to encourage others along the same path. The
“drifter” pathway is unfocused. The student may or may not join the academic ranks, now or in the future—all options are held open. While there is variation in the pathways and how students choose their path, the transformation from student to faculty is frequently left to chance (Reybould, 2003). In addition, it is not known how faculty members respond to each of the “archetypes.” There may be preferred pathways that are acknowledged and encouraged by faculty, perhaps the “anointed” pathway, and pathways that are discouraged or ignored, such as the “drifter” pathway.

Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Career Choices

While most of the literature on science and engineering education is based on undergraduate experience, the literature does provide a basis from which to view a field that does not have an equitable representation of students or faculty. The emphasis in the 1970s was on the individual making a wise choice based on her abilities. If women wanted to be scientists then they would need to think as scientists (Henwood, 1996). The environment of science itself was assumed neutral and not challenged as male-centered (Salner, 1985). Bias is now evident in how inquiry is conceptualized (Keller, 1995; Salner, 1985) and science continues to structure and limit women (Henwood, 1996). Because the male-centered culture of science is based on the ideal-worker norm, women did not see science as compatible with family and “chose” not to go into the field (Henwood, 1996). Even within the scientific fields there are career choices that segregate women. Women are more likely to choose teaching careers than research careers (Bentley & Adamson, 2003) and to choose biological sciences rather than physical sciences (Sax, 1996). These choices are made based on perceptions of the field and societal expectations for women. However, women students who had women role models (across all fields) of faculty who balanced
work with family were more likely to view the field as supportive. These are the women students who persist to degree completion. Furthermore, those who had SME women instructors (not just in the department) were more likely to persist in SME (Robst et al., 1996). Thus looking at SME helps describe some women who initially chose a career, such as science, and then opt out when the conditions of the field and the demands of child raising become apparent (Aveling, 2002).

The literature on career choice reflects both individual and social influences. While women’s career choices are based on interest and aptitude they also may be influenced by individual characteristics and social expectations. Role models are particularly important in nontraditional fields such as science and engineering as women seek careers where they can balance work and home life. In addition, self-efficacy is vital for persistence toward academic and career goals.

Socialization

Socialization, as the process of norms and roles adoption, is a process that enables the individual to build commitment and loyalty to the organization or, in the case of the academy, to a discipline (Schein, 1968). The process begins with the observation of the organization and continues with the imitation of group behaviors (Bragg, 1976). Next, feedback from members of the organization provides a mechanism for modification of behavior to match the organization. Finally there is an internalization or adoption of the concepts and behaviors (Bragg, 1976). Anticipatory socialization aids the individual in attaining membership in the desired group and once in the group eases adjustment (Bess, 1978; Merton, 1957). Organizational socialization, which includes initial entry and role
continuance (VanMaanen & Schein, 1979) begins when an individual is hired and may continue well into their tenure.

The socialization process can also be characterized by six separate dimensions of socialization (VanMaanen & Schein, 1979). Collective socialization takes place within a group of new members, and individual socialization refers to the tactic of training individually and in isolation from other new members. Formal socialization tactics are processes that separate the new member from the regular members and informal processes are within the context of the regular working environment. Sequential socialization identifies a sequence of steps set in a specific order, and random socialization occurs when the steps and order are unknown or unspecified. Fixed socialization refers to set timetables for progress and variable socialization provides few clues to new members about the length of a passage. Serial tactics provide experienced role models to new members so that they follow in their footsteps and disjunctive tactics leave the new member with no one who has already experienced a particular role or process. Investiture socialization refers to the valuing of skills, values, and attitudes that a new member brings to the organization, whereas divestiture socialization refers to the devaluing of an individual’s past as the organization seeks to recreate self-image based on new assumptions and values (VanMaanen & Schein, 1979).

Socialization literature is based on the integration into organizations. The socialization of graduate students, while based on socialization theory, concerns the integration of students into a discipline or career rather than integration into an organization. Socialization theory is the foundation; however, graduate student socialization is contained within a separate subset of the literature.
Graduate Education

Graduate Student Socialization

The literature on the socialization of graduate students suggests that graduate school is the beginning of anticipatory socialization or “how nonmembers take on the attitudes, actions, and values of the group to which they aspire” (Tierney & Rhoads, 1993, p. 23) for future faculty roles (Austin, 2002b; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996). Successful socialization in higher education can be identified when 1) the professional educational program is highly goal oriented, 2) the goals are consistently transmitted to students and there are opportunities for students to try new behaviors, 3) role models are easily identifiable, and 4) the relative homogeneity of students leads to a peer subculture (Bragg, 1976). Effective first-year socialization, then, assists students in making informed choices—leaving or persisting toward a faculty career (Golde, 1998). However, some research hypothesizes that a large portion of socialization in graduate school is, in fact, socialization to graduate school (Darling & Staton, 1989) or to the discipline (Schuster, 1990) and not to the professoriate. Within the graduate student context, the socialization process includes interactions between students and others in their environment (Austin, 2002b).

Faculty Interactions

Graduate students observe, listen to, and interact with faculty in formal and informal settings. Formal settings include the classroom, the laboratory, and advising office. The formal setting is important to the development and acquisition of knowledge (Weidman et al., 2001) and helps to build students’ intellectual identity (Kirk & Todd-

In particular, mentoring and role modeling are frequently cited as the most influential factors in both academic persistence and academic career choice (Keith & Moore, 1995). Much of the research cites mentoring as one of the most important factors in graduate student persistence to graduation (Antony & Taylor, 2001; Ellis, 2001; Haworth & Bair, 2000; Keith & Moore, 1995; Rice, Sorcinelli, & Austin, 2000) and persistence to faculty careers (Antony & Taylor, 2001; Keith & Moore, 1995). Mentoring includes intentional and focused faculty interactions around research and publishing, teaching, professional conduct and ethics, and general challenge and support of students. Mentoring also includes peer interactions, which according to some research, are as important as faculty interactions in graduate students’ experience (Antony & Taylor, 2001; Austin, 2002b; Bruce, 1995). Mentor support was a strong predictor of career commitment (Ülkü-Steiner et al., 2000).

When there are mentors available of both genders, there is a tendency for selection of mentors and role models to be based on gender (Gilbert, 1985; Keith & Moore, 1995; Wolf-Wendel, 2000). There are examples of cross-gender mentoring relationships; however, this is frequently due to the lack of women faculty to provide mentoring (Berg & Ferber, 1983) or the perception that male faculty have more power to assist students (Waldeck, Orrego, Plax, & Kearney, 1997). Some women have doubts about the ability of men to mentor them in a way they would find helpful (Bruce, 1995; Conners & Franklin, 1999). Conners and Franklin (1999) found that some women perceive that they will be viewed as “pushy” if they initiate a contact with a potential (male) mentor and that male
mentors prefer to work with male students. While the research reflects differences in how men and women select and interact with mentors, there is little evidence that women students access mentors in fewer numbers than men students.

In more general faculty-student interactions students who interact frequently with faculty on an informal basis are more likely to be highly productive and have a higher professional self-concept (Weiss, 1981). The closer a student is to obtaining his or her degree, the more highly committed they are to their (future) profession. Although there are slight differences by gender in terms of productivity in Weiss’ study, there are no differences in professional self-concept.

Women students who interact with women faculty perceive interactions more positively and perceive more concern for their welfare than with male faculty, but the effect size is minimal (Schroeder & Mynatt, 1993). If there are few women faculty and students in a program to provide positive interactions, then women report lower academic self-concept, lower career commitment, and perceive less sensitivity in their department for family issues (Ülkü-Steiner et al., 2000).

*Peer Interactions*

Interaction with peers is an important part of graduate student socialization (Austin, 2002b; Boyle & Boice, 1998; Golde, 2000; Hagedorn, 1999; Tinto, 1993). First-year students learn how to be graduate students by watching more advanced students. Collegiality among students, particularly first year doctoral students, enhances socialization (Boyle & Boice, 1998). While socialization is important to the overall experience of graduate students, most literature concludes that social nonintegration does not precipitate attrition (Golde, 2000; Tinto, 1993). However, conflicting results by
Hagedorn state that social integration is in fact an important retention factor for women over 30 years of age (Hagedorn, 1999). Cohorts and graduate assistantships are two examples of institutionalized peer interactions.

_Cohort groups._ A “cohort consists of a group of students who enter a program of studies together, completing a series of common learning experiences over a one to two year period” (Barnett & Caffarella, 1992, p. 1). While there are variations in cohort models, the intent is to provide a social and academic network for students. According to Barnett and Caffarella, some cohort programs involve students taking all of their coursework together during the first one or two years; others provide a core set of courses but individuals also take electives outside of the cohort. In addition, cohort programs may provide opportunities outside the classroom to foster cohort development. Retention factors associated with cohort groups include individuals’ feelings of belonging, social bonding, and reduced isolation expectations (Basom, Yerkes, Norris, & Barnett, 1996). Students in cohorts have improved academic achievement, greater motivation for scholarship, and high personal expectations. Faculty who are a part of cohort programs emphasized the positive impact on students (increased collegiality) and the increased efficiency of program delivery (Barnett, Basom, Yerkes, & Norris, 2000). The disadvantages of a cohort program include a rigid delivery system, inflexible course scheduling, forced full load, and peer interaction conflicts. Faculty observe more discussion within cohorts but also perceive that cohorts were slightly intimidating as a group (K. C. Reynolds, 1993).

_Graduate assistantships._ Research assistantships (RAs) provide some of the same benefits found in cohort groups (Perna & Hudgins, 1996). RAs have on-going interactions
with faculty, which facilitate socialization. RAs form a ready made peer group, both academic and social in nature. Assistantships reduce financial concerns for students and negate the need for outside work that might interfere with academic work. In addition, RAs learn how to conduct independent work, which is important for their own dissertation research. What is unclear from Perna and Hudgins’ work was the quality of the RA experience and their interactions with faculty.

Teaching assistants (TA) and research assistants (RA) may gain valuable experience, particularly if they are provided with support and guidance for improving their teaching and research skills; however, there are personal costs involved in these positions. TAs may not acquire necessary training and support (Nyquist et al., 1989) and are economically used as cheap labor (Hinchey & Kimmel, 2000). Academe “traffics” in RAs when they lend RAs to industry as a part of a research project (Slaughter, Campbell, Holleman, & Morgan, 2002). While the practice may provide valuable applied experience to RAs it takes them out of the academic socialization process—again providing cheap labor.

Family and Friends

Graduate student socialization also depends on interactions with friends and family. Perceptions of family and friends influence how a student processes and integrates socialization into the academy (Austin, 2002b). While interactions inform students’ perceptions of the academy and lead students to their own conclusions about academic life (Austin, 2002b), student perceptions change over time as the student progresses to degree (Baird, 1992).
Gender differences are apparent in student conflicts between school and family commitments. Women students tend to have more internal conflicts when managing priorities than men students (Conners & Franklin, 1999) and may take more time to complete degrees due to family issues (Maher et al., 2004). Women are more likely to choose an activity that involves their child than an extra activity for their professional development (B. J. Anderson & Miezitis, 1999). Both the family and school domains will occupy all available time (by default or expectation), and this results in conflicting priorities for women students with families (Grace & Gouthro, 2000). Nonetheless, it is not clear from the research how these conflicts influence future decisions about entering the professoriate.

**Graduate Student Persistence Models**

Undergraduate student persistence is a well-studied concept as evidenced by Pascarella and Terenzini’s tome *How College Affects Students* (2005). While many of the principles of undergraduate persistence can be applied to graduate students, there are distinct differences. Two major models specifically address doctoral student degree progress or persistence (Girves & Wemmerus, 1988; Tinto, 1993). In addition, with attrition rate in doctoral programs at about 50% there is concern about a loss of institutional and personal investment (M. S. Anderson & Swazey, 1998; Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992).

The model by Girves and Wemmerus (1988) indicates that involvement is the key to degree progress, and involvement is a function of financial support and student perceptions of their relationship with faculty. While departmental and student characteristics influence grades, grades themselves do not influence degree progress.
Student involvement with faculty as advisors and role models is critical to degree progress. In addition, when financial support is provided through graduate assistantships, students are more integrated into the department and in turn have more interactions with faculty.

Tinto’s model of doctoral persistence (1993) is based on three stages. The period of transition and adjustment includes the first year. Students in this stage are influenced by their social interactions with peers and faculty in both informal and formal arenas. The second stage covers the time up to candidacy (completing oral examinations or the defense of the dissertation proposal). Students acquire knowledge and develop competencies needed for doctoral research within the community of the academic department. The final stage is the work and completion of the dissertation. Individual abilities are at the forefront as the student completes the research and writes up the results. Faculty are directly involved as mentors or advisors, but there are fewer in numbers than during other stages. The nature of the student-faculty interaction at this stage will influence not only the student’s degree attainment but their future occupational opportunities as well. A graduate student’s community is focused at the college or departmental level and is specific to their field of study. Tinto also finds that the role of external communities, such as family and friends, gain importance during this final stage. Over the course of graduate work a student progresses through the stages, and relationships and influences will change over time. Persistence, then, depends on the student’s relationship to faculty, their interaction with external communities (academic discipline, family, and work), and their socialization process (Tinto, 1993).

* Note: The terms department and program are used interchangeably. The intention is to denote the academic division with which the student identifies. For example, in research institutions Higher Education Administration may be a program within a department whereas Civil Engineering may be a department within a College.
The concept of academic integration through interactions with faculty as a factor related to retention is the topic of several studies (Golde, 2000; Hagedorn, 1999; Nora et al., 1996). Academic non-integration precipitates attrition whereas social non-integration is a negative aspect but does not precipitate attrition (Golde, 2000). Golde found that unsatisfactory relationships with faculty may be the result of a lack of integration but also may be due to a change in the advisor relationship. In addition, the study reflects the importance of the advisor-student relationship at all stages not just the dissertation stage. In another study, “Institutional experiences, academic achievement, and environmental pull factors contributed most to persistence decisions” (Nora et al., 1996, p. 247). However, the relationship between students’ nonclassroom interactions with faculty and persistence is significant for women but not for men. In a study by Hagedorn (1999), data from women doctoral students over 30 years of age contradict several points in Tinto’s model. Social integration is important to retention of these students. Financial obstacles do not contribute to attrition (although they may deter enrollment) and support from family and significant others is not significant. Finally, factors that impact women’s degree progress are reported by Maher, Ford, and Thompson (2004) include appropriate and stable funding, an involved advisor, and the opportunity to participate in meaningful research projects.

Critiques of Graduate Student Education

Beyond socialization as a process of integrating graduate students into the academy, most of the current literature reflects a critique of graduate education. Not meeting the needs of the students or the needs of their future institutions is not a new critique (LaPidus, 1993); however, recent studies contend that faculty roles are expanding, changing, and providing new challenges to those just entering the field (Austin, 2002b;
Snyder & Elliot, 2005). New faculty members are expected to be competent in research, teaching, and service as well as collaborate more effectively with individuals both within the university and with outside organizations (Boyer, 1990; Rice et al., 2000). Faculty members are viewed as juggling multiple demands and trying to balance professional and personal lives (Wolf-Wendel, 2000). Thus, graduate education is challenged to fully prepare future faculty.

Several cross-disciplinary studies analyzed the components of graduate education and concluded that graduate education does not prepare graduate students for their future roles as faculty (Austin, 2002b; Golde & Dore, 2001; Nyquist et al., 1999; Wulff, Austin, & Associates, 2004). These studies did not identify gender differences in the perceptions of graduate students; however, they do provide a context for graduate education in the United States.

Students in a large, multi-campus study (Golde & Dore, 2001) were attracted to a faculty career based on an interest in teaching (83.2%), working on campus (79.9%), research (72.1%), lifestyle (59.5%), encouragement from a faculty member (47.3%), and service (40.6%). While students were focused on becoming faculty, there were perceived barriers, such as the need to obtain research funding (14.7%), work load expectation (9.6%), job market (8.5%), salary (6.1%), and tenure process (3.5%). While the barriers were acknowledged, they were not deemed insurmountable. Yet, over half of the students reported that they were unprepared to publish and were not provided training to expand their teaching skills in order to be prepared for their first faculty position. Golde and Dore (2001) summarize students’ perceptions: “The data from this study show that in today’s
doctoral programs, there is a three-way mismatch between student goals, training and actual careers” (p. 5).

