

## Abstract

LOMBARDI, RYAN TIMOTHY. Examining the Impact of Fit on the Job Satisfaction of Midlevel Mangers in Student Affairs. (Under the direction of Audrey J. Jaeger, Ph.D.)

The purpose of this study was to identify the relationship of personal characteristics, job characteristics, and fit on the job satisfaction of mid-level managers in student affairs.

The study was quantitative in nature and used the Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector, 1997) and several additional instruments to assess the impact of these variables on job satisfaction.

Participants included 845 midlevel managers who are members of NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education.

This study demonstrated significance in the relationship of gender, race, years in job, level of monetary professional development support, number of student contact hours, person-organization fit, and person-job fit on job satisfaction for this sample. The findings provide current levels of job satisfaction for midlevel managers and contribute to the literature on the multiple variables that impact satisfaction for this population.

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Examining the Impact of Fit on the Job Satisfaction of  
Midlevel Managers in Student Affairs

by  
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North Carolina State University  
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## **Biography**

Ryan Timothy Lombardi was born to Dennis and Susan Lombardi in 1974. The youngest of three boys in his family, Ryan pursued an early passion in music through high school and college. He attended West Chester University and received an undergraduate degree in music education, after which Ryan immediately pursued and obtained a master's degree in higher education from the University of Kansas. Ryan's professional career began at Colorado College and continued at Duke University, where he worked until joining Ohio University in 2008. He currently serves as the vice president for student affairs at Ohio University, a position he began in June 2012. Ryan resides in Athens with his wife, Kara, and two daughters.

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never have finished this without you. I finally acknowledge my beautiful daughters, who will not remember this process, but will hopefully benefit from the outcome. I love you both and hope that your mother and I have provided a strong foundation for your happiness and success in life.

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## **Introduction**

Institutions of higher education have long been viewed as a place for young men and women to mature and develop as contributing members of society. In early periods of the history of higher education, the role of educating students about subject matter as well as character issues fell in the hands of the faculty. These faculty often lived in residence with students and acted as an extension of the home environment (Cohen, 1998). There were very few, if any, lines drawn between what occurred in the classroom and outside of it. Faculty gradually became more specialized in nature, focusing on research and creative activity within their discipline, while the management of students' lives became more time consuming given increased coeducation and the expansion of public higher education after the Morrill Act of 1862 (Boyer, 1990; Rudolph, 1965). This, coupled with the increasing complexity of institutional life and rising enrollments, created the need for additional human resource investment by colleges and universities. As a result, institutions began to augment their ranks with support personnel to focus on the administration of the institution and matters that were deemed on the periphery of what occurred inside the classroom environment (Cohen, 1998; Nuss, 2003). Through the years, the ranks of these support staff have expanded significantly, and many institutions now have extensive organizations dedicated to this end. For the purpose of this study, the primary focus was on Divisions of Student Affairs, also sometimes called Student Services, Student Development, or Campus Life. These divisions often consist of professionals who support the holistic development and growth of students, and include functions such as student programming, counseling services, residence life, student health services, and career services, to name a few (Dungy,

2003). The exact composition of Divisions of Student Affairs varies by institution, and a detailed list of those considered for this study can be found in the Methodology section.

These functions are often considered to be peripheral to the core of the educational experience, as they do not entail direct instructional capacity. However, research has shown that students who are engaged outside of the classroom and have proper support structures in place are typically more successful in their academic pursuits, thereby emphasizing the value and importance of these services in modern higher education (Astin, 1977; Astin, 1993; Kuh, 2009).

Within the context of higher education, student affairs professionals are a varied and complex group in the academe. With educational backgrounds in areas such as counseling, administration, and student development, these professionals are responsible for the life and education of the college student in the cocurricular environment. Classified as a “helping profession,” student affairs work has for long been considered high-investment, low-reward (in monetary terms) work (Jones, 1980; Lorden, 1998; Quinn, Staines, & McCullough, 1974). A recent *Chronicle of Higher Education* study indicates that among all administrative functions of a university, those who work in student affairs are the lowest compensated (Lopez-Rivera, 2009). That is, a midlevel manager in student affairs makes less than a peer at a similar level in business operations, advancement, or academic affairs. Further, it is assumed that with the level of education that a typical student affairs professional has—most entry-level positions require an advanced degree—earning potential would be far greater working in a corporate or nonuniversity setting. Those who have dedicated their careers to this work will likely list the benefit they receive from their vocation not as their paycheck,

but rather as the intrinsic satisfaction they receive in helping today's college students thrive and have a positive curricular and cocurricular experience (Lorden, 1998).

Given the complexity of student affairs divisions at institutions of higher education, it is not surprising that they are also complex in their personnel composition. Most institutions require a level of staffing that creates an administrative bureaucracy not found in earlier periods of higher education (Cohen, 1998; Nuss, 2003). For example, a dining services operation will have a vast array of staff working in the department. These staff will include front-line individuals such as food servers, janitorial staff, and cashiers, as well as behind-the-scenes people such as cooks, dietary specialists, and chefs. At the head of the department might be a budget officer or manager who is responsible for ensuring that millions of dollars in revenue from these operations are judiciously used to maintain a constant supply of fresh, high-quality ingredients and the ability to provide a varied and healthy menu to students. These individuals likely present fee scenarios to boards of trustees, institutional leaders, students, and parents when determining how the operation will be run. These duties are complex and require a high level of competency to be effective, and they are also critical to the continued success of the individual operation. These types of positions are typical across many college campuses in student affairs divisions, and for the purpose of this study were categorized as midlevel managers. They are not in the executive ranks of the division or institution, yet have significant responsibility for maintaining high-quality and necessary services to students within a specific department. Often referred to as the keepers of knowledge and those most responsible for day-to-day management of student life operations, midlevel managers in student affairs represent a crucial component of the university

community (Belch & Strange, 1995). Midlevel managers are in a unique position in a divisional management structure at most institutions. Most commonly, these professionals serve as departmental directors for the aforementioned core functions of the profession. While typically given latitude to make departmental decisions regarding resources and programmatic direction, midlevel managers report to more senior officers and are often not involved in higher-level institutional decision making processes.

Although midlevel professionals in student affairs represent a critical component of the administrative structure, they tend to experience a perpetual struggle with their positions. Rosser (2000) notes that among all challenges with these roles, the greatest is that midlevel managers often have to enforce, maintain, and uphold policies that they had no say in developing. This leads to a feeling of having to justify policies without being able to fully comprehend the rationale behind them (Rosser, 2000). This task can be particularly difficult given the increased role of parents in the lives of today's college students. Parents today often intervene on behalf of their students, and expect that university staff members will be able to help them resolve a problem or justify a policy to them (Lum, 2006). A midlevel manager might find it challenging to deliver news or policy implications to constituents such as parents in these situations.

Professionals who work in student affairs represent one of the largest populations of employees on many college and university campuses (Montgomery & Lewis, 1996; Sagaria & Johnsrud, 1988), and as these numbers have increased, so has the turnover of those who hold these positions (Mooney, 1993; Sagaria & Johnsrud, 1988; Ward, 1995). Midlevel managers in student affairs report an intent to leave their positions and overall low levels of

job satisfaction at alarming rates (Bender, 1980; Borg, 1991; Holmes, Verrier, & Chisholm, 1983; Klenke-Hamel & Mathieu, 1990; Lorden, 1998; Renn & Hodges, 2007; Tull, 2006). Although several studies have been conducted to explore these attrition rates, they vary in their findings. This variation in findings has created ambiguity in the profession and demonstrates the need for additional investigation. For example, Holmes et al. (1983) found that as many as 61% of professionals leave within six years in the profession, while Bender (1980) noted that 64% of professionals indicated they would not remain in student affairs work their entire career. Those who do remain in the profession long enough to ascend to a midlevel manager position are likely to find increased challenge and ambiguity in their roles once they do so (Rosser, 2000). This creates additional concern for the potential of additional attrition in the profession.

The trend toward specialization within student affairs limits the breadth of experience for midlevel managers and has been linked to overall low levels of satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Hill, 1983; Johnsrud, 1996). As a result, a significant amount of research has been conducted on these specialized subpopulations (e.g., residence life staff, judicial officers, career counselors, etc.) of student affairs professionals (Forney & Wiggers, 1984; Jones, 2001; Nowack, Gibbons, & Hanson, 1985; Nowack & Hanson, 1983; Phillips & Marriott, 1980). However, no research has been conducted that examines student affairs professionals across these varying functional areas (e.g., residence life, career services, judicial affairs, student activities, etc.) of responsibility. The daily work environment and stress levels encountered by these individuals are quite diverse, and were considered in this

study to provide a more in-depth understanding of how they do or do not contribute to job satisfaction.

The job itself and the specific workplace environment has also shown to correlate with low levels of job satisfaction when based on the low quality of supervision received (Amey, 2002; Arminio & Creamer, 2001; Lorden, 1998; Schenider, 2002), the lack of advancement opportunities (Evans, 1988; Johnsrud, 1996; Wood, Winston, & Polkosnik, 1985), low pay and salary relative to those perceived in other professions requiring similar levels of education (Jones, 1980; Lorden, 1998; Quinn, Staines, & McCullough, 1974), lack of professional development opportunities (Nestor, 1988), and overall poor working conditions (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Lorden, 1998). Specifically, Barnes, Agago, and Coombs (1998) found that for faculty, the amount of time dedicated to work is a significant predictor of intent to leave the position (Seifert & Umbach, 2008, p. 361). Although this study was specifically related to faculty, it is important to consider such time constraints when considering student affairs professionals. These environmental factors speak to the importance of considering fit as independent variables in this analysis.

Beyond the job, work environment, and other organizational factors, personal attributes and priorities balanced by student affairs professionals may affect levels of job satisfaction. Although well represented currently in the student affairs profession, women have historically reported higher levels of stress (Scott, 1992) and lower levels of satisfaction (Burns, 1982) in the work environment than their male counterparts. Johnsrud and Heck (1994) found that for faculty, women are more likely than men to leave their positions, due to perceived barriers to success. Although this research was based on the faculty experience, a

similar concern exists for those women who are professionals in other areas of higher education, including student affairs. Further research suggests that additional work-life issues play an important role in the overall satisfaction with one's job (Johnsrud & Edwards, 2001; Johnsrud, Heck, & Rosser, 2000), although to what extent and which specific factors have the greatest impact has not been clearly identified for the population of midlevel managers.

Previous studies examining job satisfaction for student affairs professionals have not considered the diversity of the profession and are essentially attempting to categorize all types of student affairs work as having the same basic work functions and job expectations. The increasing specialization and professionalization of student affairs has created an opposite effect, in that jobs within student affairs vary significantly. This unique context of the positions that midlevel managers holds can have a profound impact on their daily work life, and in the demands and stressors of the job. By examining these individual specialty areas for comparison with each other, we better understand the varying levels of satisfaction for midlevel managers and the characteristics of their job that contribute to this experience.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The Student Affairs profession has historically experienced high levels of attrition among its staff ranks (Bender, 1980; Borg, 1991; Holmes et al., 1983; Klenke-Hamel & Mathieu, 1990; Lorden, 1998; Renn & Hodges, 2007; Tull, 2006). Low levels of job satisfaction due to increased specialization, low quality of supervision, lack of advancement opportunity, low pay, lack of professional development, and overall poor working conditions have also been examined among student affairs professionals (Amey, 2002; Arminio &

Creamer, 2001; Evans, 1988; Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Hill, 1983; Johnsrud, 1996; Jones, 1980; Lorden, 1998; Quinn, Staines, & McCullough, 1974; Schenider, 2002; Tull, 2006; Wood et al., 1985).

Midlevel managers in student affairs represent a large and important component of an institutional administrative structure (Belch & Strange, 1995). However, these professionals face significant challenges in their daily work given the unique roles they fulfill and have felt underappreciated in doing it (Scott, 1978). Often charged to enforce, maintain, and uphold policies they may have had little input into developing, midlevel managers continually balance between leading more junior staff and following the directives of the senior leaders within their division or institution. This role of the midlevel manager has been repeatedly cited as challenging and one that likely leads to low levels of job satisfaction (Henkin & Persson, 1992; Johnsrud & Rosser, 1999; Rosser, 2000).

Person-Environment (P-E) fit is defined as “the compatibility between an individual and a work environment that occurs when their characteristics are well matched” (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005, p. 281). Previous research on job satisfaction has shown that environmental factors can have an impact on an individual’s ability to achieve job satisfaction (Bretz & Judge, 1994; Kristoff, 1996). That is, people are more likely to be satisfied with their work if their values are in congruence with those of the environment. Specifically, this refers to Person-Organization (P-O) fit and Person-Job (P-J) fit, both of which were used as constructs within Person-Environment (P-E) fit for this study.

Person-Organization (P-O) fit is defined as “the compatibility between people and organizations that occurs when: (a) at least one entity provides what the other needs, or (b)

they share similar fundamental characteristics, or (c) both” (Kristoff, 1996, p. 4). Previous literature details that significant differences exist among varying types of institutions of higher education (Hirt, 2006). However, no studies have been conducted that examine the effect these institutional types have on the job satisfaction of midlevel managers who work within them.

Person-Job (P-J) fit is assessed by comparing a person’s desires and preferences in a job with the demands of the actual job they hold (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). Previous studies have examined specific functional work areas within student affairs to determine levels of job satisfaction (Forney & Wiggers, 1984; Jones, 2001; Nowack, Gibbons & Hanson, 1985; Nowack & Hanson, 1983; Phillips & Marriott, 1980). These previous studies do not utilize the Person-Job fit construct as it relates to job satisfaction. Therefore, it has been impossible to glean through previous literature the specific components of a job function that affect job satisfaction, which Person-Job fit will help illustrate. Further, given the breadth of work in student affairs, it was necessary to examine Person-Job fit across the multiple functional areas that typically comprise student affairs divisions. No research has been conducted that examines the variance in job satisfaction across multiple job functions within student affairs.

This study helps to inform factors that determine the level of job satisfaction for midlevel managers, including those specific to the job and more broadly to the institution. In doing so, a more clear professional development path can be created for new and aspiring student affairs professionals.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of fit (organizational and job), personal, and job characteristic factors on the overall job satisfaction of midlevel student affairs professionals. Specifically, an analysis of varying functional work emphases and their correlation with personal factors was conducted. In an effort to augment the literature on job satisfaction, this study attempts to provide additional examination and analysis of how a combination of these factors contributes to job satisfaction. To this end, the following research questions were addressed:

- 1) What are the levels of job satisfaction for midlevel student affairs professionals?
- 2) What is the relationship of fit (organizational and job), personal characteristics (years in profession, years in job, educational level, relationship status, race, gender, dependent child status), and job characteristics (position level, functional area, institution type, institution size, student contact hours, and professional development) on the job satisfaction of midlevel professionals in student affairs?

## **Conceptual Framework**

As job satisfaction is one of the most commonly researched dependent variables in the psychological and sociological literature, this study was informed by several related theories. Given the breadth of literature on job satisfaction, it was necessary to identify those frameworks that were most relevant and included the factors being considered for this study. The theories presented as part of the conceptual framework propose varying constructs for identifying job satisfaction, including those specific to the individual, the job, and the

workplace. This approach fits most appropriately with this study as an attempt to focus on the environmental impact on job satisfaction for individuals.

Kalleberg (1977) identified job satisfaction as the “overall affective orientation” (p. 126) of employees in relation to their work. He found that job satisfaction is a result of factors that are both intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic refers to the work itself, and whether the employee finds it appropriately stimulating and challenging. The extrinsic factors relate to multiple constructs identified as convenience, financial, relationships with coworkers, career, and resource adequacy (Kalleberg, 1977).

Herzberg (1966) presented a two-factor theory in relation to job satisfaction. His motivation-hygiene theory suggests only motivators (achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth) would lead to job satisfaction, while the absence of hygiene factors (work conditions, pay, relationships) create negative feelings and produce an outcome of job dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1966).

Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction “as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” (p. 1300). Further, he identifies work, pay, promotions, recognition, benefits, working conditions, supervision, coworkers, company, and management as typical job dimensions through which job satisfaction must be assessed (Locke, 1976).

The High Performance Cycle (Locke and Latham, 1990) suggests that work motivation and job satisfaction are best explored in a cyclical fashion, in which satisfaction and commitment are achieved only after certain factors are present in the work relationship (Locke & Latham, 1990). The factors required for the High Performance Cycle to be

realized include goals, expectations, effort, performance, and contingent and noncontingent rewards (Locke & Latham, 1990).

For the purpose of this study, the factors relevant to job satisfaction outlined by Kalleberg (1977), Herzberg (1966), Locke (1976), and Locke and Latham (1990) were identified as work factors, including pay, promotion, supervision, benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, coworkers, nature of work, and communication. These factors were used in measurement as controls to better examine the relationship between fit and overall job satisfaction.

The conceptual framework employed for this study suggests that in addition to the factors identified by these theories (Herzberg, 1966; Kalleberg, 1977; Locke, 1976; Locke and Latham, 1990), there are certain environmental factors that also affect ultimate job satisfaction. Two specific factors of the environment, person-organization (PO) fit and person-job (PJ) fit, were utilized as independent variables in order to determine their impact on satisfaction. These two fit variables suggest that in order for individuals to find satisfaction in their organization and job, they must have a certain alignment of values (person-organization fit) and skills (person-job fit) within them (Cable & Judge, 1996; Edwards, 1991; Kristoff, 1996).

Job and personal characteristics that have shown to have potential to affect work environment and satisfaction will be explored (Johnsrud & Heck, 1994; Johnsrud & Rosser, 2002; Smart, 1990). These additional variables were chosen based on the review of literature that demonstrated independent correlations with job satisfaction. Job characteristics that will be examined include position, functional area, institutional type, crisis response hours, night

and weekend work hours, and opportunities for professional development. The personal characteristics that will be assessed include the number of years in profession, educational level, relationship status, ethnicity, gender, and dependent child status (Burns, 1982; Johnsrud & Edwards, 2001; Johnsrud & Heck, 1994; Johnsrud, Heck, & Rosser, 2000; Scott, 1992). Each of these variables was examined and analyzed to determine its impact on the dependent variable of job satisfaction. Figure 1 illustrates a conceptual model that was used for this study.

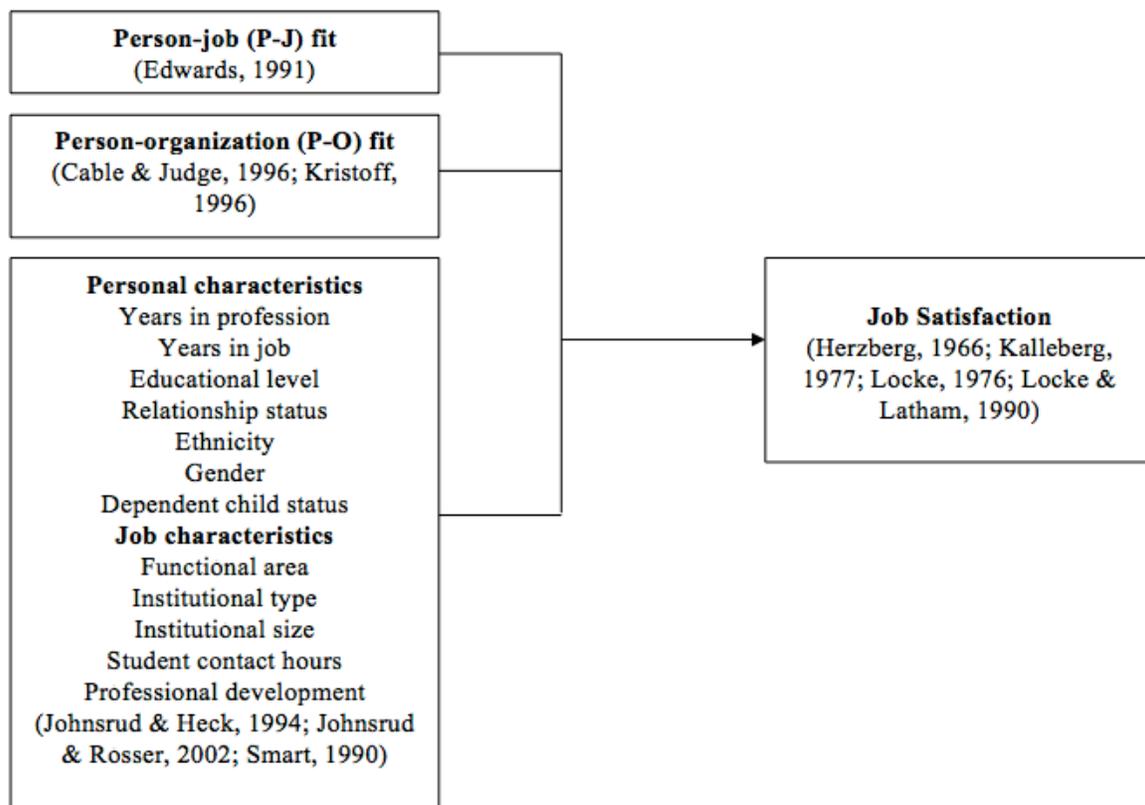


Figure 1. Conceptual framework for study of impact of fit on job satisfaction for midlevel managers in student affairs

Smerek and Peterson (2007) suggest, "...literature does not have a conclusive notion of what comprises job satisfaction among administrators in a college or university..." (p. 233). Previous studies have called for additional insight into these areas and a more thorough examination of the profession (Holmes et al., 1983; Lorden, 1998; Rosser, 2000). This study provides a better understanding of the environmental (person-job and person-organization) fit construct in combination with job and personal characteristics that affect job satisfaction for midlevel managers in student affairs and further informs the literature while providing practical application for the profession.

### **Significance**

Given the prominent role that student affairs professionals, and particularly midlevel managers, have in the higher education experience, this study provides direction as to how to better recruit and ultimately retain these professionals. With a more clear understanding of the factors that affect job satisfaction, professionals will be more aware and therefore closely matched to those functional areas and organizations that will result in a positive outcome for both the employee and employer. This is significant because lack of job satisfaction has been linked to both turnover and intent to leave an organization (Johnsrud, Heck, & Rosser, 2000; Johnsrud & Rosser, 2002; Smart 1990). The literature indicates that attrition among the ranks of midlevel managers historically exceeded 50% (Bender, 1980; Holmes, 1983), and that they play a critical role in the ability to deliver effective institutional services for students (Bender, 1980; Lorden, 1998). Therefore, it is critical to better understand the specific variables that contribute to job satisfaction across multiple functional areas of responsibility.

The work of student affairs professionals varies greatly. The day-to-day responsibilities can vary significantly depending on a specific role, and for aspiring professionals it is no longer prudent to broadly identify a career in student affairs as a vocational path. Doing so could lead to confusion, dismay, and ultimately attrition if expectations do not match reality. Therefore, better delineating the levels of satisfaction for job types and work conditions helps to inform areas for additional preparation for entrance into the profession.