Participants in a four-year qualitative study of graduates who aspired to the professoriate perceived a lack of developmentally organized, systematic, professional development opportunities; insufficient feedback and mentoring, particularly on teaching; and too few opportunities for guided reflection (Austin, 2002b; Nyquist et al., 1999). Austin’s study is of particular value because her goal was to emphasize the perspectives and voices of 79 graduate student participants in her study. The students identified the following motivations for joining the faculty ranks: desire for knowledge and research, desire to teach, desire to engage in creative and meaningful work, desire to contribute to the discipline, and desire to interact with interesting people.

Several other major studies found similar perceptions among graduate students, faculty, and other stakeholders (in business and industry). The 2000 National Doctoral Program Survey, conducted online (32,000 responses), found that the greatest concerns of graduate students included mentoring, career guidance and placement, teaching, professional training, positive program climate, and increased information to prospective students (Fagen & Wells, 2004). Through interviews, focus groups, email correspondence, and surveys, Nyquist and Woodford (2000) found conflicting views about doctoral education. There was agreement by stakeholders that doctoral programs prepare students to do quality research, but there was no agreement on whether this was sufficient—considering that students are inadequately prepared for other responsibilities (teaching, collegial evaluation, curricular planning, service, use of technology, collaboration).

Finally, a study that assessed the career paths of doctorates after attaining degrees reported
that only 67% of the students who had reported an intention to be faculty were, in fact, in faculty roles ten years later (Nerad et al., 2004). The respondents evaluated their respective doctoral programs and recommended that graduate education have more relevance to the field, have more practical job search instruction and exploration/explanation of future roles, and better match the number of doctorates graduated with market demand. In addition, respondents would have benefited from more instruction on how to teach and more practice actually teaching.

Finally, there have been critiques about the process of socialization to the professoriate. Professional socialization views students as passive, views students’ personal and social origins as irrelevant to research preparation, and “does not make problematic whose skills and values are internalized” (Pallas, 2001, p. 7). Not only do current faculty admit and encourage students who are similar to themselves (Bess, 1978) but also they expect students to be socialized to the same model. Graduate students are expected to perform independently but to be dependent socially, intellectually, and financially on the faculty and the department (Egan, 1989). This may be particularly difficult for older students who already have a professional identity and are asked to re-socialize.

**Best Practices in Graduate Education**

Several studies highlighted specific competencies needed by graduate students and practices that benefited students within graduate education. Communication, leadership, teaching and instruction, professional adaptability, and self-awareness competencies were identified as important for graduate students (Poock, 2001). Haworth and Bair (2000) found five teaching and learning practices that enrich doctoral students’ experiences:
problemitization of professional knowledge and practice; use of relational teaching and learning; emphasis on integrative inquiry; individualized mentoring; and student engagement in research-based discovery activities.

Three best practices were found among exemplary programs based on interviews with first-year graduate students, advanced graduate students, and the graduate director in ten departments (Boyle & Boice, 1998). Exemplary departments fostered collegiality rather than competition among the first-year students. The departments supported both mentoring and collegial professional relationships between first year students and faculty members. They also provided first-year students with a clear sense of program structure and faculty expectations. While this study focused on the first-year experience, the quality of interactions at the first year level may influence the experience of the students in the following years. One program that is national in scope is the Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) program (Gaff et al., 2003; Gaff, Pruitt-Logan, & Weibl, 2000). Each participating department developed a program in conjunction with current activities on their campus, provided supervised teaching experiences and a course on teaching in their discipline, and hosted discussions with faculty members and alumni. In addition, both research and teaching mentors were recruited to help students improve their skills. The early assessments show that “virtually everyone involved in PFF would recommend the program to others; and benefits to academic departments and universities include better recruitment, greater satisfaction among graduate students, and better placement” (p. 20).

Graduate student literature outlines the primary importance of faculty interaction with students as it relates to persistence and socialization. Peer interactions and family interactions are also important to student socialization but not as relevant to student
persistence. In addition, the literature critiques graduate education for not preparing students for faculty roles.

Research on New Faculty

The research on new faculty within higher education has shifted from an institutional perspective (finding faculty that will fit the current culture) to an interactional perspective (how is the environmental interaction conducive) (Tack & Patitu, 1992). Doctoral graduates who seek faculty positions have experienced graduate school as an anticipatory socialization into the professoriate (Austin, 2002b) and yet they seek positions in a variety of institutions. Students educated at research universities are not necessarily socialized to faculty roles in community colleges, four-year liberal arts colleges, and regional universities (Austin, 2002a; Austin & Wulff, 2005). If students have not been socialized appropriately to assume their new roles immediately then it will be difficult for institutions to find new faculty who will “fit” into the current culture (Tierney & Rhoads, 1993). When an existing culture is primarily male, white, and over 50 it will be difficult for new faculty who are increasingly diverse to fit cultural expectations. Even if a new hire appears to fit the organization there are additional concerns once they are hired (Rice et al., 2000; Tierney & Rhoads, 1993), perhaps due to the disconnection between graduate education and faculty role expectations. Socialization continues with organizational socialization (Tierney & Rhoads, 1993), which begins with an initial entry substage and then role continuance. Those at the initial entry stage have different concerns and issues than those who have moved on to role continuance.

The three core concerns of early career faculty are not differentiated by gender but may be attributable to a difference in generations (Rice et al., 2000; Tierney & Bensimon,
1996; Tierney & Rhoads, 1993). First, new faculty members are troubled by an evaluation process that is unclear, vague, and has shifting expectations; the tenure process does not live up to its potential (Corcoran & Clark, 1984; Rice et al., 2000; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996). The system “is undermining the very creativity, energy, and commitment that makes new faculty of such value” (Rice et al., 2000, p. 12). Second, the academic community, according to new faculty, is not a culture of collegiality. There is a bimodal distribution of senior faculty who have been in their field for 20 to 30 years and early-career faculty, creating two dramatically distinct groups rather than a single, unified, collaborative community (Rice et al., 2000). Third, early-career faculty are more interested in a balanced life—balancing their professional life and balancing personal with the professional (Sorcinelli & Near, 1989). Early-career faculty are not interested in a 24-hour commitment and 80-hour work week (Karber, 2005; Tack & Patitu, 1992).

While the concerns of new faculty are not gendered, there is evidence that their experience may be gendered. Tierney and Bensimon (1996) found a wide variety of experiences for women faculty. Some environments were clearly hostile, some were subtly undermining, and a few supported and encouraged women faculty. Those organizations that were not flexible and welcoming required the women faculty to “accommodate” to the environment—doing “smile work” and “mom work” in order to get by. Organizations with a positive climate contained “chairs who were sensitive to the personal lives of women, an equity-oriented institutional ethos, and a critical mass of women” (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996, p. 94). Two studies found that women acculturate to the climate as much as they are socialized into it (Jensen, 1982; A. Reynolds, 1992). Finally, women faculty had more difficulty finding mentors and “describe environments where they must struggle against
subtle discrimination to be taken seriously and as the equals of their male colleagues” (Rice et al., p. 20).

Therefore, it is apparent that the new faculty are not prepared for their new roles. They have been educated at research institutions that may not prepare them for work in other types of institutions. Faculty have not been prepared for the multiple roles that they must balance and their tenure expectations may be ambiguous. Although women may experience hostile academic environments—toward their academic work or their personal lives—both men and women early career faculty are interested in living a balanced life.

Summary

Overall, the literature provides information to understand the process of graduate education and the experiences of graduate students. Experience differs by gender, race, institution, and discipline. Experience is connected to retention or continued enrollment and graduation is described in terms of connection to the institution, faculty, and peers. Socialization is also described by interactions with the institution, faculty, and peers. However, socialization appears to be explained through two different concepts. First, socialization reflects academic integration and is a retention factor. Socialization also deals with the adoption of norms and roles of a future career as a faculty member. Not all graduate students, particularly those in the professional schools, are set for a faculty career. Therefore, one can be socialized to graduate school without being socialized to an academic career.

Even those students who intend to be faculty have difficulties in adjusting to the academic life. They watched their faculty to learn how to act; they worked with each other and built networks; they were GAs and TAs when it was expected. Yet, graduate school
did not prepare them for their future faculty roles. While students readily listed what was missing from their graduate programs, they still continued into the faculty ranks.

What is missing is research about the how and why students cross over to faculty ranks, both for those who were prepared and those who were unprepared. Higher Education Administration as a field of study is not disaggregated in the literature; therefore, it is unknown whether as a field it provides a more complete socialization process into academe or if there are other factors that contribute to an equitable conversion of women students to faculty. Thus, there are two primary research questions for this research: What are the experiences of women graduate students who become faculty in Higher Education Administration? What are the factors that assisted in their conversion from student to faculty?
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

The research questions can be answered through a qualitative methodology, which is naturalistic, descriptive, and grounded in the experience of the participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Qualitative research focuses on the process of the phenomenon rather than the outcomes. As this study explores the experiences of individual women faculty in Higher Education Administration, it is appropriate to use qualitative methods. In addition, the research questions asked are consistent with a feminist perspective. Reinharz (1992) emphasizes the need to seek out the voices of women in order to understand how they make meaning. Specifically this study seeks the voices of women faculty in Higher Education Administration and how they make meaning of their graduate education. Stewart (1992) outlines several feminist strategies for studying women’s lives. The two that are most relevant to this study are “look for what’s been left out” and “identify women’s agency in the midst of social constraint” (p. 13). This study looks at a discipline (Higher Education Administration) that has not been highlighted in graduate education research and explores how women in Higher Education Administration programs created their own professional paths.

The qualitative case study method is a useful tool to explore the experiences of these women. The case study provides an in-depth understanding of a particular situation and helps the researcher explore the meanings assigned to the situation by the participants (Merriam, 1998). The case study is useful when there is a bounded system, either formal or informal, and involves a finite number of people (Merriam, 1998). A case study is particularly well-suited to the examination of a wide variety of evidence and may include
documents, artifacts, observations, and interviews (Yin, 1994). Finally, the results of a case study are thick, rich descriptions that can provide increased understanding of the population and insights to assist future policy development (Merriam, 1998).

Of specific interest to me is the experience of women in Higher Education Administration. As a field of study, Higher Education Administration can be described as an exceptional case or exemplar (Yin, 1994) in the context of equitable hiring of faculty, one that could provide insight into graduate education for women. Stake (2000) describes this type of research as an intrinsic case study because the researcher is less interested in how the case might represent other cases and more interested in this particular case. This case study explores and describes the experiences of individuals within an environment that appears to be more supportive of women students and faculty than other academic departments based on graduate rates of students and hiring rates of women faculty. Women faculty in Higher Education Administration is a bounded system and there are a limited number of possible participants. Therefore, the research questions can be answered through the case study method.

Participant Selection

The study population is women faculty and the case study selection included women faculty in Higher Education Administration. The initial pool of 36 participants was derived from an expert panel of faculty within the field of Higher Education based on a set of criteria. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) suggest a criterion-based selection when generalizability of the findings is not a salient aspect of the research, and where the primary goals of the research are exploration and explication of meaning. Different environments may influence both a graduate student’s experience and faculty career
choices; therefore, the criteria for the final selection included a variety of program characteristics (see Table 3.1). This case study included 18 women faculty currently working at Doctoral/Research-Extensive institutions, Doctoral/Research-Intensive institutions, and Master’s Colleges and Universities I institutions (Carnegie, 2005). The participants received their doctorates from Doctoral/Research-Extensive institutions or from Doctoral/Research-Intensive institutions. In addition, participants received their doctorates from and work in two types of higher education programs. Administrative-oriented programs are geared toward practicing professionals who plan to continue on the same career path. The faculty-oriented are designed for students who planning a career as a faculty member in the field of Higher Education Administration. The final selection criteria was variation in length of time in faculty role, which ranged from less than 1 year to 12 years, coinciding with the shift of more women than men in education graduate programs (Stark et al., 1985) and the increase in Higher Education Administration doctoral programs. This selection offers a maximum variation from the study population (Miles & Huberman, 1994).
Data Collection

Interviews are a necessary data collection method when researchers cannot observe how individuals interpret meaning (Merriam, 1998). Therefore, to gain an understanding of how women make sense of their graduate experience, interviews were conducted in-person with the eighteen participants. In-person contact is important in this context as the social interaction is vital to understanding the meaning making of the participants (Warren, 2002). The interviews took place at the 2005 Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) annual meeting or at the institutional site of the participant and lasted from one to three hours. All interviews were taped with participant consent (see Appendix A for consent form & Appendix B for Institutional Review Board forms) obtained prior to
the interview date (Kvale, 1996). This allowed the participants to understand the intent of
the research and protected their confidentiality (Warren, 2002) while setting the agreed
terms of the interview in advance. The interview protocol was based on Seidman’s (1991)
suggestions to include time for both relating experience and reflection. In addition, the
interviews were treated as conversations, with the expectation that knowledge evolves
through dialogue (Kvale, 1996). The first question, “Tell me about your graduate school
experience” was intentionally open-ended in order to provide an opportunity for
participants to provide their general perceptions of their graduate experience. I allowed the
participants to respond until they asked for more direction (either verbally or nonverbally).
Specific questions were then asked such as, “What prompted you to return for a
doctorate?” and “What were your goals when you entered your program?” Again, I
allowed the participants to fully respond before moving to a new topic. At times I
prompted the participants to provide more detail about a particular experience or to return
to a question. I was looking for both a timeline of their experience and specific interactions
with faculty, students, and family. The participants usually provided the process first, and
then I asked questions to draw out the interaction experiences. Therefore, the data reflect
both the process of graduate education and the interpersonal interactions during the
process. After the participants described their graduate experience, including the point at
which they decided to pursue a faculty career, I asked about their experiences as a new
faculty member. The resulting data showed the relationships between graduate education
as preparation for a faculty career and the reality of the faculty career. A sample list of
questions is included as Appendix C. The interviews helped to answer both of the research
questions.
In order to provide a detailed context of the participants’ experience, I requested a copy of each participant’s curriculum vitae (CV) and teaching philosophy. These documents provided clues to connect graduate experience with entering academe. Public documents about graduate programs in Higher Education were also mined for potential issues and to provide the context of graduate education (Merriam, 1998). Follow up electronic mailings to three participants provided an opportunity to clarify interview data and to obtain current CVs.

Data Analysis

The initial interviews were transcribed within a one-month period of time after all data were collected to maintain my connection to the event. By transcribing all of the data I became immersed in the data and was able to recall each participant and her story. After transcription was complete, I wrote memos about what was relevant to the participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The transcripts were peer reviewed by a colleague who provided a summary of the primary participant issues (Creswell, 2003). She later confirmed the plausibility of the final coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The data were initially coded based on a “start list” (Miles & Huberman, 1994) derived from the socialization literature. The initial list included the dimensions of socialization as defined by Van Maanen and Schein (1979): collective socialization compared to individual socialization; formal socialization compared to informal processes; sequential socialization compared to random socialization; fixed socialization compared to variable socialization; serial tactics compared to disjunctive tactics; and investiture socialization compared to divestiture socialization. The start list also included an analysis of gender as a factor in graduate socialization and career choice.
The start list codes did not fit the data. The interview questions did not yield relevant responses. As a result, I consulted the literature to find an appropriate framework. Graduate student socialization topics, rather than a general socialization theory, appeared to be a better fit. The professionalization process as outlined by Moore (1970) and career development processes also showed merit. These analytical frameworks from the literature were appropriate because my research questions and my interview questions were based on the literature.

The qualitative analysis software N6* by NVIVO was used to code and sort the data. Each interview document was prepared by breaking the data down into smaller paragraphs. N6 allows coding to be done at the paragraph, line, or word level, but all data are coded at the same level with prior decision making required. I chose to code at the paragraph level in order to provide context for the selected data. Once all documents were prepared, I coded the first interview using the socialization, professionalization, and career development codes as listed in Table 3.2. There were also some program characteristics codes that were quantitative in nature and were kept separate from analysis codes (see Table 3.3). In addition, new codes were generated from the first four transcripts—it was initially unclear how they these new codes would relate to the framework. Table 3.4 lists the codes generated from the data.