Retention of staff in the work environment is critical in today's depressed economy. Aside from the desire to have generally satisfied employees in the workforce, the more basic element of cost comes into play with retention. The cost to recruit and train a new employee is significant (Staw, 1980). Bliss (2004) suggests the dollar amount associated with a single employee departure is 100% of their annual salary, and up to 150% of the annual salary for managerial positions. This cost includes not only the actual financial expenses needed to advertise, recruit, select, move, and train a new employee for the organization, but also the opportunity costs that are lost by having a position vacant for some period of time (Bliss, 2004; Hinkin & Tracey, 2000). This has the potential to negatively affect service to students, morale of other staff who will assume the burden of additional work, and ultimately organizational performance and effectiveness. An example of effective employee retention is evident in the SAS Institute, where the turnover rate has been as low as 4%, in a software market in which employee turnover commonly exceeds 20% to 30% annually (Bankert, Lee, & Lange, 2000). The benefits of the retention efforts to the SAS Institute are evident in their revenue, which more than doubled in a seven-year span in the late 1990s (Bakert, Lee, &

Lange, 2000). For institutions of higher education, retention of staff will positively impact departmental budgets and overall efficiency, particularly given the frequent use of elaborate search processes for selecting new staff. If a cost effective method for improving the satisfaction and retention of student affairs staff can be identified through this study, it should be given strong consideration for implementation.

This study addresses the variables that affect job satisfaction. This data is useful to identify areas of opportunity for additional training and determine which functional areas within student affairs are likely to have the lowest levels of satisfaction. Given that no research has been conducted on this topic for midlevel managers in student affairs across functional areas, all data gathered relating to these characteristics provide new direction for the student affairs profession.

While some personal characteristics have been examined and correlated with job satisfaction, previous studies were not comprehensive to provide a broader snapshot of the impact of these variables. For example, one study on the impact of gender on job satisfaction was useful but too narrow in scope (Burns, 1982). It simply looked at one's gender without considering other variables that might inform the study. This data on gender could fluctuate significantly depending on additional variables such as ethnicity, relationship, dependent child status, and level of educational attainment, to name a few. This study examines additional personal variables as they relate to job satisfaction, which provides a more clear picture of how work environments can be created that allow persons from varying backgrounds to find satisfaction in their work.

In many employment sectors there has been a perpetual struggle to quantify the concept of fit. This language is commonplace in search committee materials and performance reviews. By assessing the relationship of fit to job satisfaction for student affairs professionals, this study breaks new ground in providing future guidance for the student affairs profession. Through a better understanding of specific types of fit (person-organization and person-job) variables, modifications in the recruitment of staff to career tracks, institutions, and job can occur. Further, the likelihood that these professionals will persist in their jobs and in the profession can also be inferred. This study provides data about how environmental and job characteristics inform levels of job satisfaction for midlevel managers in student affairs.

### **Summary**

Job satisfaction among midlevel student affairs professionals is in need of examination to better understand who exactly is experiencing low levels of satisfaction and better inform the reasons why this is occurring. The impact of fit when hiring new employees or when seeking new employment was explored, given that this has been considered informally in searches for many years. The independent variables that have been identified offered a breadth of information through which to examine this topic. Using theoretical frameworks for job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1966; Kalleberg, 1977; Locke, 1976; Locke and Latham, 1990) that are well established adds credibility to these findings and ensures they are well received by those in positions to affect change in institutions of higher education. This study provides additional evidence to support the need for enhanced

professional development and attention to the dichotomy of experiences that midlevel managers are having.

## **Review of the Literature**

Job satisfaction is a complicated construct; combined with factors affecting environmental fit, it was explored in greater context in this study. As reviewed previously, student affairs professionals are leaving their jobs at an elevated rate (Bender, 1980; Borg, 1991; Holmes et al., 1983; Klenke-Hamel & Mathieu, 1990; Lorden, 1998; Renn & Hodges, 2007; Tull, 2006), which is cause for concern in the profession. While some studies have explored this problem by looking at intent to leave (Bender, 1980; Klenke-Hamel & Mathieu, 1990; Lorden, 1998) or other extrinsic benefits (salary, benefits, promotion) of the job (Evans, 1988; Jones, 1980; Lorden, 1998; Quinn, Staines, & McCullough, 1974), none have looked at the impact of environmental fit on the levels of satisfaction for midlevel managers. This literature review provides a context for job satisfaction, environmental fit, and student affairs middle managers. Each component better informs the theoretical background and framework for this investigation.

### **Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is an often-studied construct in education, psychology, and sociology. Defined by Locke (1969) as the emotional state resulting from appraisal of one's job, satisfaction can be affected by many variables, both within and external to the day-to-day work environment. Many studies have been conducted in an attempt to explore the nuances of how employees attain job satisfaction, and most result in an intricate combination of factors and variables. Some examples of these variables include work on present job, present pay, opportunities for promotion, supervision, and coworkers (Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969). The research on job satisfaction is extensive as it has long been considered an

important predictor of the intent to leave an organization (Bender, 1980; Klenke-Hamel & Mathieu, 1990; Lorden, 1998). Similarly, for many years employers have been interested in retaining valued employees not only because they benefit the organization by producing outcomes, but also because the real impact of losing them is the cost (opportunity and real) of replacing them (Bliss, 2004; Hinkin & Tracey, 2000; Staw, 1980).

There has been significant discussion of the concept of job satisfaction and the means by which it is measured. Debates have ensued over the causes and results of job satisfaction. Locke (1976) used the word *emotion* in describing the reactions that persons have to their job. This concept of the emotional response to the work environment has remained constant in the literature for 30 years. Locke (1976) also introduces the notion that satisfaction is partially dependent on the alignment of the outcomes received in the workplace with personal values and needs. Pinder (1998) upholds Locke's (1976) contention that job satisfaction is an "emotional experience" and that people have an inherent need to enjoy their work in order to be satisfied with it.

Based on research conducted by these psychologists, there appears to be a relationship between the emotional enjoyment and comfort one has in the workplace with overall level of satisfaction. It is then plausible to suggest that those who are able to find a workplace that aligns closely with their values that is relatively comfortable will be more likely to find satisfaction in that environment. While some authors (Locke, 1976, Pinder, 1998) place emphasis on the emotional aspect of satisfaction, others (Benge & Hickey, 1984; Herzberg, 1966; Kalleberg, 1977; Organ, 1990) would contend there are other issues that play a role in determining this desired outcome.

Herzberg (1966) offered a lens through which to consider job satisfaction in the workplace. His work remains steady 40 years later due to its relevance and application. He suggested a two-factor theory of job satisfaction, known as the motivator-hygiene theory (Herzberg, 1966). The premise of this framework is that there are two distinct categories of factors related to job satisfaction, including motivators and hygiene factors. He identifies motivators as the intrinsic factors, including the work itself, responsibility, achievement, recognition (contingent rewards), and growth opportunities (Herzberg, 1966). The hygiene factors include supervision, salary, benefits, relationships, and managerial policy. In his work, Herzberg suggests that the motivators are likely to cause job satisfaction and a lack of hygiene factors would lead to job dissatisfaction. This two-factor model has held constant for over 40 years, and informs the conceptual framework for this study.

Kalleberg (1977) offers a similar multidimensional approach to job satisfaction, which entails both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. In his model, *intrinsic* similarly refers to the work itself and the employee's ability to be self-directed, produce results, and generally find the work interesting. Kalleberg (1977) offers multiple dimensions of the extrinsic factors, including finances, career, convenience, relationships, and resources. The financial dimension includes items such as pay and fringe benefits. Career dimensions included opportunities for promotion, advancement, and recognition. Accessibility to the job, pleasant work environment, and appropriate work hours are covered in the convenience dimension. Relationships with coworkers and the ability to maintain positive working relationships are also factored into the extrinsic model. Finally, resource adequacy entails appropriate

supervision, authority, and physical equipment necessary to successfully complete job tasks (Kalleberg, 1977).

Benge and Hickey (1984) describe *satisfaction* as the combination of various attitudes held by an individual employee at a given time. These attitudes can be affected by both personal and work-related variables, which can range from level of pay to one's gender. For example, an employee may feel positive about monetary compensation, which would lead to an increase in satisfaction. At the same time however, that employee may feel that women are not treated equally in the work environment with opportunities related to professional development and general issues of respect. Therefore, this would correlate negatively with job satisfaction. At some point, this employee will reconcile between the good salary and poor working conditions and use this combination of perspectives to either stay or leave the organization. Thus, job satisfaction is a complex construct that must be examined from multiple angles to fully inform the research. This study includes multiple independent variables that help provide a breadth of examination that is necessary.

Organ (1990) suggests that fairness is more important than the emotional reaction one has to a job in determining satisfaction. He continues by explaining that fairness can take many meanings. A perceived lack of equity could lead to dissatisfaction (Organ, 1990). There are four main points that are made in reference to the perceived fairness in an organization: feedback, recourse, dignity, and input (Organ, 1990). While all four of these points do contain emotional overtones, they place greater emphasis on the leadership and climate that exists within an organization.

Locke and Latham's high-performance cycle (1990) suggests that job satisfaction is likely to lead to job commitment. Meyer and Allen (1991) offer three forms of job commitment: affective, normative, and continuance. Affective commitment refers to a person's desire to remain with an organization, most likely because of an "emotional attachment to and identification with" the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991, p. 67). Normative commitment refers to employees remaining with an organization or job because they feel obligated to do so. Job satisfaction has also been linked to productivity, commitment, and overall happiness in the workplace (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Finally, continuance commitment refers to the "costs associated with leaving the organization" (p. 67).

Given these three forms of commitment, the correlation between affective commitment and job satisfaction as described by Pinder (1998) and Locke (1976) is particularly relevant to this study. It could be suggested that in addition to affective commitment, normative commitment is also high among student affairs professionals. An obligation to the cause of their work, or the students, might be commonplace among these individuals. One could hypothesize that continuance commitment would be among the lowest of the three forms of commitment; however, this may not be the case in a depressed economy with limited job availability. The monetary benefits of working in student affairs have never been exceptional, and given that tenure and other forms of seniority are less prevalent for administrative professionals, continuance commitment would likely remain the least common of the three forms outlined by Meyer and Allen (1991) for midlevel student affairs professionals.

The challenge when considering the three-component model outlined by Meyer and Allen (1997) is that there is no clear or quantifiable way to measure affective commitment that translates to a certain behavior in the workplace (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) also suggest that the perception of the workplace can have a major impact on the form of and the way that commitment is demonstrated. This presents a challenge in making a correlation between affective commitment and student affairs professionals.

An additional concept worthy of mention in this review is that of job investments. Rusbult and Farrell (1983) identify both intrinsic and extrinsic factors that contribute to commitment through job investments. Intrinsic factors could be linked closely with continuance commitment, placing importance on monetary gain and other compensatory benefits. Extrinsic factors relevant to job investments might include more relational functions of the job as referenced by Miller and Jablin (1991) in the information gathering process. The physical work environment, relationship with coworkers, and other nonmonetary rewards all factor into the extrinsic job investment model. This model appears on the surface to have less correlation with the hypothesis being formed in this paper than others, but is worthy of mention due to the attempt to form a well-rounded argument. In maintaining the notion that professionals in higher education do not enter or stay in their positions for the monetary benefits, the job investments model would suggest then that there are very few other intrinsic benefits that would lead to commitment.

Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job investment are popular concepts in organizational psychology. Looking at these through the lens of the midlevel student

services professional sheds light on satisfaction and commitment factors specific to this population. The review also reinforces the notion that the relationship that employees have with their workplaces are complex, and the population in question is no exception.

This study goes beyond what have been the most commonly examined factors contributing to job satisfaction. It is this author's contention that satisfaction goes beyond the tangible benefits one receives or the attitudes one possesses about an organization at a given time. These are important aspects that contribute to satisfaction, but there should be a more meaningful alignment of values with the organization and job in which one works. Regardless of the benefits of a particular job or the way one feels about it, if these core values do not correlate with each other, high levels of job satisfaction will be hard to achieve (Hirt, 2006; Renn & Hodges, 2007; Saks & Ashforth, 1997).

Job satisfaction is important because those who are satisfied will be more productive, more committed, work harder, and be more likely to stay at their current jobs (Meyer & Allen, 1997). All of these factors, essentially employee productivity, ultimately affect an organization's bottom line. This is particularly acute in higher education, where a very high percentage of a college or university's budget is devoted to personnel. Retaining positive, productive, and effective employees will help keep budgets stable and thus minimize the need to pass additional costs on to students, taxpayers, and donors.

### **Job Satisfaction and Student Affairs**

Although job satisfaction has been examined extensively in the psychology and sociology literature for industry, very few studies relating to education, and more specifically student affairs, have been conducted. A brief review of those studies that have been

conducted and are relevant to this literature review follow. The lack of research presents a concern for professionals in higher education programs who want to positively affect the future of the student affairs profession.

Bender (1980) conducted one of the first studies on job satisfaction specifically for student affairs administrators. She found that 66% of the respondents were satisfied with their current jobs (Bender, 1980). A study of job satisfaction for the general population resulted in an 83% satisfaction rate (Hugick & Leonard, 1991). Bender (1980) also found that younger student affairs administrators (those in the 23–36 age range) were less satisfied than their older peers. She suggests that many of the older professionals are more likely to be senior student affairs officers. Even more concerning about Bender's study is that while only 66% of the respondents reported satisfaction, an impressive 91% felt that their job gave them a personal sense of accomplishment and 96% indicated that they felt their job is important (Bender, 1980). Opportunities for professional development and career enhancement were among the lowest reported levels of satisfaction in this study (Bender, 1980). This highlights dissonance between the overall number and some factors that commonly inform job satisfaction, emphasizing the need for further study and regression analysis in doing so.

To further inform Bender's results, Wood, Winston, and Polkosnik (1985) and Holmes et al. (1983) conducted separate but similar studies that examined the attrition rate for student affairs professionals in their first five to six years on the job. The authors note a range of 32% to 61% of attrition of student affairs professionals. Similarly in Bender's (1980) study, only 36% of those surveyed indicated a desire to remain in the student affairs field for their entire career. Unfortunately, there is a lack of additional and more timely

research to support these findings. While these findings were considered in forming this study, it is recognized that the current landscape may be different from when these results were published nearly three decades ago, due to generational differences in employees, changes in the higher education landscape, and the current state of the national economy.

Several additional studies relating to job satisfaction and student affairs professionals suggest that burnout may be a primary cause of attrition in the profession (Barr, 1990; Carpenter, 1990; Forney, Wallace-Schutzman, & Wiggers, 1982). That is, the perception that student affairs professionals work exceptionally long hours and under stressful circumstances ultimately lead to their departure from the field. There is an entire literature on the topic of burnout in the psychology and sociology disciplines, and although these can be interrelated topics, a complete review will not be conducted as it is beyond the scope of this study. However, it is plausible that working conditions, stress levels, and long hours could correlate negatively with job satisfaction.

Additional studies relating to job satisfaction for student affairs professionals highlight salient issues. Anderson, Guido-DiBrito, and Morrell (2000) identify several studies in which the impact of gender is considered on job satisfaction. In general, women reported higher levels of stress and interrole conflict (Bird, 1984; Brown et al., 1986a, 1986b; Thoreson, Kardash, Leuthold, and Morrow, 1990; Witt and Lovrich, 1988) than men. That is, women have a greater challenge balancing their multiple roles (e.g., partner, parent, colleague, supervisor, etc.) in both the work and personal setting. Although Bird's (1984) somewhat dated study is skewed because many of the men in the study had a partner who did not work or worked part time, an additional study by Weishaar, Chiaravalli, and Jones (1984)

found that even among dual-career couples, women reported higher levels of interrole conflict. Yet another study (Morrell, 1994) found that females in student affairs midlevel management positions indicated higher levels of stress relating to work and their responsibilities at home than male counterparts. These findings highlight the longtime struggle for women to find equal footing in the academe.

Anderson (1998) also found that age and marital status had an impact on job satisfaction for student affairs professionals. In summary, older married senior student affairs professionals were more satisfied with their jobs than younger unmarried senior student affairs officers. This study controlled for position level, so it cannot be hypothesized that the older individuals were more satisfied due to level of career attainment, as one might assume (Anderson, 1998). Another aspect of Anderson's (1998) study found that those senior student affairs officers who worked at public institutions were more satisfied with their jobs than those who worked at private institutions. This finding may relate to the issues related to person-environment fit, given the significant difference between these two types of institutions. The results of this study leave unresolved questions, specifically regarding the impact of age and marital status. Why are older individuals more satisfied in their jobs? Why does marital status have a positive correlation with job satisfaction?

More recently, Tull (2006) conducted a study in an attempt to examine the impact of supervision on job satisfaction for student affairs professionals. The findings indicated a strong positive correlation between perceived level of synergistic supervision and overall job satisfaction (Tull, 2006). Additionally, the findings indicated a strong negative correlation with perceived level of synergistic supervision and intent to leave the position (Tull, 2006).

This study further reinforces the potential impact for variability in job satisfaction outcomes, and emphasizes the need to consider multiple characteristics when considering job satisfaction as the dependent variable.

Research indicates that a large percentage of student affairs professionals are not satisfied with their jobs and intend to leave the field (Amey, 2002; Arminio & Creamer, 2001; Bender, 1980; Borg, 1991; Evans, 1988; Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Hill, 1983; Holmes et al., 1983; Johnsrud, 1996; Jones, 1980; Klenke-Hamel & Mathieu, 1990; Lorden, 1998; Quinn, Staines, & McCullough, 1974; Renn & Hodges, 2007; Schenider, 2002; Tull, 2006; Wood et al., 1985). However, a relatively small amount of literature has been identified that provides specific examples of why this is the case. This study attempts to further inform lingering questions about job satisfaction and identify more tangible aspects of student affairs work for midlevel professionals who are in need of change. Another variable that was considered in this study that has been lacking in previous research on student affairs is the environment and its impact on job satisfaction for midlevel managers.

### **Person-Environment Fit**

When one places oneself on the campus of an institution of higher education, it is not uncommon to overhear conversations ranging from social activities to educational philosophies to political debates. Many of those who comprise the college population, beyond the students themselves, are engaged in these conversations as well. Faculty, staff, and other members of the university community immerse themselves in the intellectual fiber of the institution. The diverse array of student services that many of our colleges and

universities offer has necessitated a significant growth in the number of administrative professionals who provide oversight to these functions.

Those who work in higher education have likely experienced the environment firsthand from their own collegiate experience. Rare are positions in the academic setting that do not require some form of postsecondary education and, more commonly, multiple forms of postbaccalaureate education. Therefore, it is not precipitous to suggest that many of these professionals have a familiarity with what they perceive will be their future work setting. Miller and Jablin (1991) discuss three categories of information that are sought by new employees in an organization: referent, appraisal, and relational. *Referent* refers to basic job tasks, functions, and policies, while *appraisal* focuses on how an incumbent's success in the position will be defined (Miller & Jablin, 1991). The third category, relational information, refers to the social environment, relationships, and personal networks that may emerge as a result of the new workplace. Given the extensive amount of time most people entering this particular workforce have already spent in an educational setting, one could hypothesize that they have already gathered much of the information that Miller and Jablin (1991) describe as critical to the acclimation process.

The role of the environment in determining employee outcomes and attitudes has been examined from many angles. This construct, known as Person-Environment fit, has been studied by organizational psychologists and human resource professionals for a number of years. Early studies attempt to define fit and often end up attempting to measure one specific type fit as it relates to the individual, rather than considering multiple factors of the environment (Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2006; Judge & Ferris, 1992). In most cases, the

better the relationship between a person and their environment, the more likely that person is to have positive outcomes associated with it (Edwards, 1991; Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2006; Kristof, 1996).

Person-Environment fit is commonly examined using one of several conceptual frameworks, including supplementary and complementary fit (Kristof, 1996; Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987). Within these two constructs, fit can be considered from either a needs-supplies perspective or a demands-abilities perspective (Kristof, 1996). *Supplementary fit* is the notion that individuals augment an already established environment by contributing their own personal characteristics that are similar to others already in the environment (Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987). *Complementary fit* suggests that the environment is completed by the person's unique characteristics that are added to the group dynamic (Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987). The delineation between these is that supplementary suggests that the environment already exists, as it will before the additional person becomes a part of it, whereas complementary suggests that the addition of the person makes the environment what it will become. The significance between needs-supplies and demands-abilities is that needs-supplies suggests that an environment has the ability to satisfy a person's needs or preferences, whereas demands-abilities posits that an individual has the ability to meet the demands of the environment (Kristof, 1996, p. 3).

It is acknowledged in the literature that there are many factors of the environment that affect the individual. Among these factors are the vocation, organization, group, job, and person (Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2006). With person-environment fit being the broad construct under which the more specific dimensions fall, it is unreasonable to consider a

study that would look only at the broadest level. Therefore, two specific dimensions of fit have been identified for the purposes of this study: the organization and the job. Although both are environmental in nature, they have been found to have unique attributes and be discernable in their characteristics and impact on work outcomes (Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001). These constructs, person-organization fit and person-job fit, are reviewed in greater detail in this chapter.

### **Person-Organization Fit**

Effort has been made to examine the relationship between person (P) and organization (O) by several psychologists (Cable & Judge, 1996; Saks & Ashforth, 1997). This relationship, known as P-O fit, has been examined from the perspective of both the organization and the individual (P). The aforementioned authors examined it from the individual perspective. In both cases, a positive relationship was found to exist when a person's "values, beliefs, and personality traits" (Saks & Ashforth, 1997, p. 396) align with those of the organization. This definition emphasizes the complementary needs-supplies perspective outlined in the previous section of this chapter. By acknowledging the alignment of values with those already existing within an organization, Saks & Ashforth (1997) support this construct.

Kristof (1996) provides a broader definition of person-organization fit, as "the compatibility between people and organizations that occurs when: (a) at least one entity provides what the other needs, or (b) they share similar fundamental characteristics, or (c) both" (Kristof, 1996, p. 4-5). This definition is significant because it acknowledges the multiple constructs that are considered in examining fit, including supplementary,

complementary, needs-supplies, and demands-abilities. By providing an explanation that essentially allows the definition to be interpreted by either the person or the organization contributing to one another, it is a more suitable approach for this study.

Institutions of higher education vary greatly in their composition. Community colleges, elite private liberal arts colleges, and large public research universities have quite different missions and attract disparate types of students (Hirt, 2006). While a community college might attract working professionals trying to advance their career or acquire skills for new careers, an elite liberal arts college might attract a student who has the privilege of enrolling in a full-time pursuit of a broad education and will support the mission of these institutions of becoming a more enlightened thinker and scholar.

Similar to what might occur if students looking for vocational training enrolled in a liberal arts college, administrators who obtain employment at an organization that is not congruent with their needs might experience lower levels of job satisfaction. Kristoff (1996) defines the construct of person-organization (PO) fit as “the compatibility between people and organizations that occurs when: (a) at least one entity provides what the other needs, or (b) they share similar fundamental characteristics, or (c) both” (p. 4). The PO fit construct suggests that in order to achieve maximum potential for satisfaction in the workplace, the aforementioned definition must be realized.