* N6 is a qualitative software package that allows the researcher to code and sort data based on predetermined codes. Codes can be added, changed or redirected as necessary.
Table 3.2

*Data Analysis Grid*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate Student Socialization</th>
<th>Career Development</th>
<th>Professionalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty perceptions</td>
<td>Entering field</td>
<td>Recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department connection</td>
<td>Motivation for doctorate</td>
<td>Professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>Program choice</td>
<td>Socialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisor/chair</td>
<td>Initial career goal</td>
<td>Professional career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>Gottfredson’s</td>
<td>Reinforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>circumscription and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends and family</td>
<td>compromise (unused)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decision to become faculty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transitions to each role</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3

*Program Characteristics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative-oriented versus Faculty-oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time versus Full-time attendance pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort model versus noncohort model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsored activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4

*Data-generated Codes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-reliance: creating a path; gaining experiences; teaching; research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual stimulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal program ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of assistantship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of the transcripts were coded using the codes listed above and subcodes were added as needed (subcodes are not listed in this text). The next stage of coding included re-clustering to seek new configurations and insights into the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and looking for linkages and relationships between the codes and constructs (LeCompte &
Preissle, 1993). This process was ongoing as I began to write up the presentation of the data. The final arrangement of the codes fit into the three themes. Graduate student socialization, and professionalization were themes derived from the literature, and self-reliance was developed based on the data (see Table 3.5). The career development theme became subsumed under professionalization. The N6 software was crucial in the realignment of codes as it allowed me to move individual codes or copy an entire set of codes to a new theme. This process assisted me in presenting the data as the needed quotations for each theme and code were instantly available.

Table 3.5

*Final Themes and Codes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate Student Socialization</th>
<th>Professionalization</th>
<th>Self-Reliance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty perceptions</td>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td>Creating a path</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department connection</td>
<td>Entering field</td>
<td>Gaining experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>Motivation for doctorate</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisor/chair</td>
<td>Program choice</td>
<td>Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>Initial career goal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>Decision to become faculty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends and family</td>
<td>Professional Socialization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional career</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imposter syndrome</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reinforcement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Presentation**

The presentation of data includes description, analysis, and interpretation of the data based on the three themes of graduate student socialization, professionalization, and self-reliance (Wolcott, 1994). Chapter 4 provides a summary of the quantitative information obtained from the participant interviews and CVs. The primary interview data are organized around each of the themes and their corresponding codes. Data are summarized and representative quotations are provided to explain and enhance the
summaries. Where appropriate, participants are identified to provide a context for their responses (for example, program type or personal characteristic). The data are then represented as three composite narratives that summarize the three paths to the Higher Education Administration professoriate.

Study Trustworthiness

The choice of research methodology based on the research questions provides the foundation for this study’s trustworthiness. By matching the kind of questions (meaning-making) with qualitative methodology, the study uses an exemplary context (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Coding themes were reviewed by a colleague, which provides internal validity of the study results (Merriam, 1998). External validity is provided through the extensive presentation of the participants’ words as thick, rich description (Merriam, 1998). Detailed records of the research process and data provide additional reliability (Marshall & Rossman, 1999) and contribute to the overall trustworthiness of the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Researcher Bias

The primary source of researcher bias in this study is my closeness to the field of Higher Education Administration. It is my major field of study and I already knew or knew of most of the participants. My interest in the topic evolved out of my own experience in graduate education, not as a desire to assess the field due to a positive or negative experience, but because of my own particular career path. My feminist tendencies also influence my research methodology and choice of topics. I believe that underrepresentation of women in a discipline or field of study can not be rectified without looking at the underlying expectations of the field. On the other hand, overrepresentation may also be due
to underlying expectations that contribute to a feminized field. By utilizing literature-based themes, I have attempted to minimize my own bias.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter presents the data in three sections. A description of Higher Education Administration graduate programs begins the chapter to provide the context for the participants’ experiences. The information about programs is based on participant data and a review of program websites. Quantitative data about the group as a whole are then presented, including the selection criteria and demographic-type data based on the interviews and curriculum vitae (CV). The interview data are then organized around the primary themes—graduate student socialization, professionalization, and self-reliance.

Higher Education Administration Graduate Programs

Higher Education Administration graduate programs are generally found within a College of Education. The program may be housed within a variety of departments, including Educational Leadership, Educational Administration, or stand alone as a department of Higher Education or Higher Education Administration. A related degree, or specialization, frequently found within Higher Education is Student Affairs or College Student Personnel Administration (Evans & Williams, 1998).

Goals of Higher Education Programs

The goals of Higher Education doctoral programs focus on leadership, scholarship and the application of knowledge for the benefit of the public. The following goals are examples excerpted from sample university websites:

Our main goal for graduate training is to prepare individuals for leadership in shaping the future of higher education through generating and applying knowledge, advancing the role of higher education in supporting the public good, and improving institutional practice. (Higher Education, University of Michigan)
The Higher Education and Organizational Change (HEOC) Division is committed to advancing the scholarship, research and practice of higher education and organizational transformation in the United States and abroad. (Higher Education and Organizational Change, UCLA)

This nationally recognized graduate program in Higher Education prepares students for leadership positions in higher education administration, policy analysis, and scholarship. (Higher Education, University of Maryland)

The Higher Education and Student Affairs (HESA) program prepares individuals for leadership roles in postsecondary education and for serving students in various educational and cultural contexts. (Higher Education and Student Affairs, The Ohio State University)

**Coursework in Higher Education Programs**

Coursework in Higher Education programs includes core coursework in higher education foundations, administration, finance, governance and organization, law, and research methods. Sample course titles include Law and Higher Education (Higher Education Administration, North Carolina State University), Organizational and Administration of Higher Education (Higher Education, University of Maryland), History of Higher Education (Higher Education Administration and Student Personnel, Kent State University), and Finance of Higher Education (Higher Education, University of Arizona). Specializations may include student affairs, public policy, administration, and finance.

**Future Roles for Graduates**

Most programs acknowledge the diversity of future careers for graduates of their programs. For example, the University of Michigan states, “Our curriculum is geared
toward preparation for administrative, faculty, research, and policy careers in higher education and related enterprises. Similarly the College Student Personnel program at the University of Maryland relates the variety of possibilities for doctoral graduates: “Doctoral graduates become graduate faculty, direct such offices as academic advising centers, student activities, offices of student life, multicultural centers, assessment and research, learning support services, career centers, and become deans of students or assistant vice presidents for student affairs.” Bowling Green State University emphasizes the leadership roles of their graduates: “It is intended to launch its graduates into new areas and/or higher levels of leadership in colleges and universities.”

While individual institutions may have a specific focus, such as policy, there are commonalities such as furthering knowledge and improving leadership within education. In addition, the foundational coursework is similar from program to program. As the coursework may be similar, prospective students are advised to consider the faculty and their interests, available specialties, program requirements, the ethics of the program, and financial support in making their application decisions.

Group Profile

The quantitative information was obtained from the interviews of participants and from participants’ CV. The data are presented as group data rather than identifying or describing individuals, as too much information attributed to one individual would jeopardize participant confidentiality.

The participants were diverse based on race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. There were four women of color, one who identified as international and three who identified as lesbians (see Table 4.1). One identified as working class, two as first
generation college students, and one as an immigrant (at a young age). Two gave birth to children during the doctoral process, and two came into the program with children.

Yet they possessed similar academic backgrounds. Of the 18 participants, 17 attended a Research Extensive institution and one attended a Research Intensive institution. One participant received a D.Ed. (doctorate of education) and the rest received Ph.D.s. Program variance is described by program type (administration-oriented or faculty-oriented), cohort-status, and attendance patterns. While the number of years beyond the doctoral degree of the participants ranged from less than one to 12 years, one-third (6) had 4-6 years of experience beyond their degree.

Table 4.1

Demographic Information of Participants and Programs Attended

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-identified non-dominant identities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women of color</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral institution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research extensive</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research intensive</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degrees attained</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.Ed.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral program focus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration-oriented</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty-oriented</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program location</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Student Personnel</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education/Student Affairs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Leadership</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Administration</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.1 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral program cohort</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat cohort</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No cohort</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral program student attendance pattern</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years out of doctoral degree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1-3 years</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 years</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9 years</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12 years</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pseudonyms were given to each participant in order to provide further anonymity. Consideration was given to assigning last names as way to promote a professional stature; however, last names frequently carry race and ethnic associations that may jeopardize anonymity or imply a race/ethnic association. Therefore, the assigned first names are listed in Table 4.2 along with the type of institution where they currently are employed.
Table 4.2

Participant Pseudonyms and Current Institution Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Current Institution Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barb</td>
<td>Research Extensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cate</td>
<td>Masters I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dina</td>
<td>Research Intensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fran</td>
<td>Research Extensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gail</td>
<td>Research Extensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>Research Intensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean</td>
<td>Research Intensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kath</td>
<td>Research Intensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lara</td>
<td>Masters I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Research Extensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nan</td>
<td>Research Extensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>Research Extensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rita</td>
<td>Research Extensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sela</td>
<td>Research Intensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terri</td>
<td>Research Intensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Val</td>
<td>Research Extensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wren</td>
<td>Research Extensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zena</td>
<td>Research Intensive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Themes

Graduate student socialization, professionalization, and self-reliance provide the framework for the presentation of the interview data. The data are organized around each theme and the corresponding codes. Each set of data is summarized and representative quotations are provided to explain and enhance the summaries. Where appropriate, participants are identified to provide a context for their responses (for example, program type or personal characteristic).
Graduate Student Socialization

Faculty Interactions

The participants in this study had a variety of experiences with the faculty in their programs. A few had a strong mentoring relationship with a single faculty member and little contact outside coursework with the rest of the faculty. Many had strong advising relationships. A few had negative experiences with one particular faculty member.

However, most cited collegial relationships with faculty in their department. In addition to individual interactions with faculty, students spoke of their interactions with their faculty as a whole—their departmental connection.

Mentors. Six of the participants described a strong mentoring relationship that began either at the beginning of their doctoral process or at some point during their degree. Mentoring was described as a relationship with a faculty member that went beyond advising for coursework or a dissertation. Mentors were those who took an interest in the individual and then helped them find opportunities and jobs through their own personal networks. Those who came into the program with a research agenda that fit the interests of a particular faculty member quickly formed a mentoring relationship. For example, both Kath and Barb did not look for a specific doctoral program, rather, they sought a specific faculty member who did research in their interest area and would support their dissertation. This connection, both prior to entry into the doctoral program and during the entire graduate school process, clearly created a professional relationship to faculty members.

Kath worked with her mentor from the time she started the program and continues to do research with her in their mutual field of interest. Kath describes the kind of opportunities her mentor provided.
She really gave me the chance to build all the skills that people would be looking for as I looked for faculty jobs. She arranged for me to supervise the master’s students in their internships, I did a lot of the logistics. She got me the means for the primary research assistant for a couple of research projects. Helping me sort ideas for the dissertation and how I was going to approach that. Co-presenting at conferences pulled me into doing some of that. She took very, very good care of me.

Barb was matter of fact in stating that she started her program because of one particular faculty member who had the same research interests and became her mentor. When asked if she had working relationships with other faculty, she stated, “I don’t think so, [he] was the main person who I connected with. My other professors were fine and I enjoyed their classes but there was no strong connection. Because the other thing is when you have someone working on [my] research issues, there is just one person.”

Several participants found one faculty member during their program who shared their research. Nan and Mary worked with their advisors based on initial research interests and the connections developed into mentoring relationships. The mentoring for these students included a guided approach to their research skills as outlined by Nan.

I learned so much more from him than I did from my coursework. Details, beyond just the statistics I needed to know from my courses, I learned a lot more about how to apply it to particular research questions, what were appropriate research questions, more sophisticated data analyses. He and I co-wrote together so I got a better sense of how to write an article versus a paper, so that was pretty key.
Val started with one advisor and switched when a faculty member, new to the program, asked her to work with her on a research project. The faculty member became an advisor, friend, and mentor. Val credits her mentor with not only invaluable program advisement but also with helping her secure her first job.

And when it came time for the job search, the connections that [she] had, emailing saying “my student, my protégée, is looking for a job, these are her experiences.” I ended up getting four job offers. Being connected and understanding the culture and saying to me, “you don’t have the prestige, so you have to publish.” I did a book review with her: it’s not major but it’s your name out there. I published my master’s thesis; I presented: all things that without her I wouldn’t have known to do.

While most mentors were also the student’s advisor and/or dissertation chair, a few mentors were found outside the program area or department. These mentors were frequently associated with specific programs that crossed academic boundaries and provided mentoring at both the professional and emotional levels. Dina, a student of color, found mentors through a campus-wide program for future faculty of color and at her assistantship site. These mentors provided the support that she needed to counteract the lack of faculty of color in her department.

I also had a mentor. I was in the graduate mentor program. So, it’s like I have to have a mentor. The good thing for me, working for the program, was that I got to pick my mentor… [Another mentor] was the advisor for [the black graduate student organization] and we hit it off real quick. When [my advisor] would give me stuff and I’d go, “I don’t know what she’s talking about.” [Mentor] would take it and
say, “let me show you what she means.” She was that kind of person who was a bridge because sometimes advisors don’t give you an example.

**Advisor/dissertation chair.** The second type of faculty interaction most often mentioned by the participants was their relationship with their advisor/dissertation chair. Wren described her advisor.

She has a fairly low key advising style but I knew that if I had questions she was always available. I remember in the very first, it might have been in my first month, she took me out to dinner, which was wonderful.

Her advisor connected with her on a personal level but then helped her to see that the research interests she put on her application were not what she was passionate about. By challenging Wren, her advisor allowed her to develop her doctoral research and, in fact, her life’s work. Most participants viewed their relationship with their dissertation chair as the most important one in beginning their academic career, and valued the balance between challenge and support offered by their chair. Lara remembered that her chair challenged her to dig deeper into the research and push beyond the obvious. Fran valued her chair for his persistence—he kept her moving through the process. Mary valued her chair’s organizational support—he helped her focus on the important components of the dissertation process. Terri had an advisor who helped her control her own tendency to see the data as endless.

[She] is just amazing; she walks on water. The whole dissertation process was phenomenal… After I did my data collection we had a two hour meeting and I did a brain dump. And I probably rewrote chapter 4 more than 5 times. I had all these different ways to view it. She was very good about honing me in.
According to the participants’ descriptions, advisors/dissertation chairs frequently ventured into mentoring, but usually stayed within the context of academic process.

*Negative relationships.* Not all experiences of faculty relationships were positive. However, the students grew from the negative experience and did not let it interfere with their degree progress. Jean’s initial chair appeared to block her progress; thus she switched chairs. Her new advisor, while not an expert in her research area, was highly valued: “[His] role was giving me permission to do what I needed to do to stay authentic to my research. As chair he was the only one that was able to do that. The fact that he was alright with that was outstanding.” Two other participants related difficulties with their dissertation chairs that resulted in significant changes in their relationship. Kath worked through the difficulties with her chair and continues to do research with her. In contrast, Rita’s original chair left the institution and was replaced by someone who did not know her research. The new chair outwardly appeared to support her but kept delaying the process by erecting barriers. Pat, Zena, and Val mentioned one specific faculty relationship that was not, in their terms, productive or effective—and in one extreme case involved sexual harassment. While these women had a negative experience with one professor, they viewed the experience as an aberration within an otherwise positive graduate experience.

Gail had a more difficult time connecting to her faculty. Her advisor intimidated her and the other faculty maintained a distance through their actions. She gives an example of the type of behavior that created a distrustful environment.

I will say that the faculty, I want to make sure I’m being fair in saying this, by and large until the last year almost did everything to further students’ sense of disconnect. I even think, in my experience, their behaviors and things they said
were negative rather than even neutral. Let me give you an example. One person, one faculty member who was on my committee, told me that my work was fabulous: “you need to think about this in terms of a book”….I came to learn several weeks later that she hadn’t even read it; she hadn’t had time yet. It really threw me because you think when you get that feedback from someone who cares so much about and has power over you in that particular way, not just as an individual but as a representation of the larger body that you are aspiring to. They give their stamp of approval that you then realize means absolutely nothing.

*Departmental connection.* The final aspect of the participants’ relationship to faculty was the overall attitude of faculty toward doctoral students and the students’ connection to the department. While some faculty made it difficult to be a graduate student, most faculty made a point of connecting with students at many levels, increasing the students’ connection to the department. While most participants alluded to but did not expressly define this connection, Jean provided a clear, positive statement.

One of things that I loved about [the institution] is that the faculty regarded us as colleagues and treated us as colleagues, especially the doctoral students. That was really important. Having been a professional so long and then to be a graduate student…across the university you were looked at as a graduate student but within the program the faculty really didn’t buy into that. And that really made a big difference.

Relationships to individual faculty helped to contribute to a student’s sense of connection to the department; however, physical proximity to the department also played a role. Sela said that “Getting that assistantship in the department was what really mattered to me.”
Those students who had assistantships within or adjacent to the department benefited from being around faculty. They had more opportunities for interaction, research, and teaching. Fran offered the benefits of having an assistantship in the department:

I was fortunate to have a graduate assistant position in the department. So that immersion was unmatched. I could see doctoral students who weren’t in the department who weren’t as connected, didn’t know what was going on, were feeling less a part of this bigger experience. I was really lucky that I was right there. I was just down the hall from every single faculty.