If a person has firmly rooted values in a professionalized and specialized education, that person might be well suited to work at a public research university filled with many specifically tailored programs for students to choose among. It is likely that the work environment would mirror the student experience; that is, they would have a specialized role

in the organization, and be one among many departments in a division of student affairs. As midlevel managers, their work would likely require them to be skilled at one or two specific functions. The level of interaction they may have with other departments would be more compartmentalized than in other settings. Those professionals who choose to work at a liberal arts college would have a vastly different experience than this example. These individuals are likely to oversee or work within multiple functional areas, meaning they will be expected to be generalists in nature, and work across what are typically known as separate functional areas within student affairs. This type of work requires flexibility and the ability to deal with levels of ambiguity that those who prefer a more discrete and specialized environment would find frustrating. For those who are entrepreneurial in spirit, or who are likely to become bored in a specialized environment, working at a liberal arts college might feel like a dream come true (Hirt, 2006). Indeed, Hirt (2006) finds that significant differences exist in the experience of professionals who work at various types of institutions.

Person-organization fit is important because it helps to identify why individuals may be attracted to a certain organization for employment. Carless (2005) found a positive correlation between individuals' perception of their fit with the organization to the overall attractiveness of that organization before they joined it. Similarly, Cable and Judge (1997) found that a prospective employee's perceived congruence with an organizations values led to a greater likelihood of obtaining employment. This finding was true for both the applicant (employee) and the interviewer/hiring authority (Cable & Judge, 1997). Although Carless (2005) found that the specific job was more important than the organization in a person's final decision about whether to join that organization, there is some indication that the

organization plays an important role. Further, part of the basis of this study suggests that professionals do not appropriately consider the role of the organization on their choices of where to obtain employment. This is supported by Carless (2005), indicating a potential gap in the research that will be filled by this study. By determining the relationship between person-organization fit and job satisfaction, we are better informed about whether this should be a more significant factor in the employee recruitment process.

Recent research (Hirt, 2006) suggests that there is a significant difference in the experience for student affairs professionals depending upon the type of institution where they are employed. With over 3,000 institutions in the United States higher education system, a vast array of institutional types exists. These include community colleges, liberal arts colleges, four-year research universities, comprehensive universities, and universities with religious or cultural significance (e.g., historically Black colleges and universities and religiously affiliated institutions). In her study, Hirt (2006) conducted a mixed-methods approach to examining the impact of these differences on working professionals. While many of the staff across these institutions identified similar intrinsic benefits (ability to positively affect students, working towards the greater good, and making a difference), the way in which they accomplished their work and the means by which their institutions are run are quite different. With this data, it is evident that the type of institution at which one chooses to work can have a significant affect on satisfaction depending on whether the fit is appropriate for one's learning and working style.

Hirt's (2006) study emphasizes the differences among institutions of higher education and clearly outlines the need for student affairs professionals to be aware of the working

environment they are likely to encounter as they consider employment opportunities. A research university differs from a liberal arts college in that professionals at the former are looked to fill a role as a specialist within a subunit of a student affairs division (Hirt, 2006). Conversely, a student affairs professional at a liberal arts college will be asked to be a generalist and will often oversee multiple divisional offices or programs, requiring them to be well-versed in multiple functional areas within the profession. Depending on one's background, arriving at either of these institutions without an understanding of the expectations and working conditions could result in negative job satisfaction. Beyond the expectations placed on professionals at varying institutions, the way in which work is accomplished also varies dramatically. Professionals who work at community colleges report high levels of interaction with faculty and members of the senior administration, whereas those at research universities contrast this sharply, indicating very little interaction and/or understanding of roles between faculty and student affairs staff (Hirt, 2006).

While Hirt's (2006) study is paramount in informing the literature about the differences that exist among varying institutions and acknowledging the importance of understanding these differences, it was not intended to correlate these nuances with overall job satisfaction levels. Rather it provides exceptional context for further examination of the issue and importance of fit within an organization and how it affects overall job satisfaction for student affairs professionals.

Persons choosing to work at an institution of higher education often know if their personal values align with the type of organization because they are likely to have

experienced higher education firsthand as students, which emphasizes the importance of this construct for this study.

### **Person-Job Fit**

In addition to P-O fit, Person-Job (P-J) fit was examined. There is far less research and literature on P-J fit than on other forms of fit, creating greater ambiguity as to what is being considered within this construct. However, among the various sources of literature, a common definition of P-J fit has emerged as the relationship between an individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) and a specific job and its core requirements (Edwards, 1991; Kristof, 1996; Saks and Ashforth, 1997). However, most of the research on this construct has been considered at the point of organizational entry. Multiple attempts have been made to determine a job applicant's perception of fit with a prospective employer; however, virtually none has been conducted in which the current job situation is reviewed. This dearth in the research speaks to the importance of this particular study in examining midlevel professionals' current working situation and the impact of P-J fit on their current satisfaction.

In considering the level of fit one has with a specific job, Edwards (1991) examined person-job (P-J) fit in two distinct ways. The first implies the level of fit is commensurate with a person's knowledge, skills, and abilities in meeting the demands of a specific job (Kristof, 1996). This is an important component of P-J fit, as it is imperative that screening processes identify candidates for positions whose background effectively matches the needs of the job. It would not be very effective to hire someone to work in a college counseling center who has no background in psychology, counseling, or social work. This would almost

certainly lead to low levels of job satisfaction due to the incongruence with the person's preparation to the demands of the job. Ideally, this level of P-J fit has been appropriately screened for during the hiring process for staff in student affairs divisions.

A second distinct way of examining P-J fit is to compare a person's desires and preferences in a job with the demands of the job (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). This level of fit is slightly more nuanced and not as easily matched through the hiring process. For example, the culture of work in a residence life department is likely to include regular evening and weekend responsibilities, on-call duties, and crisis response activities as part of the job. A person might be well trained in these areas, but if it is not clear that these areas are required to be successful in the job and an individual hopes to work in a more regular 8–5 business day setting, that person will lack a level of fit that will be necessary to be successful in the position. While this can and should be explained in an interview process with candidates, there is no way to fully appreciate the nature of work at a specific job until one has been immersed in it. As a result of this study, a better understanding of the impact of these specific job functions on job satisfaction is possible.

Graduate programs in student affairs preparation may not offer enough opportunity to identify and educate future leaders on the differences in the type of work. Many students who are pursuing careers in student affairs indicate an interest in serving as a dean of students or vice president for student affairs. This is likely due to these positions being seen at the top of a hierarchy in the organizations. Aspiring professionals lack a clear understanding of the requirements of such a position or the sacrifices necessary to accomplish these goals. If students understood that being a dean of students typically

requires one to be on-call virtually 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and be at the disposal of senior leaders and students alike, they might consider more carefully if this is the career path that is of interest to them.

While employers and student affairs preparation programs can take some responsibility for assisting professionals in better delineating the nuances in types of jobs in student affairs, some of the responsibility also falls on the individual. It is this author's contention that individuals in the student affairs profession are not accustomed to thinking strategically and introspectively about their career paths. This is particularly acute in student affairs because most employees indicate that they fell into the career based on their own undergraduate experience, rather than through an intentional reflection of what they hope to accomplish in life and how a career in student affairs can help them realize these goals. Therefore, one is likely to enter the profession and begin work in a functional area (e.g., residence life, career services, etc.) before really knowing and appreciating the differences that exist and how those will affect their future career advancement, life commitments, and job satisfaction (Hamrick & Hemphill, 1998).

There is evidence to suggest that a clear delineation does exist between the perceptions of the job and the organization and their impact on satisfaction (Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001). In other words, it is possible to have different perceptions of the fit with a specific job and the organization within which that job is housed. It is more common for job seekers to pay closer attention to their perceived fit with the specific job versus with the organization (Bretz, Rynes, & Gerhart, 1993; Kristof-Brown, 2000). This implies a candidate's narrow focus on the immediate role within the organization, thus putting less

emphasis on the broader organizational culture and their fit within it. A study by Chuang and Sackett (2005) demonstrates a similar level of emphasis placed on P-J fit from the perspective of the hiring employer. This is particularly true in the early interview stages, when the candidate is being evaluated on the potential to fulfill the specific job functions. This study also demonstrated that as a candidate progressed in the application process, the employer placed a greater emphasis on evaluating P-O fit (Chuang & Sackett, 2005). That is, once the candidate was deemed to have the relevant skills and preparation, the employer focused on trying to determine if the candidate would fit well within the broader organization. It is not evident from this study that the prospective employee demonstrated a similar shift in emphasis through the interview process.

Once an employee is in the job and work environment, research shows that multiple constructs of fit are important (Kristof-Brown, Jansen, & Colbert, 2002). This study found that the more different organizations a person has worked for in their career, the more important P-O fit is in overall satisfaction. P-J fit was most directly correlated with overall satisfaction among those who had worked in few organizations and had a longer tenure in one organization. Despite these differences however, all types of fit, including Person-Group (P-G), are important indicators of overall job satisfaction (Kristof-Brown, Jansen, & Colbert, 2002). P-G fit was not explored in this study, yet the importance of these three variables as found in this research indicates the value of examining multiple constructs of fit in the same study.

The references to person-environment fit (P-O and P-J inclusive) and information seeking both attempt to inform the possibility that those who choose a career in student

services at an institution of higher education already have some predisposition toward the work and might consider that it aligns closely with their personal values. It therefore is logical to suggest that the value they place on their work is very high and perhaps even central to their core being (Kristof-Brown, Jansen & Colbert, 2002). Again, this illustrates the challenge in identifying an area of specialty in student affairs work. One might consider it to all be the same, but in fact the nature of work can be quite divergent, and this study emphasizes the relationship between the different types of work and overall job satisfaction.

Further, considering Miller and Jablin's (1991) relational construct of information seeking, person-environment fit has a direct impact on comfort level, which in turn likely affects satisfaction and commitment. In our attempt to delineate which constructs of fit have the greatest impact on job satisfaction for student affairs professionals, it remains important to consider the differences between perceived fit and actual fit. The literature in this section illustrates the challenges that will be faced if these are not appropriately addressed in this study.

### **Student Affairs Middle Management**

Within higher education, those who work directly to provide positive out-of-classroom experiences for students comprise the student affairs profession. Also referred to as divisions of student services, student life, campus life, or similar, those who work in this arm of the university are in place to compliment the academic mission of the institution and ensure that students have a holistic educational experience (American Council on Education, 1949; Nuss, 2003). Stemming from faculty deans and house proctors, student affairs is a relatively new phenomenon in higher education (Cohen, 1998). Despite its short history, the

field has grown exponentially and is filled with complex roles and demanding positions at most colleges and universities (Nuss, 2003). From those who provide counseling, to medical treatment, to dining hall staff and career guidance, professionals who work in this industry are critical to the environment of the modern-day higher education institution (Strange, 2003).

Given the extent of these support services, it comes as no surprise that the bureaucracy that accompanies the organizations is complex. They include multiple layers of staffing and complex roles and relationships among each other. Within this structure is the middle management position. Rosser (2000) notes that midlevel managers are the “unsung professionals of the academy” (p. 5) due to their challenging roles and overall lack of recognition. This position is particularly important, as it is commonly responsible for managing a department, including its resources and people. Middle managers report to the senior leadership of the institution, and thus are held accountable to make sure the aforementioned support services satisfy user expectations. Additionally, they are charged with shepherding in the newer staff in student life units into the ranks of the profession, and with providing mentorship and guidance that will ensure the vitality of the profession for years to come. Johnsrud (1996) explains the challenges felt by middle management, given the multiple personalities they must assume and the relative lack of recognition they receive for the work they do. Given the extensive research on the impact of such forms of recognition on job satisfaction (Jones, 1980; Lorden, 1998; Quinn, Staines, & McCullough, 1974), it is important to consider other factors that are important to those who hold these middle management positions in student affairs.

Middle managers in student affairs are perceived to be in a perpetually difficult situation. Rosser (2000) explains the difficult task of having to enforce and enact policy that one has no say in creating. This is a very common task for middle managers in student affairs and other professions. This balancing act is particularly acute when faced with a difficult situation or parent in the office of a middle manager. Similarly, Rosser (2000) notes that this balancing act takes place between the supervisor they serve and the subordinates they support. A similar challenge, as found elsewhere, is that middle managers are required to act as generalists and speak for areas of responsibility where they may have little expertise. They are likely in a supervisory capacity and were given that opportunity due to their own performance in a specialty area. As a profession, little is done to orient midlevel student affairs professionals to their newfound roles as supervisors and budget managers (Mather, Bryan, & Faulkner, 2009), thus creating additional challenges for them in these roles. It is suggested that midlevel administrators be thoughtfully mentored during their transitions and offered the chance to connect with others in similar positions for support. A study by Rosser and Javinar (2003) found that having positive interdepartmental relationships with other midlevel managers correlates positively with job satisfaction, thus supporting the importance of this suggestion. Doing so will help new middle managers deal with the challenges of ambiguity and responsibility that come with their positions (Mather, Bryan, & Faulkner, 2009).

The nature of the midlevel position in higher education also perpetuates a feeling of stagnation for these professionals; however, career support has been shown to have a significant correlation with job satisfaction (Belch & Strange, 1995; Rosser, 2004). Being in

the position of middle manager, it might be perceived to be difficult to advance to a more senior position in the institution. This bottleneck, as it has been referred to (Belch & Strange, 1995), supports this feeling of being stuck in the middle and thus creates the perception of a lack of opportunities for career advancement. Interestingly, Sermersheim and Keim (2005) note that midlevel student affairs professionals do not think they are in need of additional professional development. Therefore, their feeling of being stuck is not as a result of their ability, but rather the environmental factors that might prevent them from ascending to a higher administrative level.

A study conducted by Fey and Carpenter (1996) on midlevel student affairs professionals in Texas demonstrates a further divide. In assessing the importance of various career preparation and skill development, the study found a contrast between what midlevel managers think is important and how these compare with the desires of those who manage higher education institutions (Fey & Carpenter, 1996). This dissonance between midlevel managers and senior-level executives might contribute to the challenges faced by midlevel professionals, and emphasizes the need for enhanced preparation programs.

Another factor that has led to positive job satisfaction for midlevel professionals is their ability to develop strong external relationships (Rosser, 2004). Those midlevel professionals who develop strong relationships with faculty and more senior administrators are more likely to be satisfied with their work environment. Additionally, the relationships and interactions that midlevel professionals have with students and the public (e.g., parents) can greatly affect their satisfaction (Austin, 1984; Johnsrud & Edwards, 2001; Kauffman, 1990; Volkwein, Malik, & Napierski-Pranel, 1998). One benefit in the nature of these

positions is that midlevel administrators are likely to have a reasonable amount of contact with students and parents. While it might not be quite the extent of the interaction that those holding entry-level of frontline positions have, it is still worthy of mention. These relationships might validate the professionalism desired by midlevel managers and reinforce the important role they play in an institution of higher education, while maintaining a connection to the student experience that is so fundamental to the profession (American Council on Education, 1949).

### **Personal and Job Characteristics**

Given the attempt to examine two types of fit (P-O and P-J) and their relation and impact on job satisfaction, additional factors must be studied that could inform this relationship. These include additional job-related variables such as specific position, functional area, institutional type, institutional size, student contact hours, and professional development opportunities.

The specific job one has, the functional area (e.g., residence life, career services, etc.) in which one works, and student contact hours help inform our examination of P-J fit. These characteristics of the job differ depending on the job itself and will help to clarify the impact of the variables. They also provide a broader context through which to examine one's professional experience.

Institutional type and professional development opportunities help to inform the relationship of P-O fit with job satisfaction. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the institutional type can have a profound impact on the professional experience of employees (Hirt, 2006). Institutions vary greatly in their scope, mission, objectives, and culture.

Finally, the level of support for professional development and advancement opportunities has shown to play a role in job satisfaction (Evans, 1988; Johnsrud, 1996; Nestor, 1988; Wood et al., 1985) and should be examined further as an additional work variables.

Several personal variables were also explored through this study. These variables help to inform other factors that may have an impact on job satisfaction. Some variables, such as gender, have shown to be negatively correlated with job satisfaction (Anderson et al., 2000; Burns, 1982; Johnsrud & Heck, 1994; Scott, 1992), but given the relative age of these studies and their emphasis on faculty, they warrant additional examination. The factors that were explored include number of years in the profession, educational attainment level (e.g., bachelor's, master's, doctorate, etc.), relationship status (married, partnered, single, divorced), ethnicity, gender, and dependent child status. The value of these variables are demonstrated through the study, but it is this author's contention that factors such as dependent child status affect levels of satisfaction depending on the type of job that one has. For example, it might be more difficult for a single parent of two to work in a position that requires significant on-call and night and weekend hours. Including these variables in this study allows for a more informed examination of satisfaction.

## **Summary**

Midlevel administrators in student affairs are in a challenging position in the higher education industry. While some research has shown the varying issues surrounding these unique positions, it is evident that additional research is needed. Rosser (2000) in particular notes a need to consider organizational level issues that affect middle management. The divergent views that individuals have regarding the importance of varying constructs of fit

(P-O and P-J) must also be addressed, specifically as they relate to the nature and type of work in various student affairs units. The conceptual framework in this study helps to inform these lingering questions found in the literature and help to provide greater clarity towards these important members of the higher education academy.

## **Methodology**

This chapter will examine the methods by which this study was conducted. The design, population, sample, instrumentation, and data collection and analysis are outlined to provide a comprehensive review of the quantitative methods that were employed. The purpose of this study was to examine the levels of job satisfaction for midlevel student affairs professionals, particularly as they relate to organizational (P-O) and job (P-J) fit, as well as additional demographic and job characteristics. To appropriately collect and analyze this data, multiple existing surveys were combined with additional descriptive questions in a format that was easily delivered to and completed by respondents.

### **Research Design**

This quantitative study examined attitudes and characteristics of midlevel student affairs professionals in their current setting. As an attempt to better understand the relationship between organizational and job fit and job satisfaction, this study can be classified as an explanatory, cross-sectional study (Johnson, 2001). A quantitative study allows for a significantly larger sample size than would be possible with a qualitative study. Further, given the geographic diversity of the sample, the ease with which quantitative methods were employed greatly increased the likelihood of an adequate participation rate.

### **Population and Sample**

The population that was studied are midlevel student affairs professionals at institutions of higher education in the United States who were members of the National Association for Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). For the purpose of this study, midlevel was defined as those who have supervisory responsibility for full-time

professionals, who are not the chief student affairs officer (e.g., vice president or dean), and who have at least five years of full-time (post-master's degree receipt) experience. In order to determine the status and accuracy of survey respondents, work characteristic questions were added to the survey instrument. Initial identifiers were used based on self-identification of the respondent's level of position. A random sample of midlevel student affairs professionals was obtained through the NASPA database, a professional organization whose total membership of over 12,000 student affairs professionals represents a wide variety of institutional characteristics and job responsibilities. NASPA is the largest student affairs professional organization, so using a sample from this population allowed the author to make generalizations about student affairs professionals (Boehman, 2006; O'Sullivan, Rassel, & Berner, 2003). A random sample was used in this study, as the total population of midlevel managers is likely to be thousands of professional staff. The author of this study is a member of NASPA, and as such had access to the membership database to collect contact information for survey dissemination. After reviewing the complete NASPA membership database and determining an initial population of midlevel managers, the author conducted a simple random sample as a subset of the NASPA membership population (Agresti & Finlay, 1997). This technique was employed due to the projected size of the population being studied and the labor associated with obtaining electronic mail addresses for survey respondents.

As this study contained a relatively large (16) number of independent variables, it was important to obtain a sample size that is statistically significant using multiple regression techniques. Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) suggest for multiple regression techniques that  $n \geq 50 + 8k$ , whereby  $k$  indicates the number of predictors. Using this formula would equate

to a sample size of at least 178 for this study. Stevens (1992) suggest a sample size of at least 15 for every independent variable when utilizing multiple regression, which would equate to 240 for this study. For the purpose of this study the minimum target sample size goal was  $N = 300$ , which was exceeded threefold.

Boehman (2006) conducted a study of job commitment utilizing a similar population, sampling, and survey technique, which resulted in a response rate of 44.4%. To meet a target goal of  $n = 300$  expecting similar response rates, the author surveyed at least 675 midlevel student affairs professionals from the NASPA membership.

### **Instrumentation**

Three previously established instruments for measuring variables were used in this study. Spector (1997) identifies five key benefits to using preexisting job satisfaction instruments: 1) they cover the major components of job satisfaction, 2) they have been conducted enough time to provide norms, 3) they are likely to show sufficient levels of reliability, 4) they support construct validity, and 5) they are cost- and time-efficient steps over developing a new instrument (Spector, 1997, p. 6–7).

The surveys used in this study included the Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector, 1985) and Saks's and Ashforth's (1997) measures of Person-Job fit and Person-Organization fit. Additional demographic questions were included in this survey to help better inform the analysis and dependent variable. In total, 66 questions were asked of survey respondents.

#### **Job Satisfaction Survey.**

The Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) created by Spector (1985, 1997) was designed specifically for use in measuring job satisfaction for human services and nonprofit

professions. As higher education and student affairs work fits within this framework, this instrument was an appropriate application for this study. Van Saane et al. (2003) also identified this instrument as one of seven that met the quality criteria for reliability and validity. The others were almost exclusively designed for medical professionals (e.g., nurses/physicians) with the exception of Job In General scale. However, as a global instrument the Job In General scale does not show variance between high and low areas of job satisfaction (van Saane et al., 2003). The Job Satisfaction Survey is free of charge for use in education research endeavors, as long as results are provided to the author.

The Job Satisfaction Survey is composed of nine subscale measures of job satisfaction: pay, promotion, supervision, benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, coworkers, nature of work, and communication (Spector, 1985). The Job Satisfaction Survey is composed of 36 questions, half of which are positively worded while the other half are negatively worded. The questionnaire utilizes a 6-point Likert-type scale (1 = Disagree very much to 6 = Agree very much).

***Reliability.***

The Job Satisfaction Survey has been used frequently and there are multiple tests of reliability and validity for the instrument. Spector (1985) found a coefficient alpha of .91 for the measure of overall job satisfaction. The reliability of the individual nine subscales varied in this study, ranging from .60 to .82 (Spector, 1985). Alpha coefficients for each of the subscales can be found in Table 1.

Table 1

*Alpha Coefficients and Descriptions for JSS Subscales (Spector, 1985)*

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Alpha</u>	<u>Description</u>
Pay	.75	Pay and remuneration
Promotion	.73	Promotion opportunities
Supervision	.82	Immediate supervisor
Fringe benefits	.73	Monetary and nonmonetary fringe benefits
Contingent rewards	.76	Appreciation, recognition and rewards for good work
Operating conditions	.62	Operating policies and procedures
Coworkers	.60	People you work with
Nature of work	.78	Job tasks themselves
Communication	.71	Communication within the organization

Although some of the subscales were lower than desired, seven of the nine exceeded .70 as a common benchmark. Using the Job Satisfaction Survey, Felps, Mitchell, Hekman, Lee, Holtom, and Harman (2009) found a coefficient alpha of .93 for overall job satisfaction in their study regarding intention to quit. Spector (1997) conducted an additional study and found internal consistency of .91.