Housed in the department for her assistantship, Terri volunteered to help out whenever possible. This helped the faculty, but it also gave her far more experience than the majority of the students in her program who attended part time. Several participants had assistantships elsewhere on campus and migrated toward the department when it became clear that they wanted to be faculty themselves. The opportunities that became available due to proximity were apparent in Mary’s account of her migration to the department after her coursework.

In my third year, when I finished coursework and was looking for an assistantship, [I] came in to the office to work in the administrative GAships for the program. That’s when it really kicked in. I started to do co-teaching, not as part of the assistantship, but because I had been socially a part of the group. I saw firsthand what the faculty were doing every day, helped them sometimes with courses or proofreading… The assistantship experiences were really what switched me into thinking about what faculty do and seeing that. And within a program that was designed to bring you into administration.
Peer Interactions

The interaction with peers was generally positive. Those who had little peer interaction would have preferred more. Connection to other graduate students on an academic level was usually based on proximity to other students (as provided by cohorts) or on a particular stage of doctoral process (for example, comprehensive exam, dissertation). Social networks were more varied and included students outside the primary department.

Cohort interactions. Participants who reported they were a part of a cohort described three types of programs: cohort programs with programming outside of the coursework; cohort programs with the first year sequence as the primary interaction; and cohort programs where students took most classes together and had assistantships in the same office space. Students who were a part of a cohort were more likely to have frequent peer interactions, especially at the beginning of their programs. Helen was a part of an intentional cohort with programming beyond the classroom, including brown bag seminars, which drew the community together during their first year. Mary’s cohort experience was strong but centered primarily on the coursework sequence. Because the students saw each other every week, they developed a cohort relationship. Cate related that the interactions came out of the structure of the cohort program, but outside activity depended on student initiative.

I think the department sets up the curriculum based on a cohort model. In our intro classes it’s only the cohort, that’s the structure the department sets but because it is very much the focus. Everyone has a research assistantship. We work in the same
building. It’s that type of collegial cohort type of model. The things that we would
do, like socialize or have study groups, those were all organized by students.

Stage specific interactions. Students who were not a part of a strong cohort model
found other means to make connections with their peers. Specific events during the
doctoral process triggered different types of interactions between students. When it came
time for comprehensive examinations, at least those in programs that had universal
questions, students found each other and created study groups. For Rita it was the only
time she worked with other students.

At the time the exam was about reading dusty great works and taking an exam on
them. You had to do that before you began your second year of class [as a fulltime
student], so for us it came up really quickly. That first summer we spent studying,
that was the only time we really did that together.

The dissertation process was another point at which students tended to gather in support of
each other. The groups fell into three types: emotional or motivational support groups;
writing groups; or combination groups. Pat describes the motivational role of her
dissertation group.

Actually there was a group that was a more motivational dissertation group. We
met starting in the fall of that fourth year, every three or four weeks. More like a
goal setting and motivation. We didn’t read each other’s work. It was definitely,
“here’s what I’ve done, here is what I promise to do by next time.”

Several participants completed the research sequence or dissertation writing class with
other students who later became their dissertation support group. The members of this type
of group had a common understanding of the dissertation process based on mutual
coursework. They were able to take the process and use it to critique each other’s work. These groups tended to provide both emotional support and writing support as described by Nan.

There was something called a research practicum. It was kind of like a pre-dissertation course. Many of us were in that course. About half of us split up and decided to form our own dissertation group. So we met every week. We exchanged drafts of our proposals and dissertations; we read each others work; we read each others articles; and more importantly we provided a lot of moral support. The dissertation can be very isolating when you don’t have that structure and you are only talking to your advisor. We met on a regular basis every week and helped each other emotionally. It’s such an emotional process from the proposal up until the very end. To have that was extremely helpful.

Kath, Jean, and Cate connected with other students who had similar research interests and created dissertation/research groups. Ultimately for Cate, her dissertation came out of the bigger work of her student research group.

In contrast, Sela was not looking for emotional support from a dissertation group. Her focus was on writing a high quality dissertation and the group’s purpose was to improve their writing: “it wasn’t [to] get together to wallow.” Each week one person sent out their chapter or article and at their meeting received feedback. Her participation in a writing group challenged her in ways that ultimately improved her writing.

People went after you, you got some serious feedback. I was so struggling with the first chapter and so wanted to be done. I read the feedback from one of them, and I laid face down on the bed for 5 minutes regrouping. Saying, “okay, you asked for
this feedback, it’s helpful, it’s making you a better writer.” It was a huge challenge, but it pushed me in new ways. I got a lot more of that from them than I did from the faculty in some ways.

Peers were also helpful in planning for paper presentations. While the faculty-oriented programs emphasized the importance of presenting at national conferences, most of the students looked to their peers for support. Dina attended sessions in the department on presenting at conferences; Nan and Cate worked with their peers to brainstorm ideas and practice their presentation skills; Gail presented with others based on results from their mutual research assistantship.

Social networks. Students in cohorts not only supported each other academically but they comprised a social group. Activities within the department that included master’s and doctoral students provided additional opportunities for social interaction. Mary found that her social network included a mix of students.

The further I got into my program the more I interacted outside the cohort... By the second, third, fourth year I probably spent more time with the cohorts ahead and behind. I would say the best friends I came out of the program with were sprinkled: one or two from my cohort; one from the cohort ahead of me; and one from behind. Those without cohort programs created a social network that included people from their assistantships, master’s students, and acquaintances from coursework. Students who identified with non-dominant groups found social support in student organizations on campus. These organizations included Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT), Black, and International graduate and undergraduate student groups. Kath explains the importance of these groups in her graduate student experience.
Friends I could share what was going on in my life, even though they didn’t understand the professional issues. I complained about my advisors and it wouldn’t get back to anyone because they weren’t in the same field. When you are part of one minority or another you tend to form connections with other people who share that identity, regardless of the other ways in which you are different.

Friendships made while completing a doctorate were important to most of these women for the support they provided during the doctoral process. They frequently cited them as the closest friends they have and have kept in contact with them more than any other group in their lives. These friends are now their colleagues and are the basis of their professional network. Lara describes her friendships.

Unlike my undergrad or master’s program, I became very close with people through my doctoral program. I don’t communicate with hardly anyone who I went to undergrad with. I think the closest friendships I’ve had in my life came through the doctoral program.

While 17 of the 18 participants were full-time students, half were enrolled in programs where a majority of the students were enrolled part-time. As a result, the students who were full-time found each other and created their own cohort. Terri commented that while the full-time students where not in the majority, they all tended to have assistantships in or close to the department. In addition, those in part-time programs had to develop a more diverse social and academic support network and had fewer opportunities to develop in-depth peer relationships within their field.
Family and Outside Friends

While two participants depended on their family for emotional support, most did not have the strong connections to their family. Families were supportive, in general, but provided little in the way of ongoing assistance or even communication, perhaps because most of the participants had been on their own and were not financially dependent on their family. Seven students lived fairly close to family members and did cite them as a part of their social support system; however, family typically could only provide emotional support. Dina and Nan’s families did not understand the process or the stress of attaining a doctorate, but were supportive. For Mary, Cate, Pat, and Sela, visits with family were a way to escape from the academic environment and gain perspective, particularly in the dissertation stage. Gail reported that she and her family were emotionally close but they did not even acknowledge her continuing education.

I don’t want to say that they were not supportive because that would be completely inaccurate. But they never asked about it or talked about it. I would sometimes bring up issues; more often what I was learning in my doctoral program came out through discussions of social issues that I could shed particular light on. But it was not about me getting a doctorate or what I might want to do afterwards.

Another source of support came from spouses or significant relationships. Six participants were married when they came into their graduate program and three had significant relationships. Two marriages and one relationship ended during the doctoral process, but little was said about the loss. As Rita said, “My relationship broke up during my doctoral studies; stuff happens.” Those who maintained their relationships cited
supportive partners. Fran spoke about her husband’s support, but also the financial difficulties.

He gave me all the freedom and support possible and it was difficult at times. There was always a pressure to hurry up and get done because financially it was killing us even though we were enjoying it… When I was beating my head against the wall, he’d be there to say it’s time to go do something else.

One final group of significance to some the participants was their friends outside their program or institution. In particular, several women had a faith community that provided support for them as they went through the program. Others had a network of friends from prior jobs and through professional organizations, primarily American College Personnel Administration (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). Sela, who did not have a cohort, had a group of friends who were student affairs professionals at different institutions.

I have a group of girlfriends who are phenomenal. That group is so supportive. To hear their good news is as if it were my own good news. The first one I met at my first job out of grad school. That group has just been phenomenal both personally and professionally. It’s hard to imagine how I would have survived this life without them. None of us have had children. Two of us have been married but also divorced. We’re sort of this odd group of smart and successful women who haven’t done what you think women are supposed to do. It’s sort of interesting to watch because I don’t think any of us are hostile to marriage, none of us are hostile to kids, but part of making sense of our lives. Thank God we had other people like us who also didn’t do those things.
Faculty, peers, friends and family all influenced the perceptions and retention of graduate students. There were a few women who had negative experiences as a graduate student, however, every one of them came away with an overall positive perspective of their doctoral program. They found ways to overcome the negative experiences and thrive in the academic environment.

The theme of graduate student socialization frames the experience of graduate students during their doctoral program. However, it does not cover the process by which they returned for a graduate degree, nor does it include any career decision processes. The theme of professionalization covers the participants’ experiences prior to returning to graduate school, their career decision process, and their move into new faculty positions.

*Professionalization*

*Selection*

The selection process for the participants frequently began with the selection of a different career—that of a student affairs practitioner. This usually occurred during the undergraduate years or soon after, perhaps in the first job. After attaining a master’s degree, students either became practitioners or continued on to a doctoral program. Those who became practitioners decided at some later point to go on to a doctoral program. Finally, a decision to become faculty completed the selection process into a faculty career.

*Student affairs career.* Fourteen of the participants cited experiences as student leaders on campus in some capacity during their undergraduate education, either as RAs or in student organizations, or both. As they interacted with student affairs staff, they started asking questions—not understanding that there was a separate field of study. Kath relates the moment she realized there was a field of student affairs.
It was a realization that I wasn’t any good at science, I didn’t have the skills or the interest in science, but that was the only thing I’d ever thought I was going to do. In the process of deciding what I was going to do I spent a lot of time talking to the associate dean of students. I finally said, “I like what you do, how do you that?”

For others, the student affairs staff made the connection for them or suggested that they might be interested in the field. Mary notes that the staff had to convince her that her experience as an undergraduate could lead to a career.

I was sort of complaining about [the lack of a career goal] to one of the professionals in the residence life office where I spent time… He prompted me, “What have you really been majoring in for four years?” “Well, engineering and then I was….” “No, where were you putting your energy?” It was three years as an RA and before that Hall Council officer, the judicial board, student leadership and activities. When we started to talk about the professional pieces it started to make sense.

While these two scenarios were the most prominent and resulted in undergraduates enrolling directly into a master’s program, there were other entry points into the field. Nan, Val, and Dina entered the field through student affairs jobs and then returned to school for career advancement. Finally, Rita came to student affairs based on a negative experience.

I looked into career searching resources; I was really interested in the process. I decided that I didn’t think my undergraduate career office had been very helpful for the likes of me and I thought I could do it better.

Almost all participants entered their master’s programs with intent of advancing their careers as practitioners in student affairs, with three exceptions. Terri and Dina had
master’s degrees outside the field and worked in their fields before going back for doctorates. Barb had a higher education focus rather than a student affairs focus and knew that she would stay in academia.

Returning for a doctoral degree. Nan and Jean continued directly from their master’s into doctoral programs—both had worked in the field prior to returning for their master’s. The rest of the participants were practitioners for one to fifteen years after attaining their master’s degree. Participants offered differing motivations for pursuing a doctorate. One motivation was simply career advancement. The next step was to attain a Ph.D. in order to move up the ladder—become a dean of students or a vice-president of student affairs. For several, this was a part of the decision, but it was also labeled “the right time” to go back to school. They did not have commitments that bound them to their jobs or their location. Lara and Wren, who had been out of their master’s programs for over ten years, cited a desire to learn about recent theories—there was more to student development than Chickering who was the primary student development theorist in the 1980s. Mary, Zena, and Sela cited the desire to return to an intellectually stimulating environment. Mary remembered how her colleagues responded to her enthusiasm for intellectual discussion.

I tested [the idea of going back to school] by taking one course just to make sure that I wasn’t kidding myself that I wanted to do this. I suspected that it would be okay because I was the one in the staff meetings who read the latest book or saw something at a conference and wanted everyone to talk about it. [The response was] “No, we need to do work we can’t talk about it—go take a class.”

Two related how they drifted into graduate school, not making a conscious choice to be a doctoral student until they were in the program. Zena, the only participant who
attended school part-time, started by taking a class to keep herself intellectually
challenged. Two years later someone pointed out that she had completed half of the
courses toward a doctorate. Rita had been trying to place a graduate student intern at her
own institution when the intern coordinator suggested that she apply for the program.

Once the decision to return to a doctoral program was made, prospective students
looked for programs to fit their needs. Several women looked for a particular program such
as student affairs or higher education with a student affairs focus. Some women looked at
geographical location: either they wanted to stay where they currently lived or they wanted
to move to a specific metropolitan area. Others sought specific faculty who would support
their research interests or had made connections with faculty at conferences. Ultimately the
decision to attend a particular institution, as Mary explained, was based on the connection
to faculty, the location of the institution, and the overall perception of the departmental
environment.

The place I felt most at home and felt excited about what other students were doing
was [University]. It turned out nice because my family was two hours away. I’d
read the importance of having a support system, so family was there for that one.
Also, the community itself felt like it would be a support system. Even though I
didn’t know anyone there yet, it was pretty clear that I would get to know them. It
was close between there and a couple of other places but ultimately all the faculty I
clicked with, their interests clicked, and it made it logically a good choice. It felt
like a good place to be.

Faculty career selection. Participants chose a faculty career prior to entering a
doctoral program (5 participants), during their doctoral program (8 participants), or at some
point after attaining their degree (5 participants). The majority of the participants went into
doctoral programs designed for future/continuing administrators and not designed to
socialize future faculty. Even the three students who went to institutions that were
designed for future faculty thought of themselves as administrators until some midpoint in
their program. Of the five who had initial plans to go into faculty roles, none attended a
faculty-oriented program.

At the point of admission to a doctoral program Barb, Sela, Kath, Helen, and Jean
had the goal of a faculty career. Kath decided early in her master’s program.

Coming out the sciences where you went straight through, I wasn’t quite clear that
that wasn’t the norm [to the PhD]. Somebody had looked up reasons for doing a
PhD and I was the only one who thought research would be interesting… I loved
my theory classes and I liked the research I was doing. I made that decision really
early.

Sela thought she would have to go back to administration before pursuing a faculty career
because there had been only “old guys” teaching in her master’s program.

All the rest decided to pursue a faculty career at some later point; however, their
initial career goals were to return to administrative positions. Cate summarizes the views
of most of the participants.

When I went back my intent really was to come out as a dean of students, I was
really interested in continuing to work in student affairs. But I really wanted to go
full time because I was young enough to be able to do that. You’re not making a
huge amount of money in student affairs at mid level. So to be able to go full time
was really manageable.
The decision to pursue a faculty career at some point during their doctoral program was based on four reasons: a realization that they could do the work; the encouragement of a faculty member; a positive teaching experience; or the cumulative effect of the doctoral process.

While all participants at some point came to the conclusion that they were capable of doing the work of faculty, Gail realized that she could exceed the performances of those faculty in her program.

At first I think I was very, very intimidated. I thought he was a wonderful researcher. I was really impressed by his CV and felt very inferior. And the second person I worked with had a lot of baggage and I questioned some of her ethics around the research. Basically she absented herself from the research, got the grant, hired us to do all the work and just… she was never out in the community, There was a moment when I looked at both of them and thought, “oh my god, I could do what you are doing.” If they can do this thing, I can do this thing. I got to know them as people with tremendous strengths and tremendous development areas.

Most of the women received encouragement from their faculty to pursue a faculty career once they had made the decision; however, Fran had not even considered a faculty career until an advisor made the suggestion. The suggestion came after she spent a day caught up in the process of research. On her return her advisor said, “You aren’t going to be a president, you’re not going to be an administrator, you’re going to be a faculty member.”