As indicated, the Job Satisfaction Survey contains both positive and negatively worded measures (Russell et al., 2004; Spector, 1985). Bergstrom and Lunz (1998) conducted a study to gauge the effectiveness of this method of assessment and found an overall reliability for the Job Satisfaction Survey of .87. Reliability did not change when the positive and negatively worded measures were separated and tested (Bergstrom & Lunz,

1998). This demonstrates the effectiveness of having positive and negatively worded measures within the same instrument.

**Person-Job/Person-Organization Fit survey.**

Methods of measuring fit between an individual and the organization (P-O) and job (P-J) are limited. However, Lauver and Kristof-Brown (2001) found that it is important to study the constructs autonomously, and that each has a separate and unique impact on job satisfaction. For the purpose of this study, Person-Organization and Person-Job fit was measured using questions developed by Saks and Ashforth (1997). This measure was chosen because of its multiple-item scales. Virtually all of the very limited number of instrument options for fit utilize one-item measures. In this instrument, a series of four questions was asked of the survey respondents to gauge their respective perceptions of Person-Organization and Person-Job fit. To determine perceptions of Person-Job fit, questions were asked such as, “To what extent do your knowledge, skills, and abilities match the requirements of the job?”, “To what extent does the job fulfill your needs?”, “To what extent does the job enable you to do the type of work you want to do?”, and “To what extent is the job a good match for you?” (Saks & Ashforth, 1997, p. 406). Person-Organization fit was measured by asking four additional questions, including “To what extent are the values of the organization similar to your own values?”, “To what extent does your personality match the personality or image of the organization?”, “To what extent does the organization fulfill your needs?”, and “To what extent is the organization a good match for you?” (Saks & Ashforth, 1997, p. 406). The questions were answered using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = To a very little extent to 5 = To a very large extent).

As indicated, the options of instruments for measuring fit are limited. This scale has been used on several occasions to assess organization and job fit for new and more seasoned employees (Carless, 2005; Resick, Baltes and Shantz, 2007; Saks & Ashforth, 1997).

### ***Reliability.***

Although the measures for determining perceptions of Person-Job and Person-Organization fit have been used less often, there are examples of studies that gauge their reliability. Saks and Ashforth (1997) found a coefficient alpha of .92 for the Person-Organization fit measures and a .89 for the Person-Job fit measures. Carless (2005) conducted a study using the Person-Job fit measure and found a coefficient alpha of .83 on two separate trials. Resick, Baltes. and Shantz (2007) conducted a study in which they used a modified version of the Person-Organization job fit measures developed by Saks and Ashforth (1997) as well as Cable and Judge (1996) and found a coefficient alpha of .94. Saks (2006) conducted a more recent study using the four-item scales developed by Saks and Ashforth (1997) with a resulting coefficient alpha of .89 for both scales.

### **Work Factors**

Many factors have been shown to contribute to job satisfaction in the workplace (Herzberg, 1966; Kalleberg, 1977; Locke, 1976; Locke & Latham, 1990). Johnsrud (2002) developed a model to account for these factors, which she generally classifies as quality of worklife. Using a multidimensional instrument such as the Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector, 1997) provides the opportunity to examine these factors in combination with personal and work characteristics as controls while determining the relationship between fit and job satisfaction. The Job Satisfaction Survey includes subscales for factors of pay, promotion,

supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards (recognition), operating procedures, coworkers, nature of work, and communication (Spector, 1985). As indicated, the Job Satisfaction Survey subscales measured reliability ranging from .60 to .82, with seven of the nine factors measuring greater than the standard desired reliability of .70 (Spector, 1985).

### **Personal and Job Characteristics**

Multiple personal and work characteristics were explored in this study to inform variations in levels of satisfaction and fit among individuals with different personal backgrounds and formal work/job functions. The personal characteristics included are years in profession, educational level, relationship status, ethnicity, gender, and dependent child status. The work characteristics included are position level, functional area, institutional type, institutional size, student contact hours, and professional development.

For the purpose of this study, the following common Student Affairs departments were considered as functional areas: academic advising; admissions; assessment; athletics; campus safety; career development; student unions; community service; commuter services; counseling services; dean of students; dining services; disability services; enrollment management; financial aid; fund-raising; graduate student services; Greek affairs; health services; international student services; judicial affairs; leadership programs; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender student services; multicultural student services; orientation programs; recreation programs; religious programs; registration services; residence life and housing; student activities; and women's centers (Dungy, 2003).

Most of the functional areas for this study match those identified by the Council for the Advancement of Standards (2009). For this study, some functional areas that are

separated in the CAS Standards (e.g., health services, health promotion, alcohol and other drug programs) were combined into a singular category to avoid the chance that respondents will not identify with overly specific functional area descriptions. It is also noted that divisions of student affairs have many varying structures and names, so using the functional areas outlined in Dungy (2003) were most likely to resonate with current professionals in student affairs. Some additional functional areas were added for this study that are not represented in the CAS Standards, including athletics, campus safety, dean of students, enrollment management, and religious programs. These departments are not found in all divisions of student affairs, but they are common enough for inclusion in this study (Dungy, 2003). An additional functional area, Student Affairs Administration, was added to the survey instrument to accommodate positions that were not found in any of the aforementioned functional areas. Some examples might include significant positions that oversee other division departments (e.g. assistant/associate vice president, senior/executive directors, special assistants, etc.) but are not the chief student affairs officer of the institution.

All personal and job characteristic variables will be measured with simple multiple-choice response questions that were coded in the analysis as continuous variables when possible. A complete list of these questions and response options can be found in Table 2.

Table 2

*Questions and Response Options for Personal and Job Characteristics*

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<u>Personal Characteristics</u>	
<u>Question</u>	<u>Response Options</u>
1. Gender	Male, Female, Transgender
2. Are you of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin?	No, Yes
3. What is your race?	White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, Other race, Two or more races
4. Marital status	Single, Married/Partnered, Divorced
5. Highest educational level attained	High school, Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's, Doctoral, Other terminal degree
6. Dependent children in household?	Yes, No
7. Years in profession (full-time)	Enter number
8. Years in current position	Enter number
<u>Job Characteristics</u>	
<u>Question</u>	<u>Response Options</u>
9. Institutional type	Public 2-year, Public 4-year, Private 2-year, Private 4-year, Religiously affiliated, Historically Black college or university, Hispanic-serving institution
10. Institutional size	<4999, 5000-9999, 10000-14999, 15000-19999, >20000
11. Functional area	CAS Standards included in 7 <sup>th</sup> Edition (2009) and Dungy (2003)
12. Average number of direct student	0-4, 5-9, 10-14, 15-19, 20-24, >25 hours per week
13. Average level of monetary support for professional development	<\$1000, \$1000-1999, \$2000-2999, \$3000-3999, >\$4000

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## Variables

This study examined one dependent variable against multiple independent variables. Table 3 identifies each variable and the correlating measure that was used as the assessment.

Table 3

### *Variable List and Correlating Measures Used in Study*

<u>Dependent Variable</u>	<u>Measure</u>
Job Satisfaction	Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) including subscales (Appendix A): nine 4-item scales (36 total questions), 6-point Likert-type measure; 1=Disagree very much, 6=Agree very much
<u>Independent Variable</u>	<u>Measure</u>
Person-Job Fit	Saks & Ashforth (1997) scale: 4-item scale, 5-point Likert-type measure; 1=To a very little extent, 5=To a very large extent <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To what extent do your knowledge, skills, and abilities match the requirements of the job?</li><li>2. To what extent does the job fulfill your needs?</li><li>3. To what extent does the job enable you to do the type of work you want to do?</li><li>4. To what extent is the job a good match for you?</li></ol>
Person-Organization Fit	Saks & Ashforth (1997) scale: 4-item scale, 5-point Likert-type measure; 1=To a very little extent, 5=To a very large extent <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To what extent are the values of the organization similar to your own values?</li><li>2. To what extent does your personality match the personality or image of the organization?</li><li>3. To what extent does the organization fulfill your needs?</li><li>4. To what extent is the organization a good match for you?</li></ol>
Personal Characteristics	See Table 2
Job Characteristics	See Table 2

## **Data Collection**

As indicated, student affairs professionals who are members of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) were sampled for this study. The author is a member of NASPA, and therefore had access to the membership database to obtain contact information (including position title) for survey dissemination. To the extent possible, the author cross-referenced the membership database with institutional contact information for the population sample to ensure the greatest accuracy in contact information (e.g., e-mail address) and current position.

Data was collected using a Web-based survey administration tool. The Web-based survey tool provided ease of distribution and return (Boehman, 2006; Umbach, 2004). The sample population received an e-mail utilizing their official work domain explaining the study and requesting response. The e-mail contained a link to the online form in which participants were provided IRB documentation before being directed to the questionnaire. Multiple e-mails were sent to survey participants over the course of a three-week period in order to increase response rate (Dillman, 2000). Participants were provided approximately one week to complete the survey prior to receiving a follow-up e-mail. Therefore, study participants received a maximum of three e-mails if they had not responded to the survey. The software package utilized enabled identification of those who had not completed the survey for appropriate follow-up and to prevent those who had completed it from receiving redundant requests.

Collecting data in this manner was economical and timely (Umbach, 2004). Web-based survey software collects all requested data and allowed the author to download this

data in Microsoft Excel (.xls) format, which can quickly be imported into statistical software programs. It is also the contention of the author that midlevel student affairs professionals were more likely to respond to something electronically than to printed materials.

A pilot study was conducted with a sample of the population that was not surveyed for the actual study. The pilot study was done to ensure the correct application of the electronic survey software and to determine approximate response time for respondents. No feedback was received that required significant changes to the study.

### **Data Analysis**

Due to the possibility of interrelationships among the variables being used in this study, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the Job Satisfaction Survey. A factor analysis is useful in studies that contain a large number of variables, and has the ability to collate multiple variables that are related into broader factors (Argresti & Finlay, 1997; Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). With a large ( $N = 845$ ) size for this study, reliability for this factor analysis was *very good* (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). This factor analysis first identified the eigenvalue of the 36 variables. Initially, variables with an eigenvalue greater than 1.0 were retained, which resulted in seven factors. Varimax rotation was then conducted and three additional methods for interpretation outlined by Mertler and Vannatta (2005) were employed, including variance, scree plot, and residuals. After reviewing the factor loadings and scree plot, additional factor analyses were conducted with fewer variables retained. This step was conducted to determine if there was a clearer model that could be derived in the analysis. After conducted multiple analyses, a three-factor model emerged and was adopted. Appropriate labels were then applied to each component. More detail on the

three-factor model is provided in the Results. Conducting this procedure minimized the chance of multicollinearity between variables and ensured the greatest statistical significance when conducting multiple regression techniques.

Data analysis procedures for the research questions follow:

*1) What are the levels of job satisfaction for midlevel managers in student affairs?*

This question was assessed using a simple correlation (mean) for the dependent variable (job satisfaction) in relation to the sample population of midlevel managers. After reporting mean scores for the variables, *t*-tests and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) techniques were applied to the data. These tests allowed the researcher to determine if statistical significance existed in the relationships between variables. In comparing results of two variables, independent samples *t*-tests were used. When more than two variables were being compared, ANOVA techniques were employed. Post-hoc tests for ANOVAs were conducted by examining Levene's test for equality of variances and reviewing significance between variables.

*2) What is the relationship of fit (organizational and job), personal characteristics (years in profession, years in job, educational level, relationship status, race, gender, dependent child status), and job characteristics (position level, functional area, institution type, institution size, student contact hours, and professional development) on the job satisfaction of midlevel student affairs managers?* This question was assessed using multiple regression techniques, which allow for a continuous dependent variable (job satisfaction) to be compared to multiple independent variables. Specifically, a two-model hierarchical regression technique was employed. This allowed the researcher to organize the variables in

two distinct models in the regression. The first model included the personal and job characteristics being examined in this study. The second model added the person-organization and person-job fit variables in addition to retaining the variables from model one. The regression was conducted in this manner to provide a clear picture of how the two fit variables affected job satisfaction in the presence of the personal and job characteristic variables. It also allowed the researcher to examine the extent of the relationship of the two fit variables on job satisfaction. Additional detail on the regression techniques and the specific variables in each model can be found in Table 29 in the Results section. Using multiple regression techniques facilitates the ability to determine partial relationships when controlling for some variables (Agresti & Finlay, 1997). Given that all variables in this study were quantitative, this method was appropriate for data analysis of this research question.

### **Summary**

This chapter has reviewed the methodology in which this study was conducted. Through an examination of the literature and review of the instrumentation methods available, evidence has been provided that methods employed have sufficient levels of reliability and validity. Further, the specific data analysis techniques have been outlined to provide an understanding of how the collected data was used to answer the stated research questions.

## **Results**

This chapter will provide an analysis of the data collected in this study. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of fit on the job satisfaction of midlevel managers in student affairs. Specifically, the analysis will address the two research questions that were proposed:

- 1) What are the levels of job satisfaction for midlevel managers in student affairs?
- 2) What is the relationship of fit (organizational and job), personal characteristics (years in profession, educational level, relationship status, ethnicity, gender, dependent child status), and job characteristics (position level, functional area, institution type, institution size, student contact hours, and professional development) on the job satisfaction of midlevel managers in student affairs?

### **Data Collection and Response Rate**

The instrument for this study was compiled using a combination of demographic, personal and professional variables along with four preexisting instruments that measure job satisfaction, person-organization fit, and person-job fit. In total, 66 questions were asked of participants using Qualtrics, a Web-based survey software obtained with permission through the Office of University Planning and Analysis at North Carolina State University.

A total of 2,331 e-mails were sent on Wednesday, March 28, 2012, requesting participation in this study. The e-mail contained a brief description of the study along with an active Web link to click to launch the survey. A reminder was sent to those who had not completed the survey on Tuesday, April 3, 2012, and a final reminder was sent on Tuesday, April 10, 2012. The survey was closed on Friday, April 13, 2012, at 5 p.m. (Eastern Daylight

Time). A total of 40 e-mails were undeliverable due to a bad e-mail address, which resulted in a revised distribution of 2,291 e-mails. Of this, 1,138 surveys were completed, although further data screening identified 13 surveys that were incomplete and had to be removed from the sample. The total number of completed, usable surveys in this study was 1,125, for an overall response rate of 49.1%.

Although the population of respondents was intended to include only student affairs professionals who serve in midlevel manager roles, the researcher asked respondents to self-identify their role in the survey for confirmation. Data analysis revealed that of the 1,125 total respondents, 56 self-identified as a chief student affairs officer, and 224 self-identified as an entry-level professional. As this study was focused on specific job satisfaction factors for midlevel managers, these 280 cases were removed from the data for all further analyses that were conducted. In doing so, the results remained focused on those professionals who hold midlevel manager roles. This resulted in a final total number of 845 survey respondents, representing a usable return rate of 36.9%.

### **Profile of Respondents**

#### **Personal and demographic characteristics.**

Personal and demographic characteristics for respondents were gender, race/ethnicity, marital status, highest educational level attained, and dependent children status. The majority of respondents in this study were *White* females who are married/partnered, possess a master's degree, and have no dependent children in their primary household. The detailed personal and demographic characteristics of respondents are represented in descending order in Table 4.

Table 4

*Respondents' Personal and Demographic Characteristics in Descending Order of Responses*

Characteristic	Number of responses for characteristic	Percentage of all responses
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	521	61.7
Male	321	38.0
Transgender	2	.2
<i>Did not answer</i>	1	.1
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
White	602	71.2
Black or African American	101	12.0
Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin	91	10.8
Asian	18	2.1
Two or more races	17	2.0
Other race	6	.7
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2	.2
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	.1
<i>Did not answer</i>	7	.8
<b>Marital status</b>		
Married/partnered	558	66.0
Single	240	28.4
Divorced	42	5.0
<i>Did not answer</i>	5	.6
<b>Highest educational level attained</b>		
Master's degree	570	67.5
Doctoral degree	233	27.6
Bachelor's degree	26	3.1
Other terminal degree	10	1.2
Associate's degree	1	.1
High school	1	.1
<i>Did not answer</i>	4	.5
<b>Dependent children in household</b>		
No	497	58.8
Yes	346	40.9
<i>Did not answer</i>	2	.2

Additional data were collected from respondents regarding the number of years worked full time in student affairs as well as the number of years worked in their current position. The median number of years worked full time in student affairs was 12 years for respondents in this study. There was a significant range of responses for this variable, from a low of 1 year to a high of 47 years. The median number of years that respondents had worked in their current position was 4 years, with a range of 0 years to 35 years. It is important to note that respondents were asked to round to the nearest whole number, so the three respondents who reported 0 were likely to have been in their current position for less than 6 months.

**Job characteristics.**

Job characteristics for this study were institutional type, institutional size, functional area of responsibility, average number of student contact hours, and average amount of annual professional development support. The majority of respondents in this study worked at large 4-year public institutions and in residence life and housing departments. The detailed job characteristics for respondents are represented in descending order in Table 5.

Table 5

*Respondents' Job Characteristics in Descending Order of Number of Responses*

Characteristic	Number of responses for characteristic	Percentage of overall responses
<b>Current institutional type</b>		
Public 4-year	465	55.0
Private 4-year	341	40.4
Public 2-year	34	4.0
Private 2-year	4	.5
Religiously affiliated	104	12.3
Hispanic-serving	17	2.0
Historically Black	4	.5
<b>Current institutional size (students)</b>		
> 20,000	291	34.4
< 4,999	205	24.3
5,000 – 9,999	136	16.1
10,000 – 14,999	118	14.0
15,000 – 19,999	91	10.8
<i>Did not answer</i>	4	.5
<b>Functional area of current position</b>		
Residence life and housing	188	22.2
Student affairs administration	122	14.4
Other (not listed)	69	8.2
Dean of students	68	8.0
Student activities	62	7.3
Multicultural student services	45	5.3
<b>Student contact hours per week</b>		
5 – 9	223	26.4
0 – 4	205	24.3
10 – 14	142	16.8
15 – 19	100	11.8
> 25	94	11.1
20 – 24	80	9.5
<i>Did not answer</i>	1	.1
<b>Monetary support for professional development</b>		
\$1,000 – \$1,999	284	33.6
\$2,000 – \$2,999	225	26.6
< \$1,000	146	17.3
\$3,000 – \$3,999	96	11.4
> \$4,000	93	11.0
<i>Did not answer</i>	1	.1

## **Data Analysis**

The data for this study were analyzed using the SPSS Version 20 software package. Several steps were required to properly prepare the data for full analysis. After removing incomplete surveys, additional review determined that not all completed surveys could be used for this study due to inappropriate participants as part of the sample.

Most of the appropriate variable coding was completed in the initial instrument design so only several steps were required after data collection. These included renaming variable labels for ease of data analysis and assigning numerical variable identification to each case. As the Job Satisfaction Scale included both positively and negatively worded items, half of these 36 questions required reverse scoring to ensure accuracy as instructed by the author (Spector, 1999). Once complete, the revised data set was compared to the original data to ensure this instrument had been properly scored.

## **Job Satisfaction Descriptive Statistics**

Preliminary analysis was conducted by using frequencies and means for overall job satisfaction of the sample population. This analysis was completed prior to conducting an exploratory factor analysis. Data are presented that reflect satisfaction with the various subscales of the Job Satisfaction Survey for the overall sample population. Further analysis was conducted using the split file function to more clearly examine frequencies among various demographic and work variables with overall job satisfaction and the job satisfaction subscales. These data can be found in Appendix F.

Spector (1997) suggests that a mean score above 4.0 on the Job Satisfaction Survey (overall and subscales) represents satisfaction, while below 3.0 represents dissatisfaction. Scores between 3.0 and 4.0 represent ambivalence towards the item measured.

Respondents in this study ( $N = 845$ ) report a mean overall job satisfaction score of 4.06 on a 6-point scale, 3.41 for pay and remuneration, 3.11 for promotion opportunities, 4.89 for immediate supervisor, 4.20 for fringe benefits, 3.96 for recognition for work done, 3.29 for operating procedures, 4.61 for coworkers, 5.03 for the work itself, and 3.97 for communication within the organization. Detailed descriptive statistics can be found in Table 6.

Table 6

*Descriptive Statistics for Overall Job Satisfaction and Subscales*

<u>Scale/Subscale</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Var</u>	<u>Range</u>
Overall job satisfaction	4.06	.70	.49	3.67
Pay	3.41	1.20	1.44	5.00
Promotion	3.11	1.06	1.12	5.00
Supervision	4.89	1.15	1.31	5.00
Benefits	4.20	1.01	1.03	5.00
Rewards	3.96	1.13	1.28	5.00
Conditions	3.29	.92	.85	4.75
Coworkers	4.61	.93	.87	4.75
Work	5.03	.87	.75	5.00
Communication	3.97	1.06	1.13	5.00

## Reliability

In an effort to ensure that the scales being used in this study were reflective what the underlying construct they were intended to measure, coefficient alphas were obtained for each. Coefficient alphas are used to determine reliability of instruments being used in social sciences (Cronbach, 1951). Most current literature suggests that an alpha of greater than .70 is acceptable for use in experimental research (Cortina, 1993). Nearly all scales were found to have strong reliability, with only one subscale (operating conditions) within the Job Satisfaction Survey at a borderline level (.606). Coefficient alphas for each of the scales can be found in Table 7.

Table 7

*Coefficient Alphas for Scales and Subscales*

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Alpha</u>
Person-job fit	.842
Person-organization fit	.905
Overall job satisfaction	.922
Pay	.802
Promotion	.786
Supervision	.873
Fringe benefits	.729
Contingent rewards	.824
Operating conditions	.606
Coworkers	.753
Nature of work	.839
Communication	.755

## **Factor Analysis**

An exploratory factor analysis using principle axis factoring was conducted on each of the instruments used in this study. Doing so provides the opportunity to determine which variables account for variance in the instruments being used. Specifically, conducting a factor analysis with principle axis factoring allows the researcher to determine if there are additional unobservable variables in shared groupings among the original set (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). Given the relatively large number of variables being used in this study, conducting a factor analysis helped to better understand the job satisfaction in this study by reducing the number of constructs through which satisfaction were examined. This provides a clearer lens through which to view job satisfaction for the sample in this study.

The instruments used to measure Person-Organization fit and Person-Job fit are both 4-item scales and through exploratory factory analysis each loaded a single factor with an eigenvalue  $>1.0$ . The eigenvalue for factor one in the person-organization fit scale was 3.12, which accounted for 77.93% of the variance in the scale. The eigenvalue for factor one in the person-job fit scale was 2.72, which accounted for 68.08% of the variance in the scale. This provides strong evidence that both instruments are in fact measuring a unidimensional construct (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). For both analyses, given that only one factor was identified, it was not possible to perform rotation. Rotation is a process by which multiple variables are examined through an alternate lens for ease of interpretation and identification of which variables fit together most clearly (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005).