Of the eight women who decided on a faculty career during their doctoral process, all but one had teaching experience, either prior to or during graduate school. For two, the
teaching experience they gained as a graduate student prompted them to change career paths. As Mary put it, after the second co-teaching experience she was hooked. Rita found herself more motivated to teach her one class than she was to do her full-time job. Val’s prior experience as a secondary teacher helped her to realize that being an administrator meant she had less direct contact with students, which was the direction she wanted to pursue.

My original plan was to go eventually go into student affairs administration and become a vice chancellor or vice president, but as I was moving up in my office I realized how much time I was spending in meetings talking about being with students and not actually dealing with students and that was important to me. So I decided to make the transition into faculty, which that meant I needed to be full time [as a student].

Cate and Pat expressed a cumulative effect of the entire graduate experience. It was the combination of personal research, teaching, presenting at conferences, and interacting with intellectual peers that steered them away from administration and toward a faculty career rather than one event or aspect of their graduate student experience.

On the other end of the spectrum were those women who, throughout their graduate programs, had no intention of following a faculty career. Zena moved prior to completing her dissertation and found a student affairs job, thinking that she would complete the dissertation while working. However, she found the position unsatisfactory. A faculty friend introduced the idea of a visiting professor position.

“Here’s the job description, you need to think about this.” I had never thought about it; it had never crossed my mind to consider coming into a faculty position.
She helped me with my vita, she helped me with my letter. I got an interview. I completely bombed the interview, I must admit. I approached it like a student affairs interview and this was an academic interview and they are completely different. In hindsight I can’t believe how ignorant I was, and they offered me the job. I hadn’t taught anything. I had taught undergraduate leadership classes, but that was it. They called and offered me the position and I just about fell out of my chair. It was for one year and they knew that I was ABD and if I wanted to be considered for any future employment I would have to finish my dissertation.

Two others took student affairs jobs immediately after completing their degree. Wren then applied for a position that combined an administrative role and a faculty role, but only because someone said she’d be perfect for the position. Lara had many years of student affairs experience before returning for her doctorate and looked forward to returning to the field with new learning and new enthusiasm. Two incidents occurred during the first position after her doctoral program that steered her toward a faculty career. The first was a realization that as a dean of students she was not fully supported by her VP; and the other was a positive experience in a classroom. She had been able to convince her institution to let her teach a class and received an unexpected response from a student. One of the students in the class was also an RA and so one time in my office we were talking about residence life stuff and I said, “By the way how are you liking the class?” He says, “I really like it and you’re a really good teacher.” And jokingly I said, “Am I a better teacher than a dean?” And he said, “I think so.” I was like, “really?” He said, “Well, yeah, you’re pretty good at teaching. You might want to think about teaching full time.”
Dina insisted that she only applied for a visiting faculty job because she did not want to offend the faculty member who recommended her for the position. In fact, she considered the job a temporary situation, a way to gain credibility to take back to administration. It was not until she came up to tenure, which she had never intended going through, that she committed to her profession as a faculty member. And, finally, Terri said “[The] whole time I was there I was on the fence about whether to go faculty or administration.” She applied to both faculty and administration jobs and ended up taking a faculty position.

The process of selecting a career was complicated by the selection of two separate careers, a student affairs career and a faculty career. Although the first choice provided a knowledge base and led to the second choice, the process by which participants arrived at a faculty career varied.

Professional Socialization

Professional socialization consists of three parts: acquiring knowledge and skills, applying the new knowledge to practice, and forming a professional identity (W. E. Moore, 1970). Students began the professional socialization process as a part of their graduate experience.

*Acquiring knowledge.* Acquiring knowledge is the domain of graduate education; however, skill attainment depended on the type of program. Administrative-oriented programs focused more on applying the theory to the practice of administration, whereas faculty-oriented programs focus more on attaining research skills. Although Mary did not decide on a faculty career until late in her program, in hindsight she recognized that her program did not offer opportunities for research or teaching. Most of the assistantships for
doctoral students in her program were in student affairs or academic administration. Terri, also in an administrative-orientated program, saw a lack of intentional modeling, for example, on how to write a paper for *The Review of Higher Education*. In faculty-oriented programs, both Nan and Cate took research assistantships as that was the expectation, even though they both thought of themselves as administrators. Although faculty-oriented programs offered more institutionalized research experiences they did not offer institutionalized teaching experiences as a part of the program. All but three women (in both program types) created their own opportunities to teach, either co-teaching within the department, teaching in other departments on campus, or in other institutions. Helen created opportunities for herself within her department.

The other thing I did throughout my program, I knew I was going to faculty and I wanted to get experience in the classroom, so I volunteered to be a teaching assistant every chance I got. So almost every semester starting with my second year I was [an informal] TA.

Dina found teaching opportunities at a local community college; Cate and Lara taught undergraduate courses in multicultural studies.

*Applying knowledge.* Applying new knowledge and testing the fit of academic learning to practice occurred for most students as they tested out their teaching skills or worked in a research assistantship. As with the first step, acquiring knowledge, the second step could be started without the goal of a faculty career. Mary explained how her advisor helped in the developmental process of her teaching practice.

I co-taught with him so that was a huge piece... I remember he told me early on in one of these classes, I think it was the second one I co-taught with him, I was
nervous about meeting the new students. He said, “you know, I’ve been doing this a long time and I’m still nervous when I meet new students.” That was such a revelation for me that someone who had been doing it this long could still be nervous at the beginning. I don’t know if he is or not, or if he was just telling me to feel better. I have no idea. I was a nervous wreck before my first class here, I was freaking out and kept hearing him say that over and over in my head. Each semester I still hear him, which to some degree is him sharing his thoughts and feelings about teaching.

Jean and Cate worked on student research projects that improved their research skills. Sela and Terri worked with faculty on projects that gave them research experience. Gail had the opportunity to take a research assistantship that allowed her to experience all aspects of the research process.

[A faculty member] had a grant to do research out in some low income communities around team based service efforts in the communities. [I] ended up doing field research, writing the results, analyzing good qualitative data, having solid research relationships, presenting at national conferences, and publishing.

Those students who came into their programs with a faculty career in mind were much more intentional in their application of knowledge and the faculty-oriented programs were more intentional about providing professional socialization opportunities.

Professional identity. The formation of a professional identity is another aspect of professional socialization. Most participants started this process while in graduate school by attending Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) and American
Educational Research Association (AERA) conferences; however, it was not until they were in their first faculty position that they developed a faculty identity.

The transition to faculty was not always as smooth as they anticipated. There were unexpected differences between administrative and faculty culture, classroom challenges, and a lack of time to do research. Four participants explicitly identified adjusting to the faculty culture as a major challenge in their new roles. For Rita, adjusting to the faculty role was more than just research, teaching, and service; it was adjusting to “how business gets done.”

Yes, I found it very surprising, kind of like being an American and going to Ireland. We all speak in English… I knew there were differences in the culture. I had taught it, but I didn’t know it would feel as different as it feels. You’re saying the same thing but it is really a different thing.

Not only was the language different but also the reward structure was different. These differences were crucial for new faculty coming from an administrative background. Wren was explicit about the differences between a student affairs culture and a faculty culture.

The larger thing was just navigating the different cultures. In many ways what is required for success in student affairs is exactly the opposite of what is required for success in a faculty role. You know I’m overstating that slightly but we would not be successful in student affairs if we weren’t good collaborators, good team players, relational type of people. Well in many faculty worlds what gets rewarded is your solitary work: you don’t always have to play nice or fair.

Those with some teaching experience, either in the classroom or in more informal situations, found the classroom to be comfortable and where they gained their personal
rewards. Teaching was the reason they had chosen a faculty career and the contact with students was reward enough. However, women of color initially found unanticipated obstacles in the classroom. Cate’s experience was typical of the women of color.

I don’t think I got comfortable teaching until my fourth year. That was the most difficult part and I didn’t anticipate that that was going to be difficult because I had taught and been a student affairs person. There were things I just didn’t anticipate: how difficult it would be to be a faculty of color in a predominately white classroom. I didn’t anticipate how difficult it would be to, how much resistance students would have to holding them accountable, setting high standards. Those were the biggest. It was really a shock to me.

Once these women established their teaching strategies in the classroom, they all stated that teaching, while difficult at first, was the most rewarding aspect of their job.

Another challenge for new faculty was finding ways to complete all that was necessary to achieve tenure. Sela, Barb, and Gail had opportunities to watch their own faculty and had a solid research foundation. They were comfortable in their new roles, primarily because they continued working on their own projects. They already had a routine for writing, and for Gail the known routine helped her manage a difficult environment in her new department. For others, planning courses, teaching, and moving the research agenda forward during their first year was a challenge; adjusting to a faculty role required more time and energy than they anticipated. Wren found she had to change her work patterns to be effective as a faculty member.

My natural inclinations were to be in my office and to be out meeting people. That’s what I knew how to do. So it was recognizing that doing the research and
writing that I needed to do, I needed to carve out time for that, and be very intentional and very protective of that time. What I learned was that most often that most people are not going to protect your time for you. I really had to figure how to do that for myself.

Another inclination for these women was to focus on teaching and students, which was enjoyable and time consuming, at the expense of research activities. Even those such as Sela who valued research acknowledged this dilemma: “There’s always the challenge too many things to be done in a finite amount of time. I think if you are committed to teaching well, then the other things don’t get done.” By addressing these challenges and committing to the new role identity these women progressed toward the professional identity of professor.

*Professional Career*

Val was the most recent graduate and at the time of her interview had been in her first faculty position for less than one semester. She was working on the beginning stages of her professional socialization, although she was committed to her chosen career. The rest of the participants were working on the development of their professional careers. This stage describes career building—how one describes and develops the self within the context of the career (W. E. Moore, 1970). There were two specific issues related to professional career building: professional focus and the imposter syndrome.

The participants described their faculty career or professional focus around those aspects that they enjoyed. Helen and Mary had not yet integrated research into their identity and struggled to find ways to do their research. They focused on their relationships
with students both in and outside the classroom. For Helen the rewards were in teaching and the research expectation was a burden.

The most gratifying part is seeing growth in students. I work with Master’s students and I think they grow up so much. That’s the most amazing part. Just last May we graduated the first cohort that had me as their major professor for their whole program. So I considered them my students. I get to see them out their doing things. They call me and they IM [instant message] me. I still have contact with them.

In contrast, Fran, Terri and Val enjoyed teaching but also were engaged in the world of ideas and looked forward to their time doing research. Kath, Jean, and Sela were faculty primarily because they were drawn to the world of ideas. Jean summarizes this intent.

I get paid for my ideas… The most satisfying part [is] to create knowledge, to interpret knowledge, to engage students in the process of owning their knowledge and being creative. That’s fun. I wouldn’t do anything else, most days.

The three women who planned on faculty careers prior to their doctoral programs and the five who had already attained tenure were more likely to express commitment to their professional role. These women had found their professional balance between writing and teaching. They knew they were continuing in the field and had no reservations about their careers. The other faculty were in various stages of commitment: the closer they were to attaining tenure, the more committed they were to the profession. Those faculty with less than three years of tenure-track experience had a more tenuous grasp of their professional identity. This was apparent when they expressed their doubts—whether they would be able to balance research and obtain tenure or not. Val, the most recent graduate, and Zena, who
is in her third year of teaching, expressed concern about their lack of expertise and their credibility in students’ eyes. Val expressed her concern as the imposter syndrome.

  I don’t know enough to be a professor. I don’t know enough to have a PhD. I know a lot about my stuff but I don’t know a lot about all these other things I’m teaching about. It’s the idea that someone is going to find out—you can’t do this; we’re going to take your degree away.

Mary, Rita, and Helen expressed doubts about the tenure process and whether they could produce enough research to gain tenure. The pressure to publish created doubts about their career choice and their ability to be an effective faculty member. While they were uncertain about their ability to achieve tenure, they also had a fall-back plan. Rita entertained the possibility that another institution with less of a research focus would be a better fit for her. Mary, Terri, Zena, and Helen had been administrators in the past and they knew they could return to administration. Returning was an alternate plan just in case they did not pass third-year review or attain tenure.

Reinforcement

  Positive reinforcement. Half of the participants said that autonomy was a major benefit of a faculty position. They valued work that was of their own choosing. Autonomy was of particular importance for Sela.

  I tell students that if somebody came in here and yanked me out of my chair and told me I couldn’t do this anymore, what I would I grieve most is the loss of autonomy. I get paid to do what I want to do, for the most part, and paid pretty well. My dad asked me one time, who my boss is. Well, I don’t really have one. And that is pretty fabulous for someone who doesn’t like to be told what to do.
Zena focused on the classroom experience: “I really like the autonomy, I like to do what I want to do in my own way. I can go into the classroom and do what I want, I think that’s really fun.” Related to autonomy was the flexibility to set one’s own schedule. For example, Dina was able to work at night, Pat scheduled exercise (swimming) during the day, and Lara appreciated the flexibility to take care of one’s children when they were ill.

Student interactions were rated by seven women to be positive career reinforcement. Mary’s favorite aspect of her job is watching the students learn: “When students make connections, when those light bulbs go on. When they connect it to another course or something in their assistantship.” While teaching was associated with the classroom, faculty observed student learning outside the classroom and after graduation. Mary and Helen had ongoing contact with students out in the field after graduation—connections to classroom material in the context of their first job.

Professional relationships, both with other faculty and student affairs/higher education professionals, were important to these women as they created their professional identity and career. Several worked with student affairs staff who supervised internships or assistantships and they valued the ongoing relationships to practitioners. Zena participated in a cross-campus group that discussed leadership theories relevant to her research. Gail found colleagues in the women’s study program who were able to support her academic interests. Participation in the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) offered an opportunity to connect with others who had similar research interests. Participation in the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) allowed faculty to stay informed about practitioner-based issues. Kath explains her connection to the faculty who
attend ACPA, “It’s a wonderful group of 30 [faculty]. A chance to be a little bit more developmental and supportive of each other.”

While many participants provided specific positive reinforcements for staying in the field, Cate, Gail, Jean, and Nan did not separate out any one area as the most rewarding. Instead, they expressed satisfaction with the entire faculty experience including autonomy, students, collegiality, research, intellectual stimulation, professional associations.

**Negative reinforcement.** There were two related issues of negative reinforcement: program fit and the tenure process. Program fit issues centered around the type of program and one’s specialization. For example, Fran was the lone student affairs professional in a higher education program and Lara was the lone student affairs professional in a counselor education program. Their frustration was that there was no one with similar research interests, no one to collaborate with and therefore a sense of intellectual isolation. As Fran says, “I love to be independent and that’s great, but I still want someone who has a similar interest who can write with me, talk with me, think about things the way I think about things.”

The tenure process was a source of challenge for faculty, but again depended on the type of institution. Those at research extensive institutions were more likely to have higher tenure expectations to publish; however, institutional aspirations to move up the prestige ladder also put pressure on faculty at research intensive institutions to complete increasingly prestigious research. Those new to the field were less likely to have a system for balancing teaching and research and, similar to Rita, tended to be frustrated by their inability to work quickly and on demand.
It’s hard to balance this stuff… I don’t have a model for collaborative research. I have a lot of things I want to accomplish. I work slower that I wish I did. I take a lot of time on my writing. I always think I can do something in about half the time it really takes me or a maybe a third of the time. I end up kicking myself a lot for why I’m not moving faster.

However, even those with tenure acknowledged that they have to work to balance teaching and research. Finally, Jean expressed the frustration of changing institutions. When she changed institutions, the expectations for tenure also changed and she will not be eligible for tenure until her eighth year.

*Self Reliance*

The concept of self reliance can serve as a subcategory of either graduate student socialization or professionalization, but is not fully described by either theme. For example, the attainment of teaching skills could be considered a part of professional socialization; however, this would not describe how the participants went about attaining the skill. Self reliance, in this case, refers to the participants’ abilities and motivations. This attribute moved them forward in the development of their careers. The faculty-oriented programs did have some mechanisms in place for developing future faculty primarily around research, but they did not have institutionalized opportunities for teaching. All of the women had to create their own career path. Thus, self reliance is a noted characteristic of these faculty members.

*Career Path*

The participants were self-motivated in making the decision to go back to graduate school. Some returned for intellectual reasons, others for career advancement, but most
navigated the life-changing move with intention and purpose. Fran chose to pursue her doctorate even though she had no role models at her own institution.

I was at a very small institution and had some close colleagues, but none of them had any interest in getting a PhD. So, it was more my own desire and passion and interest in getting it than it was mentors or friends talking about it.

Barb wanted to pursue research in her area of interest, knew the person she wanted to work with, and did not lose sight of her goal. While Barb, Helen, and Kath were drawn to their respective programs because of a faculty connection, they were self directed about how to accomplish their transitions. Once the decision had been made to follow a faculty career, the participants charted their own path in the context of programs that ultimately only suited some of their career goals. They sought out teaching experiences, which were generally outside the program norm, and several developed their own research projects. Students in one faculty-oriented program had an advantage because there was a practice among the students to share information and support each other in the career process. However, most of the participants were in administrative-type programs and there was little institutionalized support for the process. Although participants sought the advice of more advanced students who had shown an interest in a faculty career, it was more likely that an individual faculty member took an interest in the student and made career suggestions. While those who attended administrative-oriented programs might have in hindsight chosen a faculty-oriented program, all participants acknowledged that they experienced a career-enhancing program.
Research

There were numerous research opportunities at a faculty-oriented program but few in administrative-oriented programs. Those students who knew they wanted to be faculty as they entered their program were more likely to seek out research opportunities with the faculty in their department, even if the program normally did not offer the experience. Overall there were fewer opportunities to work with faculty research projects because of the nature of the institutions. Wren and Lara made a point of writing up their class research projects. Gail found a research assistantship outside her program area. Sela, Kath, Barb, Helen, and Pat voluntarily worked with their faculty on research projects to gain experience. Cate and Nan had options within their faculty-oriented program to work with faculty on research projects. Nan relates that, at one point, she had too many opportunities to handle. Jean and Cate were involved in student-initiated research groups, giving them the opportunity to manage a project from beginning to end, and for Cate, the research became her dissertation. Others, such as Fran, tried to find research opportunities but did not find a collaborative climate amongst the faculty.

Teaching

Opportunities for teaching were limited in all programs. Students had to take the initiative to seek out teaching experiences, usually as co-teachers with faculty in departmental courses, or outside the department. Pat taught classes when her chair went on leave; Fran and Cate taught at another college where faculty did not need to have a doctorate; Dina taught at a community college; Helen, Jean, Mary, Sela, and Val co-taught with faculty in their department; Kath and Lara taught master’s level classes in their departments. These opportunities were student initiated. Those who co-taught did so as
volunteers to gain the experience. Only three women did not gain teaching experiences during their doctoral program.

These women depended on themselves not only to progress through the doctoral process but also to find activities outside the realm of their program to help them develop professionally. Thus, they developed a strong sense of self-reliance. While they did not necessarily have institutional support, they did have the support of individual faculty. Those who had mentors experienced the most support throughout their doctoral education and well into their first faculty position.

Summary

While there was diversity within the participant group based on individual demographics and program characteristics, such as attendance patterns and years out of doctoral degree, there was uniformity based on institutional type and degrees attained. Under the thematic categories of socialization, professionalization, and self-reliance, the qualitative data indicate diversity and similarity of participants’ experiences. Each participant experienced their graduate education through their interactions with faculty, peers, and family. They followed one of three decision paths toward a faculty career: decision prior to doctoral program, decision during doctoral program, or decision after degree completion. The decision path of each participant influenced the timing of their commitment to a faculty career. If they made a commitment prior to their doctoral program, then they were more likely to seek out professional development opportunities early in the doctoral process; however, participants who chose a faculty career after degree completion gained similar experiences. Therefore, there were more similarities between the participants than there were differences. All of the participants created opportunities for
professional development and all were internally motivated to attend a graduate program, persist to degree, and follow a faculty career.
CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS

This analysis ties the study data to the relevant literature as described in Chapters 1 and 2. While career development theory was not utilized in Chapter 4 to present the data, there are strengths and weaknesses in career development as a theoretical framework. In addition, the frameworks of graduate student socialization, professionalization, and self-reliance are used to organize the analysis. Finally, the analysis includes a presentation of individual, interactional, and structural factors to offer an alternative perspective of the participant data.

Career Development Theory

While the career development literature provided background for this research, it was less useful in explaining the data. An analysis of the barriers and facilitators that influence the career choices of women (Betz, 1994) showed that many of the facilitators that broaden career options were evident in the lives of the participants. In fact, all of the individual facilitators listed by Betz were relevant: single, no or few children, high self-esteem, strong academic self-concept, instrumentality, and profeminist attitudes. The participants had already chosen a feminized field—student affairs—and had gained self-confidence in their chosen career. The decision of the study’s participants to embark on a faculty career path was based on negotiating a master’s degree and an administrative career. In addition, there were women role models already in faculty roles. Sela was the only participant who mentioned gender as an issue in pursuing a faculty career—she thought that she would have to have more experience before moving into a faculty role because she saw only “old guys” teaching in her master’s program.
The most relevant career development model was based on Astin’s (1984) four constructs: motivation, expectations, sex-role socialization, and structure of opportunity. Structure of opportunity, or what was available as an option, provided the most insight into the career choice of the participants. Most of the women did not consider a faculty career while they were in their master’s program. A faculty career was not an available option at the time either due to lack of awareness or lack of role models. A faculty career appeared as a new option while they were in a doctoral program and then was explored as a career possibility. This model helps to explain how career paths change when structures of opportunity change. The theory works to explain structures of opportunity but does not account for subsequent actions. What happens after a decision is made? How does an individual create her own future?

The participants’ experiences did not fit with the career decision literature about when a faculty career is chosen. According to Lindholm (2004) most students choose their discipline in their early undergraduate years by selecting a major. Higher Education Administration is not available as an undergraduate major; therefore, students have an undergraduate degree that is not related to student affairs or higher education. As Kath and Mary related, student affairs practitioners were more influential in guiding an undergraduate student into the field of student affairs than faculty. Nor were faculty particularly influential on the decision to return to a doctoral program, primarily because the participants were working practitioners and had little interaction with faculty. However, once practitioners returned for a doctoral degree, faculty were important in the students’ decision to pursue a faculty career. Faculty served as role models, encouraged students to consider faculty careers, or supported students once the decision was made to
pursue a faculty career. This result is consistent with the literature that cites the influence of faculty on an individual’s choice to become faculty and the need for continuing support and encouragement through graduate school (Antony & Taylor, 2001; Baird, 1992; Girves & Wemmerus, 1988; Tinto, 1993).

The five identity “archetypes” identified by Reybold (2003) has limited relevance to the participants. The participants at faculty-oriented programs could be classified into the “anointed” category, which is characterized by a research apprenticeship with a mentor. Cate and Nan had research assistantships and valued their interaction with their faculty mentors. However, the majority of the participants were in the “pilgrim” category—students who consciously designed their plan to the professoriate. None of the participants could be classified as “visionary” or “philosopher.” Even though many became faculty because of the intellectual stimulation, they were also grounded in the practitioner’s world of student affairs. The definition of “drifter” could describe Rita and Terri but is misleading—while they had not committed to a faculty career, they were not necessarily drifting without direction. Rather they had two different career possibilities, administrative and faculty. Those participants who did not decide on a faculty career until after graduation did not fit into Reybold’s archetype system.

Graduate Student Literature

The graduate student socialization process includes interactions between students and others in their environment (Austin, 2002b). The participants observed, listened to, and interacted with faculty in formal and informal settings; with peers in coursework and socially; and with family and friends outside of the academic setting.
Faculty Interactions

Faculty interactions were important to the participants and manifested as mentoring relationships, advising/chairing relationships, or general academic relationships. The literature rates faculty-student interactions as highly important to student persistence (Girves & Wemmerus, 1988; Tinto, 1993) and faculty-student mentoring as valuable to professional development (Blackburn, Chapman, & Cameron, 1981; Dixon-Reeves, 2003; Smith & Davidson, 1992); however, there is no indication in the literature that mentoring is necessary for persistence to graduation nor to a faculty career. This was confirmed by the participants—only six had a mentoring relationship with faculty. However, faculty interaction was instrumental in students’ graduate experience, particularly with advisors or dissertation chairs. Lara, Fran, Mary, and Terri viewed their relationship with their dissertation chairs as instrumental in moving toward degree completion. Their chairs provided support and challenge during the dissertation process. While advising is considered a formal interaction and advisors are not usually as involved in the life of the student as mentors, they are important in building the student’s intellectual identity (Kirk & Todd-Mancillas, 1991). Those who had worked most closely with their dissertation chairs were the most positive about their dissertation process. For example, both Kath and Barb sought a faculty member who did research in their interest area and continued to work closely with the same faculty member throughout the dissertation process. When a dissertation chair was not an advocate of the student, as with Rita, the experience was not satisfying nor was it growth oriented. Although not all faculty interactions were positive, each student had at least one faculty relationship that was beneficial to their persistence. In addition, the perception of a departmental attitude of collegiality toward graduate students
was important to the students. Jean valued the treatment of students as colleagues: “that really made a big difference.” While the data support the importance of faculty interaction and involvement, student initiative in the relationships was necessary for involvement to occur. Mary and Terri increased their interactions with faculty by volunteering to assist in departmental projects.

The data also support the premise that student relationships to faculty and external communities change over time (Tinto, 1993). Tinto’s first period of transition and adjustment included some faculty interaction, but also substantial interaction with other students and outside support for their transition. Those participants in cohorts had access to built-in social supports while others connected with peers through coursework or student organizations. Cate related that the interactions came out of the structure of the cohort program. Due to the proximity of other students where they all worked in the same building, they created close social ties. Student organizations provided Kath, Dina, and Pat with a network of colleagues outside the field, which provided support and social opportunities.

The second period, which lasted up until candidacy, involved more faculty interaction, but primarily through coursework, a good deal of interaction with other students as they attempted comprehensive examinations and dissertation proposals, and less interaction with outside friends and family as they worked toward candidacy. Rita studied with other students while preparing for the comprehensive examination. Nan continued work on her dissertation proposal with a group of students from the dissertation writing course.
The third period leading to completion is focused on the dissertation. The faculty chair and committee in particular were important to the student as they worked their way through the process. Student support came from self-defined groups that focused on writing, support, or both. Sela connected with a dissertation writing group, which did not “get together to wallow.” Pat described a motivational support group that held each person accountable for their writing goals. Faculty investment in students was defined and tested during this final stage. The participants with dissertation chairs who were invested in their completion provided consistent, regular feedback, whereas those faculty who were less invested gave less time and support to the student. Students, such as Val, who had developed a mentoring relationship with a faculty member received support throughout the dissertation process and into the job search process.

*Peer Interactions*

Interaction with peers was also an important part of graduate student socialization (Austin, 2002b). Most of the literature cites the importance of peer relationships to satisfaction with the graduate student experience but not necessarily to persistence (Tinto, 1993); however, Hagedorn (1999) found that social integration was important to persistence for women students over 30 years of age. Participant data confirm the importance of peer interactions at all stages of graduate education. Students valued their peers, especially at the entry stage, for community building. In particular, Helen attributes her persistence to the peer relationships she developed during the first semester of her program. Peer interaction was greater when the program employed the cohort model; however, both students in cohorts and those who did not have cohorts interacted with peers at specific points in the graduate process—in preparation for comprehensive examinations
and in dissertation support groups. For example, Dina did not meet with peers in preparation for examinations, but she did have an informal dissertation group that helped her stay on task. The peer relationships were important as both emotional and academic support depending on individual need. Sela wanted writing support from her group rather than emotional support. Additional peer interactions were evident when students found social networks outside of their academic department. These relationships were valued for their distance from academic work, particularly for those who had nondominant identities, such as lesbian, woman of color, or international student.

**Family and Friends**

Perceptions of family and friends influence how a student processes and integrates socialization into the academy (Austin, 2002b). While family and friends outside of academe were important to a few of the participants and most of the participants valued outside friendships, the majority built their social support systems within the context of their educational institutions. The participants were primarily first generation doctoral students and could not depend on families to understand and assist in the educational process. For example, the families of Dina and Nan did not understand the process of attaining a doctorate, but were able to provide emotional support. The exceptions were those participants who had significant relationships that persisted throughout their graduate education. They cited the support they received as important to their continued persistence. Fran acknowledged her husband’s support, “He gave me all the freedom and support possible and it was difficult at times.” Those whose relationships ended during graduate school did not mention their relationship as supportive toward their graduate education. In
addition, it appeared that those who had children juggled more roles but that did not define their relationships with faculty or peers.

**Critiques of Graduate Education**

An underlying issue raised by Darling and Staton (1989) is that graduate students are socialized to graduate school and not socialized to faculty roles. The type of interactions that promote socialization may contribute to persistence, but whether they contribute to the socialization of faculty roles is unclear. This may be related to the critiques of graduate education. The system does not provide future faculty with the information and training they need to be effective new faculty (Austin, 2002a). The system perpetuates the teaching assistant (TA) and graduate assistant (GA) as minimally paid junior faculty without providing the necessary support for them to be effective faculty (Golde & Dore, 2001). This argument is less relevant to the participants who were in slightly different circumstances than those in the major studies of Austin and Golde and Dore. Their socialization experience was to graduate school. Most did not know they wanted to be faculty until some point later in their doctoral program. Therefore, they did not have the expectation that the institution would provide the necessary experiences for them to attain goals they did not yet have.

Students’ perceptions of their graduate education are reported as somewhat negative and yet students persisted and became faculty (Golde & Dore, 2001). It is unclear whether the negatives of graduate education actually stopped anyone from attaining faculty status. My participants were enthusiastic about their experiences. Although, they might have acted differently if they had made the choice earlier—attended a faculty-oriented program—they valued their program and their experiences. Even the five participants who
knew they wanted to be faculty prior to entering a doctoral program did not choose a faculty-oriented program.

**Professionalization**

Moore’s (1970) theory includes the following stages: selection, professional socialization, professional career, and reinforcement. The theory was useful to organize the overall process of a faculty career in Higher Education Administration, but there were gaps between selection and professional socialization. The theory was more useful than career development theory because it incorporated the career choice as a process of selection within the context of an on-going career. A unique feature of the field is that the participants chose not one career but two related careers in the same field. The career selection of student affairs as the intermediary step was similar to choosing a field of study with several different career choices—administrator or faculty. While most participants did not consider the faculty option during their master’s program, it was available to them. Two of the participants did not make a career choice of student affairs prior to a master’s degree, but made a career choice of higher education administration after completing a different master’s degree. Both Terri and Dina worked in higher education prior to understanding it as a field of study. For all 18 of the participants the selection of a faculty career was the second career choice and completed the selection stage of professionalization.

The next stage of Moore’s theory, professional socialization, was less relevant to most of the participants during their graduate experience. It was relevant for those who returned to doctoral programs with the intention of becoming faculty—they could focus on gaining the necessary experiences needed for their future careers. But for the participants
who attended doctoral programs with the intention of returning to administrative positions, professional socialization was rather happenstance. Because graduate students are primarily socialized to graduate school rather than to the professoriate (Darling & Staton, 1989), graduate student socialization literature was necessary for filling in the gap in Moore’s professionalization theory.

Once a student chose a faculty path, anticipatory socialization was an appropriate concept. Opportunities for socialization to the professoriate included attendance at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), where students learned of new research and presented their own research. Dina, Cate, and Nan went to ASHE with classmates, supporting each other’s presentations and expanding their professional networks. Students increased their understanding of the research process by assisting faculty on research projects. For example, Gail relates her experience with a faculty project: “[I] ended up doing field research, writing the results, analyzing good qualitative data, having solid research relationships, presenting at national conferences, and publishing.” Co-teaching courses also offered opportunities to become immersed in faculty roles and for most of the participants was pivotal in choosing a faculty career. However, professional socialization during graduate school was minimal. While acquisition of knowledge (Moore’s first step of professional socialization) and perhaps application of knowledge (second step) began in graduate school, most of the application came during their first years as a faculty member.

The participants’ transitions to faculty roles reflect a lack of preparation from both administrative- and faculty-oriented doctoral programs. Co-teaching courses with faculty had not prepared them for their own classrooms. Furthermore, they were surprised by the
difficulty of the transition. As Cate relates, “I don’t think I got comfortable teaching until my fourth year. That was the most difficult part and I didn’t anticipate that that was going to be difficult…” Working with faculty on research projects did not fully equip them to do their own research, primarily due to prior work patterns. Wren had to change her work patterns to be effective as a faculty member.

My natural inclinations were to be in my office and to be out meeting people.

That’s what I knew how to do. So it was recognizing that doing the research and writing that I needed to do, I needed to carve out time for that, and be very intentional and very protective of that time.

Professional career, according to Moore’s (1970) theory, describes the participants’ identity as faculty. All the participants were in the career building stage. The longer they were faculty, and the closer to tenure, the more integrated was their identity around teaching, research, and service. Val (a first-year faculty) and Zena (a third-year faculty) expressed concern about their lack of expertise and their credibility in students’ eyes. Pat (a sixth-year faculty) expressed satisfaction with all aspects of her faculty career.