The Job Satisfaction Survey contains 36 questions that are divided into nine subscales. After completing the exploratory factor analysis using principle axis factoring,

seven factors with an eigenvalue  $>1.0$  remained, which cumulatively accounted for 60% of the variance in the results. To better identify the factors that remained, varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization was conducted and scree and factor plots were reviewed. Varimax rotation, the most common of the rotation methods, provides a more clear understanding of the relationship of variables by maximizing variance among factors (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). To better understand the underlying constructs for these variables, additional exploratory factor analyses were conducted by using a fixed number of factors that varied from two through five. After a thorough review of both the data presented and the variables remaining in the outputs, it was determined that a three-factor model would be used based on the groupings of variables that loaded. The three-factor model provided the most clear unique loadings for the associated variables. Three clear constructs emerged in this model, which are represented in Table 8. Models with four and five factors had diminished reliability and less clear loadings for what each factor explained. Smaller models had too much overlap among variables, resulting in an unclear understanding of what was being measured in the model. In summary, the three-factor model is a more accurate representation of the job satisfaction constructs for this sample. The original nine constructs of the Job Satisfaction Survey were also less reliable than the three-factor model and therefore not appropriate for use in this analysis. The factor loadings for a three-factor model can be seen in Table 8.

Table 8

*Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis with Varimax Rotation and Kaiser Normalization of Job Satisfaction Survey (N = 845)*

<u>JSS #</u>	<u>Question</u>	<u>Environment</u>	<u>Rewards</u>	<u>Benefits</u>
35	Job is enjoyable	.722		
7	People I work with	.668		
17	I like work	.632		
25	Enjoy coworkers	.627		
9	Good communication	.620		
27	Pride in job	.612		
34	Too much bickering	.604		
30	I like my supervisor	.596		
8	Job is meaningless	.586		
12	Unfair supervisor	.564		
36	Work not explained	.564		
16	Incompetent people	.563		
3	Competent supervisor	.535		
21	Uninterested supervisor	.503		
18	Unclear goals	.499		
26	Poor communication	.496		
15	Too much red tape	.426		
6	Rules & procedures	.399		
33	Chance for promotion		.736	
28	Chance for raise		.688	
32	Efforts unrewarded		.666	
11	Chance for promotion		.624	
19	Low pay for work		.604	
5	Receive recognition		.588	
23	Few rewards		.579	
20	People get ahead here		.574	
2	Chance for promotion		.561	
14	Work unappreciated		.547	
1	Paid fairly		.533	
10	Raises infrequent		.530	
22	Equitable benefits			.632
29	Inadequate benefits			.568
13	Good benefits			.568
4	Satisfied w/ benefits			.456
31	Too much paperwork			.436
	Eigenvalues	10.38	2.96	2.15
	% of variance	28.82	8.22	5.97

*Note.* Factor loadings < .30 were dropped during SPSS analysis

The three-factor model was tested for reliability and the variables were reviewed to ensure they aligned with the original scale and this sample. Table 9 outlines each factor, the primary job satisfaction subscale measures associated with it based on the strongest factor loadings, the reliability (coefficient alpha) for each factor, and a proposed name for each of the three factors based on the composition of subscales contained within.

Table 9

*Coefficient Alphas for 3-Factor Model of Environment, Rewards, and Benefits*

<u>Factor</u>	<u>Alpha</u>	<u>Primary JSS subscale(s)</u>
Environment	.913	Communication Coworkers Supervision Nature of work
Rewards	.905	Promotion Pay Contingent Rewards
Benefits	.797	Benefits

The factor labeled Environment contained items in the Job Satisfaction Survey that attempted to assess communication within the organization, relationship with coworkers, quality of supervision received, and the overall kind of work that was being performed (Spector, 1997). All of these items speak to the broader context of the environment in the workplace, thus the appropriate label. They focus on cultural aspects of the organization as opposed to those that are more transactional in nature. The factor labeled Rewards consists

of promotion, pay, and contingent rewards (e.g., general praise or recognition for good work). These items speak to the outcome rewards that employees may directly relate to their job performance. They are also likely dictated by or in some control of the direct supervisor of the employee. Finally, the factor for Benefits covers items assessing quality of fringe benefits. These might include items such as health insurance and the vision and dental coverage of the employing organization. These items are assessed based on the employee's perceived quality of the benefit package received. The three identified factors in this regression analysis provide clear unique constructs through which to view job satisfaction for the sample in this study.

## **Results**

Results from the data analysis to answer the research questions for this study will be provided in this section.

*Research Question 1: What are the levels of job satisfaction for midlevel managers in Student Affairs?* This question was answered using descriptive statistics and frequencies for each of the three factors of Environment, Rewards, and Benefits. Analysis was conducted to review personal and job characteristics related to each of the factors. Further analysis was conducted by using independent samples *t*-tests and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) techniques. This allowed the researcher to determine significance in reported differences among the personal and job characteristics. Factor scores are presented in the analysis below, which provides the response data in relation to a standardized mean for the sample population.

**Gender.**

Women respondents reported being more satisfied than men in relation to the environment and benefits, while men reported higher levels of satisfaction with rewards.

Table 10 provides means for satisfaction with Environment, Rewards, and Benefits by gender of respondents.

Table 10

*Mean Scores of Satisfaction with Environment, Rewards, and Benefits by Gender*

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>
Environment		
Female	.054	521*
Male	-.088	321
Rewards		
Female	-.084	521
Male	.137	321**
Benefits		
Female	.050	521
Male	-.074	321

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to determine statistical significance between female and male respondents. Levene's test for equality of variances was significant ( $F [1, 840] = 5.337, p = .021$ ) for Rewards, so equal variance is not assumed within the population with that factor. Levene's test for equality of variances was not significant for Environment or Benefits, which indicates that equal variances within the

populations for these factors are assumed. Females had significantly higher satisfaction than men with the Environment ( $t [840] = 2.001, p = .046$ ). Males were significantly more satisfied than females with Rewards ( $t [733.3] = -3.213, p = .001$ ). There was no significant relationship between females and males in relation to Benefits. Transgender respondents were removed from this analysis because of size ( $N=2$ ).

**Race.**

Respondents who are *White* responded being more satisfied than Black/African-American and Latino respondents for Environment and Rewards. Those respondents who are Latino reported the highest level of satisfaction with Benefits. Table 11 provides means for satisfaction with Environment, Rewards, and Benefits by race of respondents.

Table 11

*Mean Scores of Satisfaction with Environment, Rewards, and Benefits by Race*

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Sig</u>
Environment			
Latino	.012	91	
White	.015	602	
Black/African-American	-.124	101	
Rewards			
Latino	-.084	91	
White	.023	602	
Black/African-American	-.018	101	
Benefits			
Latino	.175	91	Black/African-American*
White	-.005	602	
Black/African-American	-.220	101	Latino*

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted and revealed ( $F [2, 791] = .846, p = .429$ ;  $F [2, 791] = .486, p = .615$ ) no significance between groups for Environment and Rewards, respectively. The ANOVA did reveal ( $F [2, 791] = 3.839, p = .022$ ) significance in the difference in satisfaction between groups for Benefits. Levene's test for homogeneity of variances was not significant ( $F [2, 791] = 2.287, p = .102$ ;  $F [2, 791] = 1.933, p = .145$ ;  $F [2, 791] = 1.750, p = .174$ ) for any of the factors, so post hoc tests were conducted using the Bonferroni method, which allowed the researcher to determine where the difference existed.

A significant difference in satisfaction with Benefits exists between those respondents who are Latino and those who are Black/African-American. Specifically, those who are Latino report significantly higher satisfaction with Benefits than those who are Black/African-American. Other reported races (Asian, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native) were removed from this analysis due to a small number of respondents.

#### **Marital status.**

Respondents who are married/partnered report being more satisfied with the Environment and Benefits than single respondents, while single respondents report being more satisfied with Rewards. Table 12 provides means for satisfaction with Environment, Rewards, and Benefits by marital status of respondents.

Table 12

*Mean Scores of Satisfaction with Environment, Rewards, and Benefits by Marital Status*

<u>Marital Status</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>
Environment		
Single	-.033	240
Married/Partnered	-.006	558
Rewards		
Single	.079	240
Married/Partnered	-.011	558
Benefits		
Single	-.086	240
Married/Partnered	.054	558

An independent samples *t*-test revealed no significant difference in satisfaction with Environment, Rewards, or Benefits based on marital status. Levene's test for equality of variances was not significant for any of the factors.

#### **Educational attainment.**

Respondents with doctoral degrees reported being more satisfied than those with master's degrees in regards to Environment, Rewards, and Benefits. Table 13 provides means for satisfaction with Environment, Rewards, and Benefits by level of educational attainment.

Table 13

*Mean Scores of Satisfaction with Environment, Rewards, and Benefits by Educational Attainment*

<u>Education</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>
Environment		
Master's	-.057	570
Doctorate	.130	233*
Rewards		
Master's	-.002	570
Doctorate	.036	233
Benefits		
Master's	-.051	570
Doctorate	.121	233*

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$

An independent samples  $t$ -test was conducted, and Levene's test for equality of variances was not significant. Significance in satisfaction with Environment and Benefits was found to exist ( $t [801] = -2.428, p = .015$ ;  $t [801] = -2.224, p = .026$ , respectively) between those respondents with doctoral degrees and those with master's degrees. Those respondents who reported having a doctoral degree were significantly more satisfied with the Environment and Benefits than those who held master's degrees. No significance was found in satisfaction with Rewards between respondents with doctoral and master's degrees. Other levels of educational attainment (high school, bachelors, and other terminal) were not considered in this analysis because of low response rates.

### **Dependent children.**

Respondents who reported having dependent children in their primary household reported higher levels of satisfaction with Environment and Benefits than those who did not, while those without dependent children reported higher levels of satisfaction with Rewards. Table 14 provides means for satisfaction with Environment, Rewards, and Benefits by dependent child status of respondents.

Table 14

*Mean Scores of Satisfaction with Environment, Rewards, and Benefits by Dependent Child Status*

<u>Child?</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>
Environment		
No	-.050	497
Yes	.066	346
Rewards		
No	.044	497
Yes	-.061	346
Benefits		
No	-.031	497
Yes	.041	346

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted and while Levene's test for equality of variances was significant ( $F [1, 841] = 3.897, p = .049$ ;  $F [1, 841] = 4.729, p = .030$ ) for

Environment and Benefits, there was no significant difference in satisfaction with Environment, Rewards or Benefits based on dependent child status.

**Institutional type.**

Those respondents who work at 4-year public institutions reported higher satisfaction with Environment than those who work at 4-year private institutions. Those who work at 4-year private institutions report higher satisfaction with both Rewards and Benefits than those who work at 4-year public institutions. Table 15 provides means for satisfaction with Environment, Rewards, and Benefits by institutional type of respondents.

Table 15

*Mean Scores of Satisfaction with Environment, Rewards, and Benefits by Institutional Type*

<u>Type</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>
Environment		
4-year public	.055	459
4-year private	-.070	341
Rewards		
4-year public	-.032	459
4-year private	.038	341
Benefits		
4-year public	-.004	459
4-year private	-.001	341

An independent samples *t*-test revealed no significant difference in satisfaction with Environment, Rewards, or Benefits based on institutional type. Levene's test for equality of

variances was not significant for any of the factors. Other categories (e.g., 2-year, HBCU) of institutions were removed from the analysis due to low response rates.

**Institutional size.**

Respondents reported varying levels of satisfaction with Environment, Rewards, and Benefits based on institutional size (undergraduate FTE). Respondents who reported enrollments of less than 4,999, 10,000–14,999, and more than 20,000 reported the highest levels of satisfaction with Environment. Those with enrollments of 5,000–14,999 reported the highest levels of satisfaction with Rewards. Those with enrollments of 5,000–14,999 and greater than 20,000 reported the highest levels of satisfaction with Benefits. Table 16 provides means for satisfaction with Environment, Rewards, and Benefits by institutional size (undergraduate FTE).

Table 16

*Mean Scores of Satisfaction with Environment, Rewards, and Benefits by Institutional Size*

<u>Undergraduate FTE</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Sig</u>
Environment			
< 4,999	.063	205	
5,000-9,999	-.220	136	
10,000-14,999	.035	118	
15,000-19,999	-.030	91	
> 20,000	.053	291	
Rewards			
< 4,999	-.067	205	
5,000-9,999	.026	136	
10,000-14,999	.114	118	
15,000-19,999	-.036	91	
> 20,000	-.005	291	
Benefits			
< 4,999	-.178	205	10,000–14,999*
5,000-9,999	.094	136	
10,000-14,999	.204	118	< 4,999*
15,000-19,999	-.039	91	
> 20,000	.019	291	

*Note.* \*  $p < .01$

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted and revealed ( $F [4, 836] = 2.129, p = .075$ ;  $F [4, 836] = .668, p = .614$ ) no significance between groups for Environment and Rewards, respectively. The ANOVA did reveal ( $F [4, 836] = 3.256, p = .012$ ) significance in the difference in satisfaction between groups for Benefits. Levene's test for

equality of variances was not significant ( $F [4, 836] = .719, p = .579$ ;  $F [4, 836] = .418, p = .795$ ;  $F [4,836] = .960, p = .429$ ) for any of the factors, so post hoc tests were conducted using the Bonferroni method.

A significant difference in satisfaction with Benefits exists between those who work at institutions with undergraduate enrollment of less than 4,999 and those with enrollment of 10,000–14,999. Specifically, those who work at institutions with undergraduate enrollment of 10,000–14,999 are significantly more satisfied with Benefits than those who work at institutions with undergraduate enrollment of less than 4,999.

#### **Functional area.**

Respondents reported varying levels of satisfaction with Environment, Rewards, and Benefits based on the functional area of their work. Respondents who work in student activities and residence life and housing reported the highest levels of satisfaction with the Environment. Those who work in dean of students and student affairs administration reported the highest levels of satisfaction with Rewards. Finally, those respondents who work in student affairs administration or other reported the highest levels of satisfaction with Benefits. Table 17 provides means for satisfaction with Environment, Rewards, and Benefits by the functional area of work.

Table 17

*Mean Scores of Satisfaction with Environment, Rewards, and Benefits by Functional Area*

<u>Department</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Sig</u>
Environment			
Dean of Students	-.003	68	
Multicultural	-.116	45	
Res Life/Housing	-.223	188	SA Administration*
Student Activities	.165	62	
SA Administration	.148	122	Res Life/Housing*
Other (not listed)	-.158	69	
Rewards			
Dean of Students	.245	68	
Multicultural	-.264	45	
Res Life/Housing	.068	188	
Student Activities	-.055	62	
SA Administration	.130	122	
Other (not listed)	-.116	69	
Benefits			
Dean of Students	-.005	68	
Multicultural	-.015	45	
Res Life/Housing	-.052	188	
Student Activities	-.110	62	
SA Administration	.154	122	
Other (not listed)	.068	69	

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted and revealed (F [5, 548] = .2891,  $p = .014$ ) significance between groups for Environment. The ANOVA revealed (F [5,

548] = 2.159,  $p = .057$ ;  $F [5, 548] = .903, p = .479$ ) no significance between groups for Rewards and Benefits, respectively. Levene's test for homogeneity of variances was not significant ( $F [5, 548] = 1.743, p = .123$ ;  $F [5, 548] = .288, p = .920$ ;  $F [5, 548] = 1.836, p = .104$ ) for any of the factors, so post hoc tests were conducted using the Bonferroni method.

A significant difference in satisfaction with Environment exists between those respondents who work in residence life and housing and those who work in student affairs administration. Those who work in student affairs administration are significantly more satisfied with Environment than those who work in residence life and housing.

#### **Student contact hours.**

Respondents who reported direct student contact hours per week of 5-9 hours, 15-19 hours, and more than 25 hours reported the highest levels of satisfaction with Environment. Those respondents who reported the fewest student contact hours per week reported the highest level of satisfaction with Rewards and Benefits. Table 18 provides means for satisfaction with Environment, Rewards, and Benefits by number of student contact hours per week.

Table 18

*Mean Scores of Satisfaction with Environment, Rewards, and Benefits by Student Contact Hours*

<u>Hours/week</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Sig</u>
Environment			
0-4	-.084	205	
5-9	.093	223	
10-14	-.074	142	
15-19	.088	100	
20-24	-.018	80	
> 25	.010	94	
Rewards			
0-4	.270	205	15-19*, 20-24**, > 25**
5-9	.025	223	
10-14	-.002	142	
15-19	-.105	100	0-4*
20-24	-.276	80	0-4*
> 25	-.280	94	0-4*
Benefits			
0-4	.234	205	10-14*, > 25*
5-9	-.007	223	
10-14	-.120	142	0-4*
15-19	-.112	100	
20-24	-.053	80	
> 25	-.162	94	0-4*

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .001$

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted and revealed ( $F [5, 838] = .995, p = .420$ ) no significance between groups for Environment. The ANOVA did reveal ( $F [5, 838] = 6.117, p < .001$ ;  $F [5, 838] = 3.506, p = .004$ ) significance in the difference in satisfaction between groups for Rewards and Benefits, respectively. Levene's test for homogeneity of variances was not significant ( $F [5, 838] = 1.600, p = .158$ ;  $F [5, 838] = .538, p = .748$ ;  $F [5, 838] = .829, p = .529$ ) for any of the factors, so post hoc tests were conducted using the Bonferroni method.

A significant difference in satisfaction with Rewards exists between those who have 0–4 hours and those who have anything more than 15 direct student contact hours per week. Those who have 0–4 student contact hours per week are significantly more satisfied with Rewards. A significant difference in satisfaction with Benefits exists between those who have 0–4 and those who have 10–14 and more than 25 student contact hours per week. Specifically, those who have 0–4 student contact hours per week are significantly more satisfied with Benefits.

#### **Professional development.**

Respondents who reported receiving \$2,000–\$2,999 and more than \$4,000 in annual monetary professional development support reported the highest levels of satisfaction with Environment. Those respondents who reported the most annual monetary professional development support reported the highest levels of satisfaction with Rewards and Benefits. Table 19 provides means for satisfaction with Environment, Rewards, and Benefits based on monetary professional development support.

Table 19

*Mean Scores of Satisfaction with Environment, Rewards, and Benefits by Professional Development Monetary Support*

<u>Monetary support</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Sig</u>
Environment			
< \$1,000	-.097	146	
\$1,000-1,999	-.148	284	2,000–2,999**
\$2,000-2,999	.199	225	1,000–1,999**
\$3,000-3,999	-.043	96	
> \$4,000	.156	93	
Rewards			
< \$1,000	-.331	146	2,000–2,999**, 3,000–3,999*, >4,000*
\$1,000-1,999	-.072	284	3,000–3,999*
\$2,000-2,999	.055	225	3,000–3,999***
\$3,000-3,999	.401	96	< 1,000*, 1,000–1,999*, 2,000–2,999***
> \$4,000	.207	93	
Benefits			
< \$1,000	-.124	146	
\$1,000-1,999	-.056	284	
\$2,000-2,999	.517	225	
\$3,000-3,999	.034	96	
> \$4,000	.207	93	

*Note.* \*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .05$

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted and revealed ( $F [4, 839] = 1.961, p = .099$ ) no significance between groups for Benefits. The ANOVA did reveal ( $F [4,$

839] = 4.816,  $p = .001$ ;  $F [4, 839] = 9.801, p < .001$ ) significance in the difference in satisfaction between groups for Environment and Rewards, respectively. Levene's test for homogeneity of variances was not significant ( $F [4, 839] = 2.140, p = .074$ ;  $F [4, 839] = 1.017, p = .398$ ;  $F [4, 839] = .369, p = .831$ ) for any of the factors, so post hoc tests were conducted using the Bonferroni method.

Those respondents who reported receiving \$2,000–\$2,999 in monetary professional development support reported a significantly higher level of satisfaction with Environment than those who received \$1,000–\$1,999. Those respondents who reported receiving anything more than \$2,000 in monetary professional development support were significantly more satisfied with Rewards than those who received less than \$1,000. Those who received \$3,000–\$3,999 were significantly more satisfied with Rewards than those who received \$1,000–\$1,999. Finally, those respondents who received \$3,000–\$3,999 were significantly more satisfied with rewards than those who received anything less than \$3,000.

*Research Question 2: What is the relationship of fit (organizational and job), personal characteristics (years in profession, years in job, educational level, relationship status, race, gender, dependent child status), and job characteristics (position level, functional area, institution type, institution size, student contact hours, and professional development) on the job satisfaction of midlevel managers in student affairs?* This question was answered using hierarchical multiple regression techniques, which allowed the researcher to determine the impact of multiple independent variables together on a single dependent variable in stages. A two-model regression analysis was conducted on each job

satisfaction factor of Environment, Rewards, and Benefits. Regression analysis considers variables only where all items have been answered, so  $N = 817$  for this portion of the results.

Personal and job characteristics were identified as Model 1 for each analysis, while Model 2 added the person-organization and person-job fit variables. Conducting the analysis in this format allowed the researcher to first identify the personal and job characteristics that had a significant impact on job satisfaction factors. After adding the person-organization and person-fit variables, the researcher was then able to determine the significance of these two additional variables in the presence of the personal and job characteristics. Table 20 provides an overview of the models used in the analysis.

Table 20

*Models Used for Regression Analyses*

<u>Dependent Variables</u>	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>
	<u>Ind. Variables</u>	<u>Ind. Variables</u>
Environment, Rewards, and Benefits	Gender	Gender
	Race	Race
	Marital status	Marital status
	Education	Education
	Dependent children	Dependent children
	Years of experience	Years of experience
	Years in job	Years in job
	Institutional type	Institutional type
	Institution size	Institution size
	Functional area	Functional area
	Student contact	Student contact
	Professional development	Professional development
		P-O fit
		P-J fit

To ensure that multicollinearity did not exist in any of the models, tolerance statistics and variance inflation factors (VIF) were reviewed. All of the tolerance statistics exceeded .1 and none of the VIFs were above 10, therefore multicollinearity was not present in the data (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). The analysis that follows provides a more detailed look at those variables in this study that had the most significant impact on the job satisfaction factors among this sample population.

***Environment.***

When Environment served as the dependent variable, both models 1 and 2 were found to be significant in their impact on satisfaction. A regression summary is provided in Table 21.

Table 21

*Regression Summary for Environment*

<u>Model</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>R<sup>2</sup></u>	<u>Adj. R<sup>2</sup></u>	<u>R<sup>2</sup><sub>chg.</sub></u>	<u>F<sub>chg.</sub></u>	<u>df1</u>	<u>df2</u>	<u>Sig</u>
1	.205	.042	.028	.042	2.940	12	804	.001
2	.668	.446	.437	.404	292.699	2	802	.000

Two specific variables were found to be significant in their impact on the dependent variable in Model 1: years worked in current position and average level of monetary support for professional development. As the number of years a respondent had worked in the job increased, so did satisfaction with Environment. Similarly, when respondents received higher levels of monetary professional development, their satisfaction with the Environment increased. When the fit variables were added in Model 2, those two variables were no longer significant; instead, gender, person-organization, and person-job fit were significant in predicting satisfaction with Environment. Females were significantly more satisfied with the Environment than males in this regression. As the level of person-organization and person-job fit increased for respondents, so did their level of satisfaction with the Environment. This change was not only statistically significant, but also by far the largest effect of any in the

three regression models that were conducted. This result demonstrates a strong correlative relationship between person-organization and person-job fit with satisfaction of the Environment. Coefficients for variables in both models are found in Table 22.

Table 22

*Coefficients for Environment Regression Analysis*

Variables	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	SE	$\beta$	B	SE	$\beta$
Gender	-.132	.071	-.065	-.179	.054	-.088*
Race	-.060	.053	-.040	.052	.040	.034
Marital status	-.020	.073	-.011	.010	.056	.005
Education	.088	.067	.047	.066	.051	.036
Children	.094	.077	.046	.037	.059	.018
Years worked	.000	.006	-.002	-.004	.004	-.029
Years in job	.029	.009	.133*	.013	.007	.059
Institutional type	-.059	.069	-.034	-.100	.053	-.058
Institutional size	-.006	.025	-.010	-.010	.019	-.016
Functional area	-.003	.004	-.026	.000	.003	-.002
Student contact	.014	.022	.023	.002	.017	.003
Professional development	.078	.030	.095*	-.023	.023	-.027
P-O fit				.476	.038	.415*
P-J fit				.470	.049	.323*
$R^2$		.042			.446	
$F$ change		2.940			292.699	

Note. \*  $p < .01$

In Model 1, for every one additional year respondents had worked in their job, their satisfaction with the Environment increased by .029 of a standard deviation unit. For every additional unit of monetary professional development that respondents received, their satisfaction with the Environment increased by .078 of a standard deviation unit. In Model 2,

females were .179 of a standard deviation more satisfied with the Environment than males. Finally, for every one unit increase in person-organization or person-job fit, there was an increase in satisfaction with the Environment by .476 and .470 of a standard deviation, respectively.

***Rewards.***

When Rewards served as the dependent variable, both models 1 and 2 were significant in their impact on satisfaction. A regression summary is provided in Table 23.

Table 23

*Regression Summary for Rewards*

<u>Model</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>R<sup>2</sup></u>	<u>Adj. R<sup>2</sup></u>	<u>R<sup>2</sup><sub>chg.</sub></u>	<u>F<sub>chg.</sub></u>	<u>df1</u>	<u>df2</u>	<u>Sig</u>
1	.351	.124	.110	.124	9.441	12	804	.000
2	.480	.230	.217	.107	55.696	2	802	.000

Four variables were found to be significant in their impact on satisfaction with Rewards in Model 1: gender, years worked in current position, average number of student contact hours, and average level of monetary professional development support ( $p < .01$ ). Male respondents were more satisfied than female in regards to Rewards. A negative relationship existed between years worked in the job and student contact hours with Rewards. In both cases, respondents who had worked fewer years in their job and had fewer student contact hours were more satisfied with Rewards. Finally, a positive predictive relationship existed between professional development and Rewards. Respondents who received higher

levels of monetary professional development were more satisfied with Rewards. When the fit variables were added in Model 2, all of these variables remained significant, and person-organization fit was also found to be significant in predicting satisfaction with Rewards ( $p < .01$ ). Similar predictive relationships for independent variables in Model 1 exist in Model 2. Person-organization fit also had a positive predictive relationship with Rewards. Respondents with higher levels of person-organization fit had greater satisfaction with Rewards. Coefficients for variables in both models are found in Table 24.

Table 24

*Coefficients for Rewards Regression Analysis*

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Model 1</u>			<u>Model 2</u>		
	<u>B</u>	<u>SE</u>	<u><math>\beta</math></u>	<u>B</u>	<u>SE</u>	<u><math>\beta</math></u>
Gender	.211	.068	.104*	.184	.064	.090*
Race	-.009	.050	-.006	.045	.048	.030
Marital status	-.053	.070	-.028	-.035	.065	-.018
Education	.023	.064	.012	.016	.060	.009
Children	-.077	.074	-.038	-.107	.069	-.052
Years worked	-.001	.005	-.005	-.002	.005	-.013
Years in job	-.045	.009	-.206*	-.053	.008	-.241*
Institutional type	.075	.066	.043	.042	.062	.024
Institutional size	.008	.024	.013	.003	.023	.005
Functional area	-.004	.004	-.041	-.003	.003	-.031
Student contact	-.100	.021	-.163*	-.102	.020	-.166*
Professional development	.151	.028	.182*	.107	.027	.129*
P-O fit				.353	.045	.308*
P-J fit				.066	.057	.045
$R^2$		.124			.230	
$F$ change		9.441			55.696	

Note. \*  $p < .01$

In Model 1, males were .021 of a standard deviation more satisfied with Rewards than females. For every one year additional that respondents worked in their job, they were .045 of a standard deviation less satisfied with Rewards. For every one additional unit of student contact hours that respondents had, they were .100 of a standard deviation less satisfied with Rewards. For every one additional unit of monetary professional development received, respondents were .151 of a standard deviation more satisfied with Rewards. In Model 2, males were .184 of a standard deviation more satisfied with Rewards. Every additional year in the job resulted in a .053 standard deviation decrease in satisfaction with Rewards. One additional unit of student contact hour resulted in .102 standard deviation decrease in satisfaction with Rewards while one additional unit of monetary professional development resulted in .107 of a standard deviation increase in satisfaction. Finally, for every unit increase in person-organization fit, there was .355 of a standard deviation increase in satisfaction with Rewards.

***Benefits.***

When Benefits served as the dependent variable, both models 1 and 2 were found to be significant in their impact on satisfaction. A regression summary is provided in Table 25.

Table 25

*Regression Summary for Benefits*

<u>Model</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>R<sup>2</sup></u>	<u>Adj. R<sup>2</sup></u>	<u>R<sup>2</sup><sub>chg.</sub></u>	<u>F<sub>chg.</sub></u>	<u>df1</u>	<u>df2</u>	<u>Sig</u>
1	.230	.053	.039	.053	3.728	12	804	.000
2	.273	.075	.059	.022	9.556	2	802	.000

Four variables were significant on their impact of satisfaction with Benefits in Model 1: gender, race, average number of student contact hours, and average monetary support for professional development ( $p < .05$ ). Female respondents were more satisfied than male respondents and Latino respondents were more satisfied than White or Black/African-American respondents in regards to race. Student contact hours had a negative predictive relationship with Benefits; those respondents who reported few student contact hours were more satisfied with Benefits. Finally, those respondents who reported receiving higher levels of monetary professional development support were more satisfied with Benefits. When the fit variables were added in Model 2, professional development support was no longer significant. Person-organization fit was now significant in its impact on satisfaction with Benefits ( $p < .05$ ). Gender, race and student contact hours had similar predictive relationships as in Model 1. Person-organization fit has a positive predictive relationship with Benefits; those respondents who reported higher levels of person-organization fit were more satisfied with Benefits. Table 26 provides coefficients for variables in both models.

Table 26

*Coefficients for Benefits Regression Analysis*

Variables	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	SE	$\beta$	B	SE	$\beta$
Gender	-.145	.071	-.071*	-.156	.070	-.077*
Race	-.151	.052	-.100**	-.125	.052	-.083*
Marital status	-.037	.072	-.019	-.029	.072	-.015
Education	.047	.067	.025	.042	.066	.023
Children	.078	.077	.038	.065	.076	.032
Years worked	.009	.006	.067	.008	.006	.061
Years in job	.015	.009	.066	.011	.009	.049
Institutional type	.041	.069	.024	.030	.068	.018
Institutional size	.018	.025	.030	.017	.025	.028
Functional area	.000	.004	-.001	.000	.004	.004
Student contact	-.054	.022	-.089*	-.057	.022	-.093**
Professional development	.066	.029	.080*	.043	.030	.052
P-O fit				.117	.049	.102*
P-J fit				.101	.063	.069
$R^2$		.053			.075	
$F$ change		3.728			9.556	

Note. \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$

In Model 1, females were .145 more satisfied and Latinos were .151 of a standard deviation more satisfied with Benefits. For every unit increase in student contact hours, respondents were .054 of a standard deviation less satisfied with Benefits. For every unit increase in monetary professional development, respondents were .066 of a standard deviation more satisfied with Benefits. In Model 2, females were .156 more satisfied and Latinos were .125 of a standard deviation more satisfied with Benefits. For every unit increase in student contact hours, respondents were .057 of a standard deviation less satisfied with Benefits. For each unit increase in person-organization fit, respondents were .117 of a standard deviation more satisfied with Benefits.

## **Limitations**

Although significant attempts were made to produce a high-quality study, there are some limitations. The population being studied could be broader. Although NASPA represents a very large number (12,000+) of student affairs professionals, the respondents in this study were largely from the most common functional areas (e.g., residence life, dean of students, student activities, etc.). With the increasing diversification of today's college student body and the requisite support services needed, a more broad population from which to sample would likely yield additional insight into the satisfaction of student affairs professionals.

A survey question in the job characteristics section of the instrument was poorly created, which prevented the researcher from including it in the regression analysis. This question inquired about the type of institution at which respondents worked (e.g., public, private, religiously affiliated, etc.). Through SPSS the researcher was able to capture the variance between public and private, but was not able to account for the other variables that were of interest (e.g., religiously affiliated and specific-population serving). This could be easily solved in future studies with a better application of the survey software for this particular item.

Several demographic variables were asked in the survey instrument that had very low response rates and had to be removed from analysis. These included race, educational level and gender. Specifically, the number of respondents whose race was Asian, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, and Alaska Native were very low and removed from the analysis. Those individuals who had attained less than a master's degree (high

school only, associates and bachelors) were also very low and had to be removed. Finally, there were only 2 respondents who identified as transgender, so those had to be removed from the analysis as well.

Dialogue that occurred between several survey respondents and the researcher suggests that the time of year at which the survey was administered could have had an impact on the answers provided. The survey was administered in March and April, a time when many student affairs professionals attend national conferences and in the middle of spring semester. One colleague mentioned that he thought this might be a time at which professionals are feeling burned out from the busy time of year, and therefore might contribute to more negative responses to the items. This comment should be juxtaposed with a very high return rate, far above what is common for electronic survey instruments.

It is worth noting that this study was conducted as the United States was emerging from a multi-year economic recession. The recession affected many institutions of higher education, thus likely impacting employees at these institutions as well. It is unclear how the recession specifically impacted the participants in this study; yet, it is worthy to note as job turnover and movement were likely affected.

Finally, the conceptual framework for this study attempted to identify the factors that contribute to job satisfaction based on previous literature. There is a significant amount of research that has been conducted on this topic, so it is plausible that not all factors were considered in this model. The researcher acknowledges that placing additional independent variables in this model would likely change the outcome of the regression analysis.

However, this study focused on key variables that were most commonly considered, and deemed to be most relevant to the research at hand.

### **Summary**

This chapter outlined the data collection procedure, profile and demographic factors of respondents, and job characteristics of the respondents in this study. Data analysis procedures were reviewed and descriptive statistics were provided for job satisfaction among respondents. An exploratory factor analysis was conducted to determine construct validity of the instruments and reliability was determined, which resulted in a three-factor model. Results for mean job satisfaction were presented both for the overall sample population and tested for significance to account for variances based on the personal and job characteristics of respondents. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the impact on job satisfaction among a number of variables through two models. Finally, limitations of the study were provided. The following section will provide additional discussion on the results presented in this chapter, followed by implications and recommendations.

## **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of fit on the job satisfaction of midlevel managers in student affairs. To address this purpose, two research questions were posed:

- 1) What are the levels of job satisfaction for midlevel managers in student affairs?
- 2) What is the relationship of fit (organizational and job), personal characteristics (years in profession, years in job, educational level, relationship status, race, gender, dependent child status), and job characteristics (position level, functional area, institution type, institution size, student contact hours, and professional development) on the job satisfaction of midlevel managers in student affairs?

Research question 1 was addressed by examining means for the three job satisfaction factors of Environment, Rewards, and Benefits of the sample population. Further analysis was conducted by using independent samples *t*-tests and one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) techniques based on the personal and job characteristics reported by the sample population. Research question 2 was addressed by employing multiple regression techniques, which allowed the researcher to examine the impact of multiple independent variables (fit, personal and job characteristics) on single dependent variables (Environment, Rewards, and Benefits) for the sample population.

### **Levels of Job Satisfaction**

The preliminary analysis of frequencies and means of job satisfaction using the Job Satisfaction Survey and related subscales was provided to better inform the study. This data will be discussed briefly, and a more thorough review of the three-factor model of

Environment, Rewards, and Benefits, and the relationships between the variables will be provided.

Midlevel managers who participated in this study reported that they are generally satisfied with their jobs. The overall mean score for the sample ( $N = 845$ ) was 4.06 on a 6-point scale. A mean score above 4.0 represents satisfaction (Spector, 1997). There was a high degree of variability when considering the various aspects that comprise satisfaction. The aspects of their job that midlevel managers in this sample are least satisfied with include opportunities for promotion (mean of 3.11), work conditions (mean of 3.29), and pay/remuneration (mean of 3.41). Respondents reported the highest levels of satisfaction with the work itself (mean of 5.03), the supervision received (mean of 4.89), and their coworkers (mean of 4.61).

Findings from descriptive statistics related to job satisfaction reinforce previous literature addressing satisfaction of student affairs professionals. Lack of advancement opportunities was highlighted by Johnsrud (1996), Evans (1988), and Wood et al. (1985) as contributing to low levels of job satisfaction. Similar reinforcement of previous literature exists in relation to pay (Jones, 1980; Lorden, 1998; Quinn et al., 1974) and overall working conditions (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Lorden, 1998), which demonstrated lower job satisfaction with lower pay and poor working conditions.

In contrast to previous literature, supervision received was one of the highest rated components of job satisfaction in this study. This finding is counter to previous literature that indicated low levels of satisfaction with supervision (Amey, 2002; Arminio & Creamer, 2001; Lorden, 1998; Schneider, 2002). Two of these previous studies (Amey, 2002;

Schneider, 2002) were focused on new professionals, so this may highlight the difference in perception of supervision between new and midlevel professionals in student affairs.

Creamer and Winston (2002) noted that high-quality supervision is most important in the first two positions an employee holds. Without this, the likelihood of employee attrition is greater. Similarly, Tull (2006) found that high levels of synergistic supervision correlated with high levels of job satisfaction for new professionals. It could be posited that supervision was rated more highly in this study because of the sample of midlevel professionals. Those who have experienced poor supervision at early stages in their careers may have already left the profession and would not be represented in this sample. Another explanation may be that the supervisory needs of midlevel managers are lower, given their increased professional experience and competence.

The relatively high means for the work itself would seem to signify that midlevel managers in this sample are satisfied with the nature of their work. Similarly, they are satisfied with both their coworkers and their supervisors, both of which contribute to the overall working environment. These results also demonstrate our need as a profession to focus on the factors we can control (e.g., pay and professional development) that result in the lowest levels of satisfaction for respondents.

### **Environment, Rewards, and Benefits**

As reported, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted in this study that revealed three distinct constructs. These three constructs of Environment, Rewards, and Benefits account for the majority of items in the Job Satisfaction Survey, and they provide additional framework for considering the data from the sample.

The Environment factor accounts for items related to the direct supervisor of the respondent, the communication within the organization, the coworkers of the respondent, and the nature of the job tasks themselves. The author choose to label this factor as Environment because it encompasses broad categories that speak to the culture within the workplace, rather than a specific monetary or fringe compensation. Environmental factors are likely to develop over time, and are dependent on both leadership and the composition of the staff at the time of study.

The Rewards factor is focused on both monetary and nonmonetary rewards, including pay/salary, professional development, and opportunities for promotion, as well as general acknowledgement provided to employees when good work is performed. All of these items are controllable within an organization. That is, a supervisor or manager of the organization has the direct ability to affect these variables in a timely manner. Given this, the outcomes associated with this factor should be considered as areas for improvement in terms of practice.

The Benefits factor is focused specifically on fringe benefits associated with the job and organization of the respondent. These are likely to include such items as health insurance, vacation time, tuition-remission, family leave policies, etc., and were assessed by asking the respondents' perspective on how they rate their benefits compared to what they feel they should be or what they know from other organizations. The ability to affect this factor could be impeded by institutional limitations, but is nonetheless important for senior leaders in student affairs to be aware of to create the most positive work climate possible.

### *Demographic and personal characteristics.*

There was no significant difference in satisfaction with Environment, Rewards or Benefits for respondents based on their marital status or whether they had dependent children in their primary household. These findings contrast a study by Anderson (1998), who found that married professionals in student affairs were more satisfied with their jobs. However, Anderson's (1998) study was more focused on senior-level administrators in student affairs, which likely provides additional context that could change the outcome for respondents. Married respondents in this study did report higher level of satisfaction with Benefits, but it was not statistically significant. Single respondents reported higher satisfaction with both Environment and Rewards, but again it was not statistically significant.

Respondents with dependent children in their household reported higher levels of satisfaction with their Environment and Benefits than those who did not, but neither was statistically significant. It is not alarming that those respondents with children were less satisfied with Rewards, given they are likely to have additional financial pressures that accompany raising children. Again, this variance was not statistically significant in this sample, but the difference is worth noting.

Female respondents in this study were significantly ( $p < .05$ ) more satisfied with Environment and significantly less satisfied with Rewards than male respondents. There was no significant difference between female and male respondents in regards to Benefits. Previous literature (Anderson et al., 2000; Burns, 1982) indicates that women have lower overall job satisfaction than men. The analysis in this study provides further insight into the literature. By looking specifically at the three-factor model, it is evident for this sample that

women's source of dissatisfaction is related to Rewards, which includes items such as pay, opportunities for promotion, and general praise in the work environment. These findings support the work of Johnsrud and Heck (1994), who found that females are less likely than males to be promoted, and therefore experience negative implications with salary attainment. Blau and Kahn (2000) report that while significant gains were made in earnings for female workers between 1978 and 1999, a leveling off occurred in the mid-1990s. At that point, women were earning 76.5% of what men earned for similar work (Blau & Kahn, 2000). These findings speak to the need to consider augmenting rewards for women who work in student affairs midlevel manager positions. And since women in this study reported significantly higher levels of satisfaction with Environment, addressing any shortfalls in Rewards could yield positive overall outcomes for female employees. Although the researcher attempted to collect data on transgender professionals, the response rate was too low ( $N = 2$ ) to form any conclusions from the responses.

The only significant difference between satisfaction by race was in regards to Benefits, where Latino respondents were significantly ( $p < .05$ ) more satisfied than both Black/African-American and White respondents. No literature was found that supports or discounts this specific finding. No significant difference existed between groups for either Environment or Rewards. An examination of the mean scores does reveal variance in these categories, where White respondents reveal the highest level of satisfaction in both factors. Respondents who indicated their race as American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Asian, or Other were all removed from this analysis due to low response rates.

Respondents in this study who held a doctoral degree had higher levels of satisfaction in Environment, Rewards, and Benefits than did those with master's degrees. This higher level was statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) for both Environment and Benefits, but not Rewards. This finding seems contrary to the assumption that those with doctoral degrees would earn higher salaries and therefore have significantly higher satisfaction with Rewards. Snyder and Dillow (2012) note that there was a 34% increase in attainment of doctoral degrees from 1999–2000 to 2009–2010. Therefore, it is possible that this increase in educational attainment has negated some of the monetary benefit that was assumed to be associated with it. That is, there are not more jobs that require a higher level of education, but there are more employees who have a higher level of education. However, this additional education may not be leading to a higher level of pay. It also seems plausible that Environment and Benefits would have presented a more level playing field regardless of level of educational attainment, but that was not the case with this sample.

While there were variances in levels of job satisfaction based on demographic and personal characteristics, the findings both supported and contrasted previous literature. Many of the personal characteristics were not found to have a significant impact on satisfaction, which could suggest that the student affairs profession provides a relatively level playing field regardless of personal background. Many of the findings in this portion of the study provide new literature for the profession, which will both inform further research and practice, as will be discussed in the subsequent chapter.

### ***Job characteristics.***

While variance in job satisfaction was relatively minor for personal and demographic characteristics, more noticeable variance exists for job characteristic factors. In particular, significant differences in satisfaction rates were present when institutional size, functional area of work, student contact hours, and professional development support were considered. The only job characteristic factor that did not yield significance was in the difference among types of institutions. Public institution employees were more satisfied with the Environment while private institution employees were more satisfied with both Rewards and Benefits. However, none of these relationships were statistically significant.

There was variance in all factors when considering the institutional size of respondents in this study. The only statistically significant difference existed in satisfaction with Benefits, where those who work at institutions with undergraduate enrollments of 10,000–14,999 were significantly ( $p < .05$ ) more satisfied than those who worked at institutions with enrollments of  $< 4,999$ . However, other variances existed among the factors even though they were not statistically significant. These variances highlight previous research conducted by Hirt (2006), which detailed the differences in experiences by institutions. The findings in this study are an important supplement to her work, as most of her qualitative research focused on the cultural differences present at different types of institutions. Hirt (2006) provides significant qualitative data on how it feels to work at different types of institutions. The cultural norms, the work styles, and the values are well articulated through her research (Hirt, 2006). This study provides additional quantitative support on job satisfaction levels based on institutional size. While institutional type and size

was considered for this study, other factors such as religious affiliation or specific population-serving institutions similar to those found in Hirt's (2006) were not considered for the purpose of this study.

Analysis was conducted on the six most common functional areas reported in this study, including Dean of Students office, Multicultural Student Services, Residence Life & Housing, Student Activities, Student Affairs Administration, and Other. Respondents who reported their functional area as student affairs administration or dean of students reported higher satisfaction with Environment, Rewards, and Benefits than the other most common responses in this study. Student Activities respondents also reported high means for satisfaction with Environment. Residence Life and Housing reported high means for Rewards. However, the only difference that was statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) among all of the means was in relation to Environment. Those who work in Student Affairs Administration were significantly more satisfied with the Environment than those who work in Residence Life and Housing. These findings highlight several issues. The work environment for Residence Life and Housing professionals includes extreme hours, including the possibility of living on site and conducting primary work in a remote office location among a residential community (Jones, 2001). This could lead to a decline in satisfaction with Environmental factors, particularly compared with the other functional areas, which are more likely to be centrally located and among a cohort of professionals. The higher means (though not significant) for Dean of Students and Student Affairs Administration staffs in relation to Rewards and Benefits might suggest that those who work in these functions are likely to have higher salaries and more access to professional development opportunities.