Reinforcement for faculty centered on the rewards and challenges of the position. Again, the closer the faculty were to tenure, the less they were overwhelmed by the challenges of balancing the demands of their professional lives. Teaching and the satisfaction they gained from student interactions positively reinforced the participants’ career choice, while the frustrations of the tenure process negatively reinforced their career development. Moore’s theory helped to organize the data and clarify the process the participants went through as they moved toward faculty careers.
Self-Reliance

The career development literature and the graduate student literature reflect the self-reliance theme. Career development theory incorporates the concept of self-efficacy as a factor in career decision making (Betz, 1994). In this context the individual needs to have self-efficacy in order to project herself into a particular career. In an academic sense, self-efficacy is believing that one can do the necessary academic work, which is necessary for individual persistence (Betsworth, 1999; Byer, 2002). The participants had completed a master’s program and believed they could complete a doctoral degree. They were self-motivated to begin doctoral programs citing intellectual stimulation and career advancement as the reasons for returning to school. Lara and Wren cited a desire to learn more about recent theories. Sela expressed the desire to return to an intellectually stimulating environment. Nan and Jean noted that they continued directly from their master’s into doctoral programs with the intention of improved career advancement. Other research cites instrumentality, or a sense of agency, as a facilitator for making nontraditional career decisions (Betz, 1994). Self-direction or autonomy is also an important attribute for graduate students—they are expected to work on and complete independent research. Self-efficacy and self-direction are relevant to graduate education; however, they do not fully explain the breadth and depth of the actions of the participants in this study, hence the use of the term self-reliance is more appropriate. All 18 women created their career path while enrolled in programs that only partially met their needs as future faculty. While teaching opportunities were not available programmatically, 15 of the 18 women gained teaching experience either at their universities or at neighboring colleges. Research opportunities were more likely to be institutionalized than teaching
opportunities, and 11 of the 18 women worked on faculty or student research in addition to their own dissertation research. Not only did these women create their own paths, but also they valued the overall experience as expressed by Pat, “I had a charmed doctoral experience, and I do call it charmed. It was amazing.”

Analysis of Factors

While the theoretical and analytical frameworks were useful in the presentation and analysis of data in relation to the existing literature, the analysis can be re-organized to describe the participants’ multiple levels of experience. Assessment of multiple levels of experience is not a unique concept. For example, open systems theory considers both the organization, the environment and the interaction between them (Ballantine, 1983). The ecological model (Cook, Heppner, & O'Brien, 2002) identifies intrapersonal, social, cultural, and physical environmental variables. Risman’s (1998) Multi-level Gender Model identifies three types of theory: individual, interactional, and institutional. Gender discrimination needs to be addressed through the lenses of all three types of theory to effect societal change. Based on the similarities (labels) and possible differences (definitions) with the preceding models, the analysis was reorganized into the following factors: structural, interactional, and individual.

Structural Factors

Structural factors of graduate education include the type of institution, the discipline, the type and organization of the department, and the characteristics of the program. Doctoral programs, by definition, are offered at Research Extensive and Research Intensive institutions. Discipline makes a difference in assessing graduate school attendance by gender, particularly science, math, and engineering, and math (SME) on one
end and education on the other (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Department organization influences the experience of graduate students (M. S. Anderson, 1998) much more than the institution itself. Participants talked about their programs and rarely talked about the larger department (if the program was one of several in a department). Several factors specific to the field of Higher Education appeared relevant to students. Graduate program type, either administrative-oriented or faculty-oriented, influenced the graduate student experience. For example, Cate, Nan, and Dina in faculty-oriented programs had more opportunities for research but no institutionally supported opportunities for teaching. Cate and Nan cited support from peers for a faculty career and a ready-made network of future colleagues. Those students in administrative-oriented programs had more connections to the field of student affairs, but fewer supports for future faculty professional development. Most of the available assistantships for doctoral students were in student affairs, thereby creating a network of practitioners. Programs that used the cohort model provided more structure for peer interactions than institutions that did not use a cohort model. Helen was a part of an intentional cohort with programming beyond the classroom, which drew the community together during their first year. In contrast, the only time Rita interacted with her peers outside of specific coursework was during the preparation for the comprehensive examination. Program characteristics influenced expectations of faculty and students. These expectations were a part of the underlying but unseen structure of the program. When there were no expectations for informal interactions between students and faculty, then there was infrequent social and research interaction. For example, Fran sought but did not find an opportunity for collaborative research within her department. Those programs that espoused a collegial understanding of the relationship between faculty and
students provided more opportunities for collaborative research and teaching. Kath, whose program was within a counselor education department, describes her mentor and the collaborative environment for her as a graduate student.

She arranged for me to supervise the master’s students in their internships…. She got me the means for the primary research assistant for a couple of research projects... [She] helped me sort ideas for the dissertation and how I was going to approach that…Co-presenting at conferences pulled me into doing some of that. She took very, very good care of me.

Interactional Factors

Interactional factors of graduate education, as noted in the literature, are the most important influences on graduate student persistence and completion. The interaction between students and their faculty, peers, and friends and family influence the graduate experience more than the institutional or program type.

The literature emphasizes the importance of faculty interactions on student success (Girves & Wemmerus, 1988; Tinto, 1993). All of the participants in this study noted meaningful relationships with faculty, either as mentors, advisors/chairs, or as colleagues. Six of the participants described a strong mentoring relationship that began either at the beginning of their doctoral process or at some point during their degree. The mentoring relationship was important for Nan, not only for the shared research experience but also for academic development, “I learned so much more from him than I did from my coursework…I learned a lot more how to apply [statistics] to particular research questions, what were appropriate research questions, and more sophisticated data analyses.” The relationship with their dissertation chair, even if it did not take on a mentoring form, was
vital to the persistence of the participants through the dissertation process. Chairs provided
guidance, support, challenge, and focus. Terri valued her chair’s ability to help her focus:
“I had all these different ways to view [the data]. She was very good about honing me in.

Formal faculty interactions were important for the acquisition of knowledge (classroom
learning), skill building (co-teaching, researching), and professional socialization
(conference presenting, career planning). Informal interactions, either at social functions or
in the department, promoted collegiality and professional socialization. Sela cited her
assistantship in the department as the key to her interactions with faculty. She was
available to build informal relationships with faculty who were not available to students
with assistantships in student affairs.

Peer relationships were important to the participants, both academically and
socially. This is consistent with the literature, which concludes that peer relationships may
be as important as faculty relationships (Austin, 2002b). While students in cohorts had
built-in peer networks, all students found others to be a part of their informal cohorts. Peer
relationships were particularly important during all three of the periods described by Tinto
(1993). Peers provided guidance in making the adjustment to graduate school both
academically and socially. Students formed study groups for comprehensive examinations.
They also formed different types of groups around dissertation research: writing groups,
support or motivational groups, and a combination of both. For example, Sela was a
member of a strictly writing group; Pat belonged to a motivational group that met every
three weeks to provide accountability; and Nan’s group read each other’s work and
provided emotional support for the process. In addition, peers provided support for career
decisions and progression into the faculty profession. This career-focused peer effect was
identified most often by students in faculty-oriented programs, such as Cate and Nan, as these programs housed significant numbers of students who became future faculty.

Family and friends also play a role in the socialization of graduate students (Austin, 2002b). While family support varied among the participants, family did not appear to influence graduate student socialization. As Kath relates, “They were distinctly supportive… [but] they weren’t at the center of it.” All but one participant had held a full time job at some point after their undergraduate work and considered themselves independent from their parents. Family provided a sanctuary away from school but did not influence their expectations of graduate school nor their choice of career. While some participants were first-generation college students (undergraduate), almost all were first generation doctoral students. Therefore, family, as noted by Nan, could not help them with specific support for the process.

All they knew was that I was getting my PhD. They were extremely supportive but they didn’t understand what I was doing. In terms of information that I needed, it certainly didn’t come from my family, but I did feel very supported emotionally. Friends away from school were important during graduate school, but similar to family, they provided social support and an opportunity to vent about frustrations in a safe environment.

*Individual Factors*

Although participants talked about interactional factors and structural factors of their graduate student experience, individual factors were most often cited as relevant to their decision to become faculty and the resultant path. Each participant charted a unique path from their undergraduate degree to their current faculty position. Decisions at each
step of the process were made in the context of their lives. They relied on their own ability to chart their path. While several made institutional choices based on family or friends, once they were in the program they created their own experience to suit their educational and professional goals. For example, Sela chose a program based on proximity to a significant other; Lara was limited to a commutable distance from her home; and Pat wanted to stay in her current metropolitan area due to family and job location. Once they made the decision to become faculty, they sought out experiences that would help them attain their goal. In part this can be described as self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), but it was more than just believing they could accomplish the task. They actually constructed their experience of graduate school to make themselves marketable. The participants created their own cohort-like groups with peers in their coursework. They also created teaching opportunities where none existed before, usually on a volunteer basis. Sela worked with one faculty member for several years and was given considerable flexibility to lead complete sections of a course.

I created that [teaching]. I taught three classes with him. I don’t know of anyone else who had done that...There again, the level of teaching experience that I had really helped in the transition to faculty.

While none of the participants was the instructor of record for a graduate course, they were able to gain valuable experiences as co-teachers with their faculty. In addition, some taught at community colleges or at a four-year college while others taught undergraduate courses. Most had the support of individual faculty, but they did not have structural support.
Summary

While there were few common interactional or structural characteristics for the women faculty in their graduate Higher Education program, there was one prevalent action that tied them together—the belief, ability, and perseverance to build needed knowledge and skills for a faculty career. There was diversity in the structural factors of their graduate programs. Participants attended programs that were faculty- and administrative-oriented; cohort- and non-cohort based; part-time and full-time attendance patterns. They had assistantships in the department and in student affairs. In other words, they attended a wide range of programs with varying opportunities. There was diversity in their experiences of the interactional factors. Some participants had mentors, some had good advisors, and some had neither but found one faculty member who would encourage them. Several students were a part of close cohorts, some created their own networks, and a few had little on-going contact with fellow students. Family and friends played a minor supporting role for most of the students, but a few had strong ties outside their institution. What characterized all of the participants was the ability to create their own path to the professoriate.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents an overview of the findings as they relate to the research questions and the literature. The overview is followed by the Implications for Theory, focusing on graduate student socialization and self-reliance. The Implications for Practice section focuses on the impact the data have on explaining the socialization of graduate students, the role self-reliance plays in graduate students, and the distinction between administrative- and faculty-oriented programs.

Overview of Findings

The conversion of graduate students into faculty members in the field of Higher Education Administration depended on a positive experience of graduate education. The participants in this study attributed their conversion to engaging role models, faculty support, and positive teaching experiences. In addition, each participant’s experience indicated internal motivations that helped them persist to graduation and follow a faculty career.

The study data support the literature that suggests that students need and value faculty interactions both in the classroom and outside. Mentoring was valued but not necessary for persistence or conversion. Participants also valued peer interactions but social integration was not necessarily a factor in persistence to degree. Peer networks appeared to be the most valuable to the participants after graduation as they became the basis for the individual’s professional network. While family and friends provided emotional support for graduate students, they generally were not a factor in persistence to degree or conversion to faculty status.
Professional socialization is a valuable theory for explaining some behavior in graduate school; however, for most of the participants it was not relevant until their first professional position. This may be particularly the case for Higher Education Administration programs as most programs are targeted to continuing professionals and not future faculty; however, the literature critical of graduate education in general suggests that graduate students are socialized to graduate school and not to future faculty roles. Most of the professional socialization centered on the acquisition of knowledge, both theoretical and applied. The creation of a professional identity and the application of knowledge were more likely to occur during the participants’ first faculty position.

Higher Education Administration programs are not dependent on undergraduate programs that feed directly to graduate school. As a result, the career paths of the participants did not follow the “traditional” path of finding a career as an undergraduate and continuing directly into a master’s program and then a doctoral program. The participants all had work experience prior to returning for their doctorates. In addition, most of the participants did not return to a doctoral program with the intention of following a faculty career. Research and teaching are cited in the research as the primary motivators to follow a faculty career; however, the participants in this study were more likely to be motivated by teaching and interaction with students than by research.

Although the participants followed three distinct paths to a faculty career, their similarities were more pronounced than their differences. Those who had chosen a faculty career prior to entering a graduate program were intentional about finding experiences to build their professional skills. Those who decided to follow a faculty career at some point during their graduate experience either had already sought out teaching opportunities or
found them once their career decision had been made. Two of the participants changed to a faculty career based on their teaching experiences. Depending on the type of program, students may have had some structurally-based opportunities to gain experience teaching and conducting research beyond their dissertations. Those who did not decide on a faculty career until after graduation did not differ significantly from the other two groups. Only three had not gained teaching experience while in their doctoral programs.

Implications for Theory

This section provides implications for socialization and self-reliance within the literature of higher education scholarship. The literature on the socialization of graduate students and self-reliance are summarized, the study data for both are presented, followed by conclusions for each topic.

Graduate Student Socialization

Literature

Within the graduate student context, the socialization process includes interactions between students and others in their environment (Austin, 2002b). Graduate students observe, listen to, and interact with faculty in formal and informal settings. In particular, mentoring and role modeling are frequently cited as the most influential factors in both academic persistence and academic career choice (Keith & Moore, 1995). Interaction with peers is also an important part of graduate student socialization (Austin, 2002b). First-year graduate students learn how to be graduate students by watching more advanced students. Graduate student socialization also depends on interactions with friends and family. Perceptions of family and friends influence how a student processes and integrates socialization into the academy.
Data

The study data supported the literature on the importance of faculty and peer interactions in the graduate student socialization process. Professional socialization to a faculty career was less evident in the graduate education experience primarily due to the predominance of administrative-oriented graduate programs. Those participants who attended faculty-oriented programs were more likely to be exposed to hands-on research (outside of their dissertations) and were more likely to be encouraged to attend and present papers at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE).

Conclusions

Socialization, as a concept to describe the process one goes through to learn and incorporate the values and norms of a profession, has little meaning for Higher Education Administration. While there is socialization taking place, it is to graduate school itself, not to the faculty role. The structures in place for doctoral programs do not provide adequate exposure and experience for students to be socialized to future roles as faculty. Faculty-oriented programs offer opportunities to gain experience on research collaboration, but do not offer institutionally recognized opportunities to teach. Administrative-oriented programs may offer a few research assistantship positions, but it is not a standard part of the program. Even though programs do not offer teaching opportunities as a part of the curriculum, many contain flexibility in allowing students to co-teach graduate level classes. There is little or no research about whether either type of program exposes future faculty to the concepts and practices of service. Added to the complexity of the socialization question is the purpose of administrative-oriented programs—to further
develop and educate administrators. Socialization to a faculty role would not make sense. Indeed, the purpose of socialization for continuing practitioners who are already socialized to their fields of student or academic affairs is questionable. Practitioners bring their experience to their doctoral programs and enrich the learning environment. The purpose of their continued education is to develop their understanding of higher education and its institutions through coursework and scholarship. Socialization to a faculty role is thus superfluous to practitioners. Therefore, socialization to the faculty profession is more likely to happen and more appropriate in the initial faculty position of assistant professor, which according to the literature may make for a rough transition.

*Self-Reliance*

*Literature*

The literature reflects the self-reliance theme. Career development theory incorporates the concept of self-efficacy as a factor in career decision making (Betz, 1994). In this context the individual needs to have self-efficacy in order to project herself into a particular career. In an academic sense, self-efficacy is believing that one can do the necessary academic work, which is necessary for individual persistence (Betsworth, 1999; Byer, 2002).

*Data*

The concept of self-reliance is noteworthy as the participants created their own professional development outside the structural elements of their programs. All of the participants displayed internal motivations for beginning doctoral studies, persisting to degree completion, and following a faculty career. They found opportunities beyond the
structurally-provided activities to broaden their professional development. In addition, the participants built relationships with faculty and peers who supported their careers.

Conclusions

What is unclear is the role self-reliance plays in all graduate student experience. Self-reliance appeared to play a vital role in the graduate experience of the participants in this study; however, this may not be the case in other more structured fields. On the other hand, self-reliance may be an obvious and unstated necessary characteristic for persistence to degree. Self-reliance may also predict advancement to a beginning faculty position, particularly for women in male-dominated fields where there are fewer women faculty to act as role models.

Implications for Practice

This section focuses on the areas identified by the prior section: socialization theory and self-reliance as an individual characteristic. In addition, implications are presented that address the distinction between the two types of Higher Education Administration programs.