These offices are likely either responsible for setting these policies and practices, or are more closely integrated with those who do.

The number of student contact hours that respondents reported in this study had little impact on satisfaction with Environment. Variance exists between those who have varying levels of contact and their related satisfaction with Environment, but none of the relationships were significant. When considering Rewards and Benefits, there was clear variability in satisfaction that was statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ). Those who had the fewest student contact hours per week were significantly more satisfied with Rewards and Benefits. Those respondents who had the most student contact hours per week were the least satisfied with both Rewards and Benefits.

On the surface this finding is perplexing. However, considering the sample population of midlevel managers, it is plausible to consider the in-between conflict that this group faces (Rosser, 2000). That is, if a midlevel manager has been tasked with a high degree of budget and personnel management, spending time with a student might be viewed as a distraction from the administrative responsibilities that must also be accomplished. Another explanation is that those who have fewer student contact hours are also more likely to be in more senior positions and earn a higher salary than those with more student contact hours. This could be affecting the data and contributing to the results provided. The researcher believes this is the more likely explanation, given the relative similarity in satisfaction for all respondents in regards to Environment factors. Given that it is impossible to determine exactly why this outcome is evident, this is an area for further exploration. This particular finding is a good example in articulating the balance between setting policy and

implementing programs that Rosser (2000) and Johnsrud (1996) described when studying the difficult role of the middle manager.

Average monetary support for professional development was an important factor for respondents in this study. There was noticeable variance among Environment, Rewards, and Benefits when considering the level of professional development support that respondents receive. When considering only Environment, the only significant relationship was that those who received \$2,000–\$2,999 were significantly ( $p < .05$ ) more satisfied than those who received \$1,000–\$1,999. In looking at the Rewards factor, there was even greater disparity, in that those respondents who reported receiving less than \$1,000 in professional development support were the least satisfied. Those who received anything more than \$2,000 were significantly ( $p < .05$ ) more satisfied with Rewards. Belch and Strange (1995) and Rosser (2004) noted the impact that career support has on job satisfaction, and this finding highlights that monetary professional development might be a strong indicator of satisfaction. Professionals are likely to perceive financial support for professional development as a direct form of career support that was highlighted by Belch and Strange (1995) and Rosser (2004).

Although satisfaction generally increased with increases in monetary professional development support, there was a leveling-off effect. That is, those professionals who received at least \$3,000 in support had the highest level of satisfaction with Rewards. Although those respondents who reported receiving greater than \$4,000 in professional development support also had higher levels of satisfaction with Rewards, it was not statistically significant. This would indicate a point of diminishing returns in monetary levels

of professional development support. However, the findings are clear and illustrate the importance of investing in professional development to increase job satisfaction with respondents in this study.

### **Impact on Job Satisfaction**

Several job characteristics and fit constructs were found to have a significant impact on satisfaction with Environment, Rewards, and Benefits when multiple regression techniques were employed in this study. In conducting this regression analysis, the sample population was automatically reduced to  $N = 817$  as a result of missing items in the survey responses. Means were determined for the two fit constructs (person-organization and person-job) that were factored into this regression analysis. The mean score for person-organization fit was 3.65 while person-job fit was 4.06 (both on 5-point scales). The noticeable difference in means between the two fit constructs reinforces previous literature that suggests that a person's fit with the job is more important than fit with the broader organization (Bretz et al., 1993; Kristof-Brown, 2000). Given that an individual first chooses a career that ultimately translates to a specific job, this level of fit must be primary. Many professionals see the organization as a means by which they can accomplish their jobs, and have less of a connection to it than they do their overall profession or discipline (Kristof-Brown, 2000).

This regression analysis was conducted in a hierarchical manner, so that in Model 1 only personal and job characteristics were considered in relation to satisfaction with Environment, Rewards, and Benefits. Subsequently, the fit constructs were added to Model 2 in the regression analysis to examine their impact on satisfaction in the presence of the

personal and job characteristics. As such, the discussion will for these results will be organized in a similar manner.

### **Model 1.**

There were 12 personal and job characteristic variables that were considered in this regression analysis: gender, race, marital status, educational attainment, dependent child status, years in profession, years in job, institutional type, institutional size, functional area of work, direct student contact hours, and monetary support for professional development. When considering only these variables in the regression analysis, two were found to have significance ( $p < .05$ ) in relation to satisfaction with Environment for midlevel managers in this sample: years in the current job and average monetary support for professional development. Four were found to have significance ( $p < .05$ ) to satisfaction with Rewards for respondents: gender, years in current job, average number of student contact hours, and average monetary support for professional development. Four were also found to have significance ( $p < .05$ ) to satisfaction with Benefits: gender, race, average number of student contact hours, and average monetary support for professional development.

Previous studies (Burns, 1982; Johnsrud & Edwards, 2001; Johnsrud & Heck, 1994; Johnsrud, Heck, & Rosser, 2000; Scott, 1992) have demonstrated that personal or demographic variables did have an impact on job satisfaction. However, in this study when these variables were integrated with job characteristics, that was found to be the case only for gender (Environment, Rewards, and Benefits) and race (Benefits). This demonstrates that the job characteristics identified and examined were more influential than many of the demographics previously studied, except for gender. This is an important consideration that

will be further addressed in the implications section of the subsequent section. One plausible explanation is that the sample population of this study is midlevel managers. These individuals are likely to have worked in the field for a minimum of five years, and in some cases for several decades. They also reported high levels of fit with their specific job (person-job fit), all of which might indicate a level of comfort as it relates to several of the demographic variables that were considered.

The importance of professional development among student affairs professionals has been documented in the literature. Belch and Strange (1995) and Rosser (2004) both noted that career support was a strong indicator of job satisfaction. The finding of significance for monetary support for professional development combined with the low levels of satisfaction regarding opportunities for advancement is a clear indicator that the student affairs profession must focus on this aspect of employee development. While this study considered only monetary support for professional development, there may be additional types of professional development for consideration in future research, such as on-campus workshops, webinars, and other low-cost alternatives.

The number of direct student contact hours reported was also significant in its impact on satisfaction, specifically in relation to Rewards and Benefits. This, combined with the previously reported finding that satisfaction means for this sample were higher for those who had fewer student contact hours, is an important dynamic. Several reasons for these findings include the nature of work for the sample population of midlevel managers and the time of year the survey was administered. It could be posited that midlevel managers have such a high level of administrative demand in their positions that students come to feel like a

distraction from these tasks. This could highlight the concern that many in the field articulate about being too far away from students as they move to more senior-level positions. It could also be that those in midlevel manager roles in this population chose to do so in part because they prefer work of a more administrative nature, and wish for greater autonomy from the direct student contact that many entry-level positions require. The literature as it relates to student contact hours appears to be nonexistent, thus making this an important area for future research.

### **Model 2.**

The second model of this regression analysis added two fit constructs—person-job and person-organization fit—to the previously identified personal and job characteristics. Therefore, the analysis was to determine the impact of fit in the presence of the additional 12 variables examined in Model 1. As indicated, mean scores for person-organization and person-job fit were identified (3.65 and 4.06, respectively). Kristof-Brown (2000) previously suggested that person-job fit was more important to satisfaction than person-organization fit. These means suggest that the sample population in this study are noticeably more pleased with the fit with their job than with the organization in which they work.

The regression analysis did find that both types of fit were significant in their impact on satisfaction with Environment, but only person-organization fit was significant in its impact on satisfaction with Rewards and Benefits. The fit constructs accounted for nearly all of the variance in satisfaction with Environment, and much less when looking at Rewards and Benefits. Literature has demonstrated that a good relationship between a person and the environment is likely to yield positive outcomes (Edwards, 1991; Jansen & Kristof-Brown,

2006; Kristof, 1996), which is inclusive of both job and organization fit. Kristof (1996) defined person-organization fit as “the compatibility between people and organizations that occurs when: (a) at least one entity provides what the other needs, or (b) they share similar fundamental characteristics, or (c) both” (p.4-5). The finding of significance in this study combined with a lower mean score for person-organization fit suggests that more work must be done to assimilate individuals with their organizations, or to help them identify organizations at the onset of their careers that will have a greater likelihood of being a positive match. Mather, Bryan, and Faulkner (2009) stress the need for more robust orientation programs for midlevel managers; articulating cultural values of the organization might prove useful in such an orientation.

Hirt (2006) identifies significant cultural differences that exist between various types of institutions. She also provides qualitative narrative about the impact these differences have on the nature of work for professionals. Professional preparation programs in student affairs and higher education should spend time highlighting the differences articulated by Hirt (2006) to begin to help inform future professionals. Cable and Judge (1996) suggest that employee awareness and congruence with organization values will increase the likelihood of that employee forming a successful relationship with the organization. While this study does not provide detail into the differences of fit among respondents, that data exists and can be considered for future study.

The regression analysis in Model 2 also found significance in the impact of person-job fit on satisfaction with Environment. Broadly defined, person-job fit is the relationship between and individual’s knowledge, skills and abilities and the requirements of their

specific job (Edwards, 1991; Kristof, 1996; Saks & Ashforth, 1996). Further, Kristof-Brown (2000) suggests that job seekers tend to pay closer attention to their perceived fit with the job instead of the organization. This contrasts with literature that suggests the employer is more concerned about the employee's fit with the organization (Chuang & Sackett, 2005).

Findings in this study indicate that respondents rated the fit with their job as noticeably higher than the fit with their organization. This supports Kristof-Brown's (2000) assertion that an employee is more likely to consider this component of fit as primary.

The researcher suggests that employees may tend to hold the organization in which they work accountable for aspects of the environment that negatively impact their satisfaction. That is, if an individual is not happy with professional development opportunities, they may perceive this to be an organizational value, and therefore their perceived fit with the organization may be lower. It seems less likely that professionals would hold themselves accountable for such a policy, or that their overall enjoyment for the type of work would diminish. Kristof-Brown et al. (2002) also found that for those who have worked at fewer institutions, person-job fit is more closely linked to satisfaction. Those who have worked for multiple organizations are more likely to place an increased value on the person-organization compatibility. This is an important consideration for senior student affairs officers as employees may respond differently to the constructs of fit depending on their employment backgrounds.

The regression analysis in this study examined the two fit constructs together, and in the presence of the other demographic variables. The mean scores for person-organization and person-job fit were noticeably different, and differences in significance as suggested by

Lauver and Kristof-Brown (2001) were identified. Person-organization fit was significant for Environment, Rewards, and Benefits. Person-job fit was significant for Environment.

Further analysis can be conducted in the future specifically examining the fit constructs.

### **Summary**

This chapter provides additional discussion on the results of this study. Detailed analyses of both research questions were provided. Findings from this study both support and contradict previous research in the literature. Examples were provided and suggestions were offered for future consideration, which will be explored further in the following chapter. In summary, a total of seven variables (2 fit constructs, 2 personal characteristics, and 3 job characteristics) were significant in their impact on job satisfaction for the sample population in this study. The following chapter will provide implications for the findings in this study as well as conclusions and recommendations for future research.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

This chapter outlines implications for theory, practice and research as a result of this study. The purpose of this study was twofold: 1) to examine job satisfaction levels of midlevel managers in student affairs and 2) to examine the relationship of person-organization and person-job fit on job satisfaction for midlevel managers in student affairs. The findings in this study provide better understanding of current levels of job satisfaction among the sample population and provide the opportunity to examine variances in this satisfaction based on both personal and job characteristics. The findings in this study also illustrate the importance of organizational and job fit on satisfaction for the sample population.

### **Implications for Theory**

The analysis of data and presentation of findings in this study provide additional insight into the conceptual framework that was proposed in Figure 1 in the Introduction. The regression analysis that was conducted to answer research question 2 was hierarchical in nature, which suggests a revised conceptual framework in Figure 2.

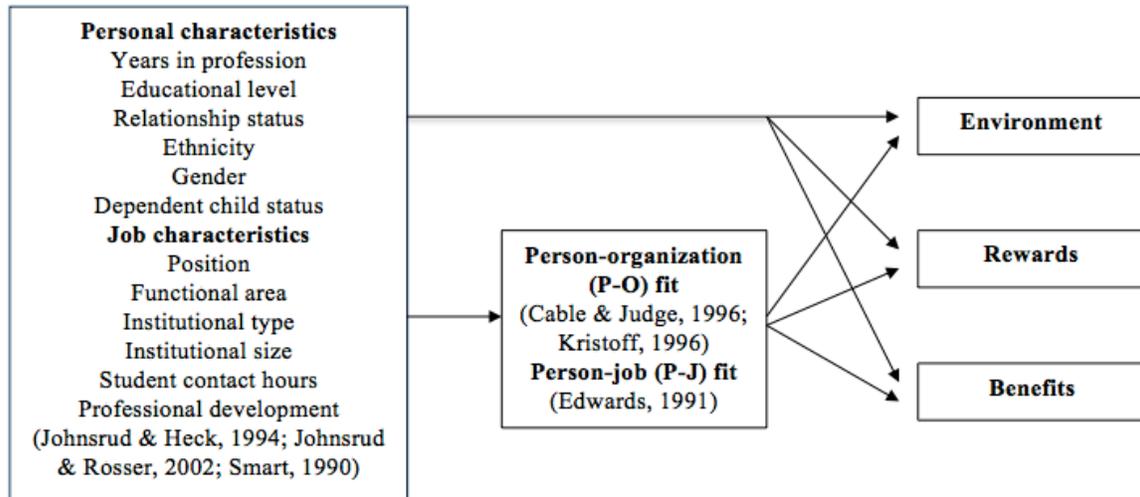


Figure 2. Revised conceptual framework.

This revised framework allowed the researcher to examine two models in the regression analysis, one that considered the fit constructs in the impact on job satisfaction, and one that did not. The revised framework also acknowledges that the fit constructs were considered together in the analysis, rather than separated in the initial conceptual framework. Another benefit to this revised framework was that by examining only the personal and job characteristics in Model 1 of the regression analysis, the researcher was able to determine connections between the regression results and mean satisfaction scores for these variables. The links were evident and reinforced the findings. For example, mean satisfaction scores were higher for respondents who had fewer student contact hours, and this relationship was also evident in the regression analysis. Those that had the largest variance in mean satisfaction scores also turned out to be the variables that had significance in their impact on job satisfaction.

Kalleberg (1977) identified both intrinsic and extrinsic factors that contribute to job satisfaction. This study found that extrinsic factors were most relevant to the satisfaction of this sample. Mean scores for intrinsic factors (e.g. the work itself) were higher than most other constructs in the initial Job Satisfaction Survey. Further, only factors that Kalleberg (1977) would have identified as extrinsic were found to have significance in the regression analysis in this study. Herzberg (1966) posited that both motivators and hygiene factors contributed to job satisfaction for employees, and the findings in this study support his theoretical framework.

The findings in this study also support the theories of Kristoff (1996) and Saks and Ashforth (1997) in regards to person-organization fit. Significance was found in all job satisfaction constructs for the impact that person-organization fit has on satisfaction.

### **Implications for Practice**

There are five key findings of this study that inform student affairs practice, including the need to create opportunities for advancement, providing monetary support for professional development, supporting contact with students, recognizing the importance of organizational and job fit, and appropriately preparing employees for professional life in student affairs. Each finding is explored in greater detail along with recommendations for practical application.

First, the mean satisfaction scores related to opportunities for advancement were clearly the lowest among the sample population, and illustrate a need to increase opportunities for employees to advance within their organizations. This would represent a shift in a profession that has long held the mantra of ‘move out to move up’ in preparation

programs and mentor relationships (Rosser, 2000). It would seem that if greater opportunities for advancement were offered within the organization, we would see an increase in job satisfaction levels among employees. Another way to support these opportunities is to create organizational structures that allow for growth, rather than having obvious ceilings that will be difficult for employees to penetrate. This finding might contribute to the lower mean scores for person-organization fit in this study. If an employee in an organization does not feel there are adequate opportunities for advancement, that individual might experience less of a fit in that organization, and therefore be more likely to seek opportunities outside of it.

The second key finding is that the significance of monetary professional development should send a clear signal that organizations need to invest in their employees to keep them satisfied with their jobs. Professional development should be considered a part of a total rewards package related to benefits, educational support, etc. This finding also supports the desire for opportunities for promotion, as the two are clearly linked. If employees are provided appropriate monetary support for professional development along with opportunities for promotion and growth within an organization, positive outcomes will likely result for both the employee and organization. When considering the mean levels of satisfaction in relation to monetary professional development, with this sample it appears there is a point of diminishing returns. That is, those professionals who received between \$3,000–\$3,999 were nearly as satisfied as those who received greater than \$4,000. This suggests that employees are satisfied when receiving a reasonable (\$3,000–\$3,999 in this study) amount of monetary support for professional development. This finding can be

immediately implemented into practice in student affairs organizations by prioritizing resources and considering professional development as an essential component to employee satisfaction. Increasing monetary support for professional development provides an alternative for supervisors to increase job satisfaction if it is not possible to increase an employee's level of pay. Professional development expenses can be easier to accommodate in tight budgets, as they often represent one-time expenses.

The third implication for student affairs practice rests in the finding that the number of direct student contact hours had significance on satisfaction for this sample population. Those respondents who had the lowest number of student contact hours were the most satisfied with Rewards and Benefits. Senior student affairs officers should consider several points highlighted by these findings. Supervisors should examine the balance between student interaction and administrative responsibility they are placing on midlevel managers. This balance could be a source of strain for individuals who hold these roles. Is their administrative workload appropriate in conjunction with the expectations placed on them for contact with students? Supervisors should also work to create an environment where student contact is valued, even for mid- and senior-level professionals. This could be accomplished by creating intentional time for interaction with students that does not interfere with other administrative responsibilities. It could also be accomplished by modeling the behavior desired in employees and rewarding student contact during performance evaluations and merit decisions.

The fourth implication for practice is that organizational and job fit clearly have an impact on satisfaction with Environment for this sample population, and this finding,

combined with the variance in means between these two constructs, should be considered. The findings suggest that individuals are more closely aligned with their jobs than with their organizations. Senior leaders would be wise to create additional opportunities to foster values congruence between their organizations and employees. This can be achieved on a number of levels. It should begin in the employee recruitment process, where a clear articulation of organizational culture and values should be shared with prospective employees as well as a candid dialogue about institutional or departmental expectations. It is not uncommon during search processes for hiring staff to try to impress candidates for positions, but this finding suggests that an honest and direct assessment of the organization is necessary. If the prospective employee does not have a clear understanding of the values of the organization, that individual's fit in the organization could be diminished. Based on these findings, that could lead to lower levels of satisfaction for that employee.

The process of sharing organizational values and cultural norms should continue through the orientation process for new employees. A good investment of time could be to share the context of organizations during this acclimation process. Helping new employees to understand the history and rationale of traditions and practices in an organization will provide a better understanding of them. This should allow the new employee to either appreciate the organization and successfully integrate into it, or be fully informed about a decision to not remain with the organization.

The process of values congruence should be a continued priority for supervisors throughout employment. This ongoing commitment will reinforce organizational values for all employees, but it requires a skilled manager to constantly assess the changes in the

environment and his/her workforce. It is important to know who is doing the work in your organization and what is important to them. Finding that connection between their collective needs with the broader organization will benefit all. Not only will job satisfaction increase, but the organization also will perform at a higher level. Indeed, a positive organizational culture can both motivate employees and produce positive outcomes for the institution (Barney, 1986).

Too little attention is paid to the impact of fit on job satisfaction in all stages of employment. Acknowledging the cultural differences in organizations as demonstrated by Hirt (2006) and tailoring recruitment, orientation, and daily operational practices to these norms will help to strengthen the student affairs profession. The fit constructs were less influential (though still significant) when considering satisfaction for Rewards and Benefits. These findings suggest a nuanced approach to satisfaction that must take into account fit variables as well as job characteristics that can be affected by senior leaders in the profession.

The final implication for practice is that we must appropriately prepare those who enter the profession for what they can expect by working in student affairs. The previous four implications centered on what the institution or manager can do to enhance job satisfaction, and while this implication is somewhat similar, it also acknowledges the role that the individual employee has on their satisfaction. That is, if we are successful in clearly articulating our values, providing adequate transitional support and maintain an ongoing commitment to our values as suggested in the previous implication; there is more that must be realized by the individual. The individual must use this information and synthesize it appropriately; so that they can attempt to find congruence with their values and those of the

institution. If the employee is not committed to exploring how his or her values align or do not align with the institution, or does not have the adequate skills to do so, the relationship between the individual and organization is likely to be negatively impacted.

Initially, the employee must have a firm grasp on their own values and how these translate into expectations for their institution and job. Without this baseline understanding and reflection, the interaction between the individual and their work will be difficult to understand. Regardless of the clarity in which an institution enacts its values and the expectations it has for employees, unclear values on the part of the employee will make satisfaction a moving target that will be difficult to realize. Preparation programs for student affairs professionals should provide the opportunity for introspection and development of individual values and expectations of positions within student affairs. This could be accomplished by offering a curriculum that prioritizes both practical experience and reflective scholarship. Having graduate students explore expectations for their first and future positions while in graduate school can help these individuals better adapt to the institutions in which they work. This understanding of employee expectations and values and institutional values can also be explored in the supervisory relationship. Midlevel managers in this study reported high levels of satisfaction with supervision, thus the opportunity to explore values congruence seems possible in current relationships.

Not only should preparation programs and supervisors help employees understand their values, but they should also help them to understand the cultural differences that exist at different institutions. As Hirt (2006) outlined in her work, the context of an institution can greatly impact the work environment and culture. By studying this early in graduate

preparation programs, we can help new professionals approach their career from a more intentional perspective. The supervisor can continue this education by providing ongoing feedback and dialogue about their own experiences at varying types of institutions, and examine how this impacts job satisfaction. Finally, learning how to correctly interpret and understand institutional values before beginning work at a new college or university presents an ongoing challenge. By utilizing networks of colleagues and conducting thorough research on prospective organizations, an employee might have an improved chance of success of finding a good fit with the organization. Fit is often discussed in the student affairs profession; yet, it is not clear how often preparation programs or professional associations formally explore how employees come to understand the similarities and differences between employee and institutional values and expectations. It is certain though that job satisfaction is not the sole responsibility of the institution, but is a partnership between the institution and employee.

Senior student affairs officers should consider their practice based on these five key implications from this study. These included opportunity for advancement, monetary support for professional development, support for student contact hours, the impact of organizational and job fit on satisfaction, and appropriately preparing employees for professional life in student affairs. Most notable would be factoring in professional development when considering compensation. This study affirms that opportunities for advancement and professional development are at least as important as, if not more than, pay itself. In considering new investments in midlevel managers in student affairs, professional development should rank high.

## **Implications for Research**

The findings in this study contribute to the literature on job satisfaction for student affairs professionals. There has been little recent research on job satisfaction levels for midlevel managers in student affairs, so this data alone is a contribution to the literature. Beyond that, the implications of the findings can be thought of in both general satisfaction levels and the impact of variables on satisfaction levels.