Higher Education Administration

Higher Education Administration is a unique field and the results are not the same as we would find in other fields. Fields that require students to continue from undergraduate to doctoral programs are not conducive to lives that have interruptions. Structures of opportunity change as women mature and find that perceived barriers to career choice are no longer relevant or new fields become apparent after completion of an undergraduate degree, which for some fields is too late to start a career. It appears that the characteristics of Higher Education Administration programs create a supportive
environment for women. There are equitable numbers of women students and women faculty, thereby providing role models and mentors of the same gender. There is a flexible start date for master’s students: some begin directly after their undergraduate education, others work before returning for a degree. Some programs require experience in the field prior to admission to the advanced degree program. Past experience is therefore valued, and individual contribution to the learning environment is expected.

Perhaps self-reliance is strengthened when students need to go out on their own and seek opportunities as the participants did in this study. Research and teaching (as a teaching assistant) are expected in many fields, thus it is not the experience itself that influences conversion to a faculty career. Or it may be teaching and researching in a male-dominated field has stresses of its own that deters women from continuation, thereby supporting the idea of critical mass. Some of the literature (see Nyquist et al., 1989 and Hinchey & Kimmel, 2000) suggests that even though graduate students gain teaching experience through teaching assistantships (TA), they do not receive developmental support to improve their teaching thereby creating frustration.

For Higher Education Administration, socialization as a concept needs to be reconsidered to meet the needs of continuing administrative professionals and future faculty. Perhaps this is understood at the program level, but it does not appear that the field addresses this issue. Are Higher Education Administration programs socializing their students to graduate school, to future administrative positions, or future faculty positions? In addition, other disciplines could be assessed for both their understanding of their purpose as it relates to socialization and the relevance of the program for future faculty.
Institutionalized support for future faculty in administrative-oriented programs would encourage graduate students to consider a faculty career. If individual faculty did not support the participants, either through encouragement or by allowing them to co-teach a class, then they may not have persisted in following a faculty path. Individual faculty provided opportunities rather than the program itself. Programs might consider institutionalizing the practice of co-teaching. In addition, programs might make arrangements with other departments and institutions to find appropriate adjunct positions so that future faculty could gain teaching experience. Making teaching opportunities available to all doctoral students could potentially provide new, unexplored career options.

**Program Distinctions**

The distinction was made earlier in this discussion between faculty-oriented programs and administrative-oriented program in order to define the expectations of the programs. Those programs defined as faculty-oriented expected students to become faculty, whether they did ultimately or not. Those programs defined as administrative-oriented expected students to continue as practitioners in the field of student affairs/higher education. However, as noted in the data, students defied expectations at both the entry and exit points of doctoral education. Currently, faculty members in Higher Education Administration come from both types of programs; therefore, there is no need to make a distinction between the two types of programs. One could argue that all faculty should come from faculty-oriented programs; however, this would be detrimental to the field. If all faculty came from faculty-oriented programs, then the field would lose the perspective of the practitioner. While research is vital to practice, most master’s students are in graduate programs to become practitioners. Currently, faculty-oriented programs are at
prestigious institutions, which in turn gives more prestige to those students who attend these institutions and enhances their future job opportunities—at least at other prestigious universities. Perhaps a clearer categorization would be research-oriented and practitioner-oriented programs; however, the distinction nonetheless contributes to the stratification of programs. Those research- or faculty-oriented programs produce faculty who seek work at similar programs and practitioner- or administrative-oriented programs produce faculty who work in similar programs and may not be “qualified” to be hired by faculty-oriented programs, thereby perpetuating the status quo. In order to reduce stratification and elitism in Higher Education programs and enrich the experience of the students and cross-fertilize ideas between research and practice, programs could consider hiring faculty from both administrative- and faculty-oriented programs.

To acknowledge that faculty do come from administrative-oriented programs suggests that there needs to be support for the transition to faculty status. This support can be provided through connecting students with future faculty programs or assigning a mentor beyond their dissertation advisor. In addition, ASHE, the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) could provide pre-conference seminars to help assist students who come from programs with few resources to support individual students. In addition, hiring committees need to understand that those students who graduate from administrative-oriented programs may not have the research experience or a publication record that students who come from faculty-oriented programs have as a result of their program experiences. Further support may be necessary so that new faculty can develop and commit to appropriate and productive research agendas.
Future Research

The potential for future research includes possibilities of both broadening and narrowing the current research study. Within the field of Higher Education Administration, there could be an expansion of the study by surveying men in the field of Higher Education Administration. Further focusing on women in the field might include longitudinal studies. There are also possibilities for expanding the research to include other fields in higher education such as professional programs (Business, Engineering) and arts and sciences (Political Science, Chemistry).

While there is value in keeping the research narrowed to a woman’s perspective in order to gain their perspective, it means that we would not know if men in higher education have similar paths. If men’s experiences are similar to those of the participants in this study then there are implications for the field as a whole; however, if men’s experiences are significantly different, then there may be gender issues that will need to be addressed. In order to provide a more comprehensive view of the field, men need to be studied as well.

In addition, a larger sample of women would provide a larger range of experiences. The sample could be expanded to show potential differences between faculty who have been out of graduate school for longer than 12 years and those of the current study who have been out of school less than 12 years. A follow-up study of the participants after both three years and six years would be helpful for longitudinal observations. Of interest would be perspectives of their career path, tenure rates, reasons for denial of tenure, and departure behaviors prior to tenure decisions. In addition, there are several questions for research that
address differences between faculty-oriented programs and administrative-oriented programs. These include program rigor, faculty mentoring, and publication experience.

Finally, the study included only one program of study and due to the unique nature of the field, it is not generalizable to other disciplines or fields of study. A model of women’s persistence and conversion to faculty could be developed and tested based on the three factors identified in the data analysis (structural, interactional, and individual) with scales for program attributes. Subsequently, the model could be tested on other programs and disciplines to see how these fit within the factor model. For the structural factor, the scales could include teaching opportunities, research opportunities, cohort model, and flexible start date (returning versus continuous students). For the interactional factor, the scales could include mentoring, peer mentoring, student-initiated study groups, and collaborative research. For the individual factor, the scales could include self-reliance, ability to manage ambiguity, and other individual attributes rather than individual demographics.

Researcher’s Agenda

Of particular interest is the application of the data to Higher Education Administration programs. Individual and interactional factors appear to influence student persistence in this study; however, these are not necessarily controlled by the university or programs. Many structural factors can not be changed but can be studied for their influence on student behavior. These factors include institutional expectations, institutional type, and program history. Structural factors that can be assessed and potentially modified include department structure, program structure, and expectations for faculty-student interactions. A mixed-method study would be appropriate to assess both the formal and informal
structures. Surveying all Higher Education programs would provide data about formal structures that provide the context for reported student persistence rates. In addition, interviews at a sample of Higher Education programs would be necessary to determine the informal structures, such as expectations for faculty-student interactions and faculty expectations about student career choice. Understanding the structural influences on student persistence and career choice should lead to productive changes within the field. In addition, programs of Higher Education Administration have the opportunity and responsibility to lead higher education to incorporate the research on graduate student satisfaction and persistence.

Summary

This research has uncovered the experiences of women in doctoral programs in the field of Higher Education Administration, specifically women who are current faculty in Higher Education programs. The investigation reveals what program characteristics and behaviors as well as student characteristics and behaviors may contribute to the relatively large number of women in the professoriate in the field. Given the academy’s inequitable proportion of women in tenure-track ranks, especially noted in a number of program areas such as science and engineering, the example of Higher Education programs may have salience for institutions that purport to make the academy more equitable.
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APPENDIX A—INFORMED CONSENT FORM

North Carolina State University
INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH

Women’s Experience of Graduate Education: A Case Study of Faculty in the Field of Higher Education

Principal Investigator: Karen Haley     Faculty Sponsor: John Levin

We are asking you to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of women faculty members who attained doctorates and accepted faculty positions.

INFORMATION
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to be a part of an individual interview lasting 1-2 hours, which will be audiotaped. A CV, a statement of teaching philosophy, and a research agenda will also be requested (as available). A second interview may be requested. It will be conducted via phone and will be audiotaped.

RISKS
There are no known risks associated with the study.

BENEFITS
There is no known benefit to the subject, however, the study results may contribute to knowledge in the field.

CONFIDENTIALITY
The information in the study records will be kept strictly confidential. Data will be stored securely in the researcher’s home computer and on archival CDs. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.

CONTACT
If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Karen Haley, at 919-515-8567 or karen_haley@ncsu.edu. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Matthew Zingraff, Chair of the NCSU IRB for the Use of Human Subjects in Research Committee, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/513-1834) or Mr. Matthew Ronning, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Research Administration, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/513-2148)

PARTICIPATION
Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be destroyed.

CONSENT
“I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may withdraw at any time.”

Subject's signature_______________________________________ Date _______________

Investigator’s signature__________________________________ Date _______________
APPENDIX B—IRB FORMS

North Carolina State University
Institutional Review Board for the Use of Human Subjects in Research
SUBMISSION FOR NEW STUDIES

Title of Project: Women’s Experience of Graduate Education: A Case Study of Women Faculty in the Field of Higher Education Administration

Principal Investigator: Karen Haley  Department: Adult and Community College Education

Source of Funding (required information): none

Campus Address (box number): 7801

Email: karen_haley@ncsu.edu  Phone: 513-8567  Fax:

Rank: ☑ Student: ☐ Undergraduate  ☐ Masters; or ☐ PhD  ☑ Other: EdD

If rank is not faculty (i.e. student or other), provide the name of the faculty sponsor overseeing the research: John Levin

Faculty Sponsor’s email: john_levin@ncsu.edu  Campus Box: 7801  Phone: 513-1285

Investigator Statement of Responsibility

“As the Principal Investigator, my signature testifies that I have read and understood the University Policy and Procedures for the Use of Human Subjects in Research. I assure the Committee that all procedures performed under this project will be conducted exactly as outlined in the Proposal Narrative and that any modification to this protocol will be submitted to the Committee in the form of an amendment for approval prior to implementation.”

Principal Investigator’s Signature* ___________________________ Date ____________

Faculty Sponsor Statement of Responsibility

“As the Faculty Sponsor, my signature testifies that I have reviewed this application thoroughly and will oversee the research in its entirety. I hereby acknowledge my role as principal investigator of record.”

Faculty Sponsor’s Signature* ___________________________ Date ____________

*electronic submissions to the IRB are considered signed via an electronic signature

PLEASE COMPLETE IN DUPLICATE AND DELIVER TO:
Institutional Review Board, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (lower level of Leazar Hall)

For IRB office Use Only

Review Received: ☐ Administrative  ☐ Expedited  ☐ Full Board

Review Decision: ☐ Approve  ☐ Approve with Modifications  ☐ Table  ☐ Disapprove

Reviewer_________________ Signature_________________________Date ____________
North Carolina State University
Institutional Review Board for the Use of Human Subjects in Research

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

If at any time you have questions or difficulties while completing IRB forms, please feel free to contact Deb Paxton at debra.paxton@ncsu.edu or 919-515-4514.

In your narrative, please address each of the questions below. Keep in mind that the more details that you provide, the easier an IRB reviewer will be able to understand your research and reach a prompt decision.

A. INTRODUCTION

1. In lay language, please briefly describe your research, its purpose, procedures, and expected contribution to its field or to the general population.

The purpose of this case study is to explore the experiences of women faculty who attained doctorates and accepted faculty appointments within a field that has an exceptionally high percentage of women faculty members. The study seeks the graduate student experience of women who are now faculty members in the field of Higher Education Administration.

Interviews with 15 women will be conducted either at conferences or at the individual institutions of the participants. In addition, their CVs and teaching philosophies will be collected for analysis.

The study results will contribute to the field of gender equity in higher education. While participation of women students continues to rise, there is not the corresponding rise in faculty ranks. By studying a field that has a high percentage of women faculty, the researcher seeks to find connections between the graduate experience and acceptance into the faculty ranks.

2. If this is student research, indicate whether it's for a course, thesis, or dissertation.

Dissertation

B. SUBJECT POPULATION

1. How many subjects will be involved in the research?

15

2. Describe how subjects will be recruited. If flyers, advertisements, or recruitment letters will be used, please attach copies of those documents.

Names will be solicited from faculty in ACCE, potential participants will be asked individually to participate.

3. List specific eligibility requirements for subjects, describe screening procedures, and justify criteria that will exclude otherwise acceptable subjects.

Women faculty teaching in the field of Higher Education Administration (nationally)

4. Explain and justify sampling procedures that exclude specific populations.

This is a case study of faculty who meet the listed eligibility requirements, beyond the requirements there are no exclusions.

5. Disclose any relationship between researcher and subjects, such as teacher/student or employer/employee.

There will not be any direct relationship between the researcher and the participants other than possible acquaintance.

6. Check any vulnerable populations that you will intentionally include in the study:
☐ Minors (under the age of 18) – if you will involve minors in your study, you must make provisions for parental consent and minor assent to the research
☐ Pregnant women
☐ Persons with mental, psychiatric, or emotional disabilities
☐ Persons with physical disabilities
☐ Elderly
☐ Students from a class taught by the Principal Investigator
☐ Prisoners
☐ Other vulnerable populations:

If any of the above are used, justify the necessity for doing so. Please indicate the approximate age range of minors to be involved.

C. PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED
1. In lay language, describe completely and with good detail all the procedures involving human subjects that will be followed during the course of the study. Provide sufficient detail so the committee is able to adequately review the research.

   The researcher will acquire the consent of each participant for a taped interview. Participants will be assured of confidentiality as described on the consent form.

2. How much time will be required of each subject?
   1st interview: 1-1.5 hours; possible 2nd interview: 1-2 hours

D. POTENTIAL RISKS
1. State the potential risks from the research (psychological, social, financial, legal, physical, or otherwise). State how you plan to minimize these risks.

   None known

2. Will there be a request for information that if accidentally made public could embarrass the subjects or reasonably place them at risk of criminal, social, or professional harm?
   No

3. Could any of the study procedures or information collected produce stress, anxiety, or psychological harm? If yes, please justify the need for such procedures or information, and describe methods you will take to minimize the harm a subject encounters (e.g., you will provide or arrange for psychological counseling for those subjects who experience distress due to your study).
   No

4. Describe methods for protecting your subjects' confidentiality. How will data be recorded and stored? Will any identifiers be collected? If so, how and why? If you will collect identifiers, will you destroy the link between subject identity and data at some point? If you are collecting audio or video recordings, do you plan to destroy the recordings after the research is complete?

   Data will only be stored on the researcher's home computer and archived to CD. The names in the data will changed in the files to protect confidentiality. Identifiers will not be so specific as to be able to link subject and identifiers.

5. If your research will be reported in a case study format, how will you protect individual subjects' responses/information?

   See above

6. Is there any deception of subjects in this study? If yes, please describe the deception, justify it, and provide a debriefing procedure.
   No

E. POTENTIAL BENEFITS
Please address benefits expected from the research. Please note that this does not include compensation for participation, in any form. Specifically, what, if any, direct benefit is to be gained by the subject? If no direct benefit is expected, but indirect benefit may be expected (i.e. to general society), please explain. There is no direct benefit to the participants, however, it is hoped that the study results will contribute the knowledge base of the field.

F. COMPENSATION

Explain compensation that subjects will receive for participating in the study, as well as provisions for the withdrawal of a subject prior to completion of the study.

1. If class credit will be offered for participation, list the amount given and alternate ways to earn the same amount of credit.

G. COLLABORATORS

If you anticipate that additional investigators (other than those listed on the cover page) may be involved in the research, list them here indicating their institution, department and phone number.

H. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. If a questionnaire, survey, or interview instrument is to be used, attach a copy to this proposal

2. Attach to this document a copy of the informed consent document that you will use

3. If your study involves minors, attach a copy of the parental permission and child assent documents that you will use.

4. Please provide any additional materials or information that may aid the IRB in making its decision.
APPENDIX C—SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Tell me about your graduate school experience.

What prompted you to return for a doctorate?

What were your goals when you entered your program?

What support did you encounter in your program?  
What challenges did you encounter in your program?

What was your relationship with your peers (other students)?

What did your family think about your returning to school? Support? Challenge?

What were the roles that faculty played in your experience?  
Your best relationship? Worst?

When did you decide to become a faculty member?  
What support did you have? What were your challenges?

Were there specific guidelines/insights given by faculty or program?

How did you prepare yourself for your future role as faculty?

In hindsight, what was missing from your program?

Any stories you would like to tell me regarding your graduate student experience?