The findings in this study indicate relatively little variance in job satisfaction levels among the sample population in relation to personal and demographic characteristics. Exceptions to this include gender and race, but neither had significant variances across all three factors (Environment, Rewards, and Benefits). This finding contradicts, in part, previous literature that cites personal factors such as marital status contributing to satisfaction (Anderson, 1998). Not only is there little variance in the mean satisfaction, but in the regression model many of these factors were not significant in their impact on satisfaction. The researcher would suggest this is a positive finding, as among this sample population, some factors that are beyond the individual's or organization's control are not bearing weight in the satisfaction of the employees. Many of the demographic factors considered have long been sources of inequality in various settings, so it is also encouraging that this might suggest that the student affairs profession is ahead of the curve in supporting individual employees from various personal backgrounds and circumstances.

There are some variables in this study that are so broad that additional examination to better understand the interaction effects is warranted. For example, the range of years worked in the profession for respondents in this study ranged from one to 47, with a median

of 12 years. The range of years worked in the current job was zero to 35, with a median of 4 years. Given the large ranges for these two variables, it is understood that the relationships they have with the dependent satisfaction variables are not likely to be linear in nature. It would be worthwhile in future research to analyze the data with other statistical measures that take into account the nonlinear nature of the data.

Findings of greater significance in this study are linked to job characteristics over which leaders in the student affairs profession have control. There exists a statistically significant variance in satisfaction means for midlevel managers in this sample based on student contact hours and monetary professional development support. Not only do the means for these variables vary, but in the regression analysis they were both found to be significant in their impact on satisfaction with Rewards and Benefits. This illustrates the need to conduct additional research into these variables, specifically the impact on satisfaction with Rewards and Benefits.

While professional development has been linked to satisfaction in previous research (Nestor, 1988), student contact hours do not appear to be a variable frequently considered. It would be helpful to understand why midlevel managers who have fewer student contact hours are more satisfied with Rewards and Benefits. Do midlevel managers believe that they should have less student contact? Are midlevel jobs designed in a way that creates an issue with balancing administrative workload with student contact? Are those respondents who reported being more satisfied in higher-paying positions that have affected this finding? Are those who are more satisfied and have less student contact earning more than their counterparts who are less satisfied? Is the sample of midlevel managers less likely to desire

and value student contact? Is the administrative burden of these professional too exceptional for them to appreciate student contact? These questions cannot be answered from data in this study, but could be in subsequent research.

Additional research should explore specifics related to professional development opportunities. Many institutions have become creative in the types of professional development offered as a result of both fiscal constraints and the recognition that individual employees prefer varying types of opportunities for professional development. This study did not consider those nuances, and focused only on monetary support for professional development. Future research could explore other types of professional development opportunities and how they associate with job satisfaction. Are on-campus workshops for student affairs professionals effective in providing professional development? Are there mentoring opportunities with senior student affairs professionals that could contribute to satisfaction with professional development? These and other types of nonmonetary professional development opportunities should be explored in more detail to better inform these findings.

The findings in this study also support previous literature on person-organization and person-job fit and the impact they have on job satisfaction (Bretz & Judge, 1994; Kristoff, 1996). Research on these fit constructs specifically related to student affairs midlevel managers does not exist, so these findings offer a starting point. While both types of fit (organizational and job) were found to be significant in their impact on satisfaction with Environment, only person-organization fit was significant on the satisfaction for Rewards and Benefits. Similar to the previous literature, the means for person-job fit were higher than

they were for person-organization fit (Carless, 2005). Further investigation into the specific cultural differences in organizations and their impact on fit should be initiated. For example, do fit levels vary between small colleges and large research universities? Do fit levels vary between public and private institutions, or between those who are religious or nonreligious? Variances in fit means for professionals based on demographic factors and job characteristics would also be worthy of exploration to better inform practice. Doing so might help to explain how individuals with varying demographic factors fit within specific types of organizations, thereby providing insight into how to best match prospective employees with hiring organizations.

While this study contributed to the literature on job satisfaction for midlevel managers in student affairs, there is much more to learn. Further data analysis could be conducted in this study on the fit constructs, to better understand the variance in fit between respondents in this sample. Additional examination should be considered specifically for those variables that were found to be most significant in this study. Gender remains an issue related to job satisfaction that we can better understand. The relationship of student contact hours and professional development support both were significant with job satisfaction outcomes. These could be further examined to better understand the relationship that exists among them.

## **Conclusion**

This study contributes to a very large body of literature related to job satisfaction, but fills a void as it relates specifically to midlevel managers in the student affairs profession. Several relevant findings have been noted for further research and for implementation in

practice. This data also updates several important pieces related to student affairs that are now dated (Bender, 1980; Nestor, 1988). As the higher education industry begins to rebound from the economic turmoil of the last four years, and new methods for delivering course content and cocurricular activities abound, the importance of maintaining satisfaction among our staff ranks and retaining valued employees is greater than ever. To effectively do so, we must invest in our staff, both through professional development opportunities and opportunities for advancement in the organization. We must also realize the role of organizational culture when recruiting and orienting those who we hire. Finally, we must maintain our steadfast commitment to creating environments that support student contact and engagement by our staff. It is the author's hope that this study sparks further inquiry into this important topic and provides some basis for conversation for practitioners in the field.

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## Appendices

# Appendix A

## IRB Approval

North Carolina State University is a land-grant  
university and a constituent institution of the  
University of North Carolina

Office of Research and Innovation  
Division of Research Administration

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

Campus Box 7514  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27695-7514

919.515.2444 (phone)  
919.515.7721 (fax)

From: Deb Paxton, IRB Administrator  
North Carolina State University  
Institutional Review Board

**Date: February 21, 2012**

Title: Examining the Impact of Fit on the Job Satisfaction of Midlevel Managers in  
Student Affairs

IRB#: 2507

Dear Mr. Lombardi,

The research proposal named above has received administrative review and has been approved as exempt from the policy as outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations (Exemption: 46.101. b.2). Provided that the only participation of the subjects is as described in the proposal narrative, this project is exempt from further review.

NOTE:

1. This committee complies with requirements found in Title 45 part 46 of The Code of Federal Regulations. For NCSU projects, the Assurance Number is: FWA00003429.
2. Any changes to the research must be submitted and approved by the IRB prior to implementation.
3. If any unanticipated problems occur, they must be reported to the IRB office within 5 business days.

Please forward a copy of this letter to your faculty sponsor, if applicable.  
Thank you.

Sincerely,



Deb Paxton  
NC State IRB

## **Appendix B**

### **E-mail Invitation**

#### EMAIL INVITATION

Dear Colleague,

I am a doctoral student at North Carolina State University under the direction of Dr. Audrey Jaeger. I am conducting a quantitative research study to better understand the factors that affect job satisfaction for student affairs professionals. Specifically, I am interested in examining the impact of person-organization and person-job fit on job satisfaction.

You have been selected as part of a national sample of student affairs professionals from the NASPA membership. Your participation in this study will be greatly appreciated. It consists of 66 single choice questions and will take approximately 10 minutes. Your responses are anonymous and all answers will be compiled using quantitative survey techniques.

< Insert survey link here >

Should you have any questions or concerns about this study please feel free to contact me or my dissertation advisor (Dr. Audrey Jaeger; 919-515-6240; [audrey\\_jaeger@ncsu.edu](mailto:audrey_jaeger@ncsu.edu)) at any time. Thanks for your time and participation.

Appreciatively,  
Ryan Lombardi  
[rtlombar@ncsu.edu](mailto:rtlombar@ncsu.edu)  
740-416-1151

## Appendix C

### Informed Consent

#### INFORMED CONSENT

This survey is distributed to a sample of student affairs professionals who are members of NASPA. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between person-organization and person-job fit and job satisfaction. Your participation will assist in making recommendations about how to enhance job satisfaction among student affairs professionals.

**We are asking you to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to better understand the factors that affect job satisfaction for student affairs professionals.**

#### INFORMATION

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an online survey comprised of 66 single choice questions which should take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

#### RISKS

Questions in this study include those that assess your satisfaction with aspects of your current job and work organization.

#### BENEFITS

While there is no direct benefit to you for your participation, the results of this study may help to better understand the factors that contribute to job satisfaction for student affairs professionals and may benefit our profession and those who work in it.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

The information in this study will be kept strictly confidential to the extent of the law. While no identifying information is asked of participants, you may feel that some demographic information identifies you. Please be assured that study data will be stored in a secured computer at all times, and research reports will be written in a manner to prevent any possibility for breach of confidentiality.

#### CONTACT

If you have questions at any time about this study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Ryan Lombardi, at [ryan.lombardi@gmail.com](mailto:ryan.lombardi@gmail.com) or 740-416-1151. 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 the North Carolina State Institutional Review Board at 919-515-4514 or 919-515-7515.

#### PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

**CONSENT:** I have read and understand the above information

**Appendix D**  
**Job Satisfaction Survey**

<b>JOB SATISFACTION SURVEY</b> Paul E. Spector Department of Psychology University of South Florida <small>Copyright Paul E. Spector 1994, All rights reserved.</small>							
PLEASE CIRCLE THE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH QUESTION THAT COMES CLOSEST TO REFLECTING YOUR OPINION ABOUT IT.		Disagree very much	Disagree moderately	Disagree slightly	Agree slightly	Agree moderately	Agree very much
1	I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	There is really too little chance for promotion on my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	My supervisor is quite competent in doing his/her job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	I am not satisfied with the benefits I receive.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	When I do a good job, I receive the recognition for it that I should receive.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	Many of our rules and procedures make doing a good job difficult.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	I like the people I work with.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	I sometimes feel my job is meaningless.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9	Communications seem good within this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10	Raises are too few and far between.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11	Those who do well on the job stand a fair chance of being promoted.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12	My supervisor is unfair to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13	The benefits we receive are as good as most other organizations offer.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14	I do not feel that the work I do is appreciated.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15	My efforts to do a good job are seldom blocked by red tape.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16	I find I have to work harder at my job because of the incompetence of people I work with.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17	I like doing the things I do at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18	The goals of this organization are not clear to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6

	PLEASE CIRCLE THE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH QUESTION THAT COMES CLOSEST TO REFLECTING YOUR OPINION ABOUT IT. Copyright Paul E. Spector 1994, All rights reserved.	Disagree very much	Disagree moderately	Disagree slightly	Agree slightly	Agree moderately	Agree very much
19	I feel unappreciated by the organization when I think about what they pay me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20	People get ahead as fast here as they do in other places.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21	My supervisor shows too little interest in the feelings of subordinates.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22	The benefit package we have is equitable.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23	There are few rewards for those who work here.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24	I have too much to do at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25	I enjoy my coworkers.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26	I often feel that I do not know what is going on with the organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27	I feel a sense of pride in doing my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28	I feel satisfied with my chances for salary increases.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29	There are benefits we do not have which we should have.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30	I like my supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31	I have too much paperwork.	1	2	3	4	5	6
32	I don't feel my efforts are rewarded the way they should be.	1	2	3	4	5	6
33	I am satisfied with my chances for promotion.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34	There is too much bickering and fighting at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
35	My job is enjoyable.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36	Work assignments are not fully explained.	1	2	3	4	5	6

## Appendix E

### Survey Instrument

#### SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Gender:

- Male
- Female
- Transgender

Are you of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin?

- No – not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
- Yes

What is your race?

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Other race
- Two or more races

Marital Status:

- Single
- Married/Partnered
- Divorced

Higher Educational Level Attained:

- High School
- Associates
- Bachelors
- Masters
- Doctoral
- Other Terminal Degree (e.g., JD, MD)

Do you have any dependent children in your primary household?

- Yes
- No

Years worked full-time in student affairs: (enter number)

Years in current position: (enter number)

Institutional Type (check all that apply):

- Public 2-year
- Public 4-year
- Private 2-year
- Private 4-year
- Religiously Affiliated
- Historically Black College or University
- Hispanic-serving Institution

Institutional Size (undergraduate FTE):

- < 4,999
- 5,000-9,999
- 10,000-14,999
- 15,000-19,999
- > 20,000

Functional area of current position (select one that most closely matches):

- Academic Advising
- Admissions
- Assessment
- Athletics
- Campus Safety
- Career Development
- Student Unions
- Community Service
- Commuter Services
- Counseling Services
- Dean of Students
- Dining Services
- Disability Services
- Enrollment Management
- Financial Aid
- Fundraising
- Graduate Student Services
- Greek Affairs
- Health Services
- International Student Services
- Judicial Affairs
- Leadership Programs
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Student Services
- Multicultural Student Services
- Orientation Programs
- Recreation Programs
- Religious Programs

- Registration Services
- Residence Life and Housing
- Student Activities
- Student Affairs Administration
- Women's Centers
- Other (not listed)

Position Level (select one that most closely matches):

- Chief Student Affairs Officer
- Senior-level (supervise multiple departments)
- Midlevel (supervise professional staff and have more than 5-years full-time experience in student affairs)
- Entry-level (no professional staff supervision; less than 5-years full-time experience in student affairs)

Average number of direct (e.g., advising, individual meetings, counseling) student contact hours per week:

- 0-4
- 5-9
- 10-14
- 15-19
- 20-24
- > 25

Average level of monetary support for professional development of any kind:

- < \$1,000
- \$1,000-1,999
- \$2,000-2,999
- \$3,000-3,999
- > \$4,000

Please check the one number for each statement below that comes closest to reflecting your opinion about it:

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>Disagree very much</b>	<b>Disagree moderately</b>	<b>Disagree slightly</b>	<b>Agree slightly</b>	<b>Agree moderately</b>	<b>Agree very much</b>
I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do.	1	2	3	4	5	6
There is really too little chance for promotion on my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
My supervisor is quite competent in doing his/her job.	1	2	3	4	5	6

I am not satisfied with the benefits I receive.	1	2	3	4	5	6
When I do a good job, I receive the recognition for it that I should receive.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Many of our rules and procedures make doing a good job difficult.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I like the people I work with.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I sometimes feel my job is meaningless.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Communications seem good within this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Raises are too few and far between.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Those who do well on the job stand a fair chance of being promoted.	1	2	3	4	5	6
My supervisor is unfair to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The benefits we receive are as good as most other organizations offer.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I do not feel that the work I do is appreciated.	1	2	3	4	5	6
My efforts to do a good job are seldom blocked by red tape.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I find I have to work harder at my job because of the incompetence of people I work with.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I like doing the things I do at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The goals of this organization are not clear to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel unappreciated by the organization when I think about what they pay me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
People get ahead as fast here as they do in other places.	1	2	3	4	5	6
My supervisor shows too little interest in the feelings of subordinates.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The benefit package we have is equitable.	1	2	3	4	5	6

There are few rewards for those who work here.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have too much to do at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I enjoy my coworkers.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I often feel that I do not know what is going on with the organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel a sense of pride in doing my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel satisfied with my chances for salary increases.	1	2	3	4	5	6
There are benefits we do not have which we should have.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I like my supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have too much paperwork.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I don't feel my efforts are rewarded the way they should be.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am satisfied with my chances for promotion.	1	2	3	4	5	6
There is too much bickering and fighting at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
My job is enjoyable.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Work assignments are not fully explained.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Please check the one number for each question below that comes closest to reflecting your opinion about it:

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
	<b>To a very little extent</b>	<b>To a little extent</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>To a large extent</b>	<b>To a very large extent</b>
To what extent do your knowledge, skills, and abilities match the requirements of the job?					1 2 3 4 5
To what extent does the job fulfill your needs?					1 2 3 4 5

To what extent does the job enable you to do the type of work you want to do? 1 2 3 4 5

To what extent is the job a good match for you? 1 2 3 4 5

To what extent are the values of the organization similar to your own values? 1 2 3 4 5

To what extent does your personality match the personality or image of the organization? 1 2 3 4 5

To what extent does the organization fulfill your needs? 1 2 3 4 5

To what extent is the organization a good match for you? 1 2 3 4 5

## Appendix F

### Job Satisfaction Survey Results

#### *Mean Job Satisfaction Scores by Gender*

<u>Job Satisfaction Variable</u>	<u>Gender</u>		
	<u>Female</u> <u>(N=521)</u>	<u>Male</u> <u>(N=321)</u>	<u>Transgender</u> <u>(N=2)</u>
Overall job satisfaction	4.06	4.06	3.92
Pay	3.35	3.53	2.38
Promotion	3.07	3.16	3.25
Supervision	4.85	4.95	5.38
Benefits	4.22	4.16	4.13
Rewards	3.95	3.98	3.88
Conditions	3.32	3.25	2.88
Coworkers	4.65	4.55	5.25
Work	5.08	4.95	4.88
Communication	3.96	3.99	3.25

*Mean Job Satisfaction Scores by Race/Ethnicity*

<u>Job Satisfaction Variable</u>	<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>				
	<u>Hispanic/Latino (N=91)</u>	<u>White (N=602)</u>	<u>Black/ African- American (N=101)</u>	<u>Asian (N=18)</u>	<u>2 or more (N=17)</u>
Overall satisfaction	4.06	4.07	3.96	4.08	4.08
Pay	3.44	3.43	3.27	3.24	3.62
Promotion	3.10	3.13	3.04	2.83	2.93
Supervision	4.64	4.94	4.88	4.72	4.82
Benefits	4.30	4.21	3.91	4.67	4.49
Rewards	3.99	3.97	3.79	4.01	3.90
Conditions	3.22	3.30	3.37	3.35	3.19
Coworkers	4.68	4.63	4.45	4.36	4.79
Work	5.08	5.02	4.96	5.29	5.10
Communication	4.02	3.99	3.85	4.15	3.85

*Mean Job Satisfaction Scores by Marital Status*

<u>Job Satisfaction Variable</u>	<u>Marital Status</u>		
	<u>Single (N=240)</u>	<u>Married/ Partnered (N=558)</u>	<u>Divorced (N=42)</u>
Overall job satisfaction	4.06	4.06	3.95
Pay	3.46	3.43	2.97
Promotion	3.10	3.12	2.93
Supervision	5.01	4.84	4.83
Benefits	4.20	4.23	3.85
Rewards	3.96	3.96	3.82
Conditions	3.21	3.33	3.26
Coworkers	4.60	4.60	4.68
Work	4.95	5.05	5.10
Communication	3.99	3.96	4.08

*Mean Job Satisfaction Scores by Highest Educational Level Attained*

<u>Job Satisfaction Variable</u>	<u>Highest Educational Level Attained</u>			
	<u>Bachelor's (N=26)</u>	<u>Master's (N=570)</u>	<u>Doctoral (N=233)</u>	<u>Other Terminal (N=10)</u>
Overall satisfaction	3.85	4.02	4.16	4.17
Pay	3.01	3.37	3.56	3.55
Promotion	3.00	3.10	3.12	3.50
Supervision	4.51	4.87	4.98	5.03
Benefits	4.15	4.16	4.31	4.40
Rewards	3.64	3.92	4.09	4.03
Conditions	3.04	3.25	3.40	3.18
Coworkers	4.49	4.58	4.68	4.65
Work	4.99	4.98	5.13	5.35
Communication	3.80	3.90	4.16	3.88

*Mean Job Satisfaction Scores by Dependent Children*

<u>Job Satisfaction Variable</u>	<u>Dependent Children</u>	
	<u>No (N=497)</u>	<u>Yes (N=346)</u>
Overall satisfaction	4.05	4.07
Pay	3.43	3.39
Promotion	3.11	3.10
Supervision	4.92	4.84
Benefits	4.21	4.19
Rewards	3.95	3.96
Conditions	3.24	3.36
Coworkers	4.56	4.67
Work	4.99	5.08
Communication	3.94	4.01

*Mean Job Satisfaction Scores by Size of Current Institution (Undergraduate FTE)*

	Undergraduate FTE of Current Institution				
	<4,999	5,000–9,999	10,000–14,999	15,000–19,999	>20,000
<u>Job Satisfaction Variable</u>	<u>(N=205)</u>	<u>(N=136)</u>	<u>(N=118)</u>	<u>(N=91)</u>	<u>(N=291)</u>
Overall satisfaction	4.02	3.98	4.18	4.02	4.08
Pay	3.31	3.65	3.67	3.34	3.30
Promotion	3.05	2.96	3.17	3.13	3.18
Supervision	4.92	4.70	4.98	4.83	4.92
Benefits	3.99	4.15	4.40	4.19	4.30
Rewards	3.90	3.90	4.09	3.88	3.99
Conditions	3.33	3.18	3.45	3.16	3.29
Coworkers	4.64	4.47	4.63	4.64	4.63
Work	5.05	4.93	5.11	5.04	5.03
Communication	3.93	3.85	4.03	3.89	4.06

*Mean Job Satisfaction Scores by Student Contact Hours*

<u>Job Satisfaction Variable</u>	<u>Student Contact Hours Per Week</u>					
	<u>0-4 (N=205)</u>	<u>5-9 (N=223)</u>	<u>10-14 (N=142)</u>	<u>15-19 (N=100)</u>	<u>20-24 (N=80)</u>	<u>&gt;25 (N=94)</u>
Overall satisfaction	4.20	4.11	3.99	4.02	3.92	3.90
Pay	3.78	3.48	3.31	3.23	3.12	3.07
Promotion	3.30	3.09	3.13	3.19	2.82	2.88
Supervision	4.90	5.01	4.85	4.81	4.72	4.86
Benefits	4.36	4.23	4.16	4.03	4.11	4.06
Rewards	4.23	4.02	3.85	3.86	3.79	3.64
Conditions	3.46	3.32	3.12	3.27	3.19	3.22
Coworkers	4.64	4.71	4.59	4.53	4.60	4.44
Work	4.94	5.07	4.96	5.18	4.97	5.11
Communication	4.13	4.01	3.89	4.00	3.86	3.76

*Mean Job Satisfaction Scores by Monetary Support for Professional Development*

<u>Job Satisfaction Variable</u>	<u>Monetary Support for Professional Development</u>				
	<u>&lt; \$1,000</u> <u>(N=146)</u>	<u>\$1,000-</u> <u>\$1,999</u> <u>(N=284)</u>	<u>\$2,000-</u> <u>\$2,999</u> <u>(N=225)</u>	<u>\$3,000-</u> <u>\$3,999</u> <u>(N=96)</u>	<u>&gt; \$4,000</u> <u>(N=93)</u>
Overall satisfaction	3.84	3.94	4.19	4.23	4.26
Pay	2.99	3.32	3.55	3.78	3.68
Promotion	2.74	2.97	3.23	3.49	3.42
Supervision	4.77	4.78	5.02	5.03	4.92
Benefits	4.10	4.16	4.22	4.25	4.37
Rewards	3.62	3.81	4.09	4.27	4.30
Conditions	3.23	3.15	3.44	3.39	3.36
Coworkers	4.46	4.53	4.78	4.61	4.65
Work	4.83	4.88	5.21	5.03	5.35
Communication	3.80	3.79	4.11	4.14	4.27