ABSTRACT

PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF STUDENT CONDUCT ADMINISTRATORS

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The functions of a Student Conduct Administrator (SCA) have existed on college campuses since the first institutions of higher education were established. Colleges and universities now employ specialized staff members to fulfill this role. The fundamentals of the position have changed only minimally over the years, but these responsibilities continue to become more complex. The question to be answered is whether or not the practice of student conduct administration constitutes a profession. If student conduct administration qualifies as a profession, SCAs hold a specific professional identity. This project provides the results of a national survey of SCAs who described how they stay up-to-date on current trends and topics within the field of student conduct, identify necessary skills to perform the position above and beyond those skill levels of the general public, and describe any specialized training SCAs need to function in the position. This dissertation used a combined method of quantitative and qualitative methodology. A survey instrument was created and distributed to all members of the Association for Student Conduct Administration. Results were tabulated using SPSS v. 22, including correlation, ANOVA, and Multiple Linear Regression. The results indicated statistical significance for each of the research areas of the study.
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PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF STUDENT CONDUCT ADMINISTRATORS

BY

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction and Background

Student conduct administrators (SCAs) at institutions of higher education work both proactively and reactively to educate students about their choices and foster responsible citizenship (Dannells, 1998; Rudolph, 1962; Stoner II & Lowery, 2004; Waller, 2013). This education takes several forms, both individually, as the SCA investigates an alleged violation, or in a group format, such as during a presentation. Different institutions provide different levels of proactive and reactive education to students based on the number of conduct incidents and level of staffing at the institution (Waryold & Lancaster, 2013). If an institution experiences an increase in the reported number of alleged violations, education most likely will be focused on an individual level. Group presentations may help to remedy systemic problems and behaviors occurring on or off campus (Waryold & Lancaster, 2013).

Because some institutions experience an increase in the number of reported alleged violations, the functions performed by today’s SCA bear only minimal resemblance to the functions performed by an SCA in the early days of higher education (Stoner II & Lowery, 2004). An SCA functioning in the field of higher education today is an educator, not strictly a disciplinarian, as the SCA was in the time of the colonial colleges (Association for Student Conduct Administration, 2012; Rudolph, 1962; Stoner II & Lowery, 2004; Waller, 2013). There is more than simply meting out punishment for conduct violations; today, SCAs conduct
investigations, dialogue with all involved parties, and construct intentional and educational sanctions for infractions of the student code of conduct and other institutional policy violations by students (Association for Student Conduct Administration, 2012; Rudolph, 1962; Stoner II & Lowery, 2004; Waller, 2013). Additionally, the complexity of student conduct violations has increased over time.

Early SCAs adjudicated a limited range of conduct violations; today’s student code violations can involve elaborate academic misconduct violations. These may include students gaining electronic access to examination answers and distributing the answers to an entire class, investigations into sexual assault or other criminal activity, as it relates to a student code violation, and other very intricate violations (National Center for Higher Education Risk Management, 2014). To be an effective SCA in today’s higher education environment, it is necessary for the SCA to possess a multitude of skills and to be adept at utilizing these skills when investigating and adjudicating a specific incident (Dowd, 2012; Waller, 2013). The demands of the position can be intense. Investigating and adjudicating incidents complex in nature and sometimes highly personal can take an emotional toll on the SCA (ASCA, 1993). Today’s fast-paced and highly collaborative, higher education environment requires SCAs to have specialized skills and training in order to carry out the position responsibilities (Stoner II & Lowery, 2004).

These specialized skills and training are necessary in order for the field to be considered a profession, in keeping with the definition and 10 criteria Horton laid out in 1944. Since the 1950s, researchers, including Wrenn and Darley (1950) and Rickard (1988), examined whether or not the field of student affairs, in general, meets these 10 criteria. Based on the current
literature and data available, the field of student conduct clearly meets seven of the 10 criteria. It remains to be seen whether the field of student conduct administration now meets the final three criteria.

If the field of student conduct can be considered a profession, ergo SCAs, as individuals, ascribing to the profession, have identity (Rickard, 1988; Wrenn & Darley, 1950). The concept of professional identity is fluid, and as the profession and professional responsibilities of a position change, so may what a professional attributes to the makeup of his or her professional identity. Prosek and Hurt (2014) assert that this notion of professional identity fluidity is true of all professions. To date, no research has been conducted on the professional identity of the SCA; therefore, this research project is important. This project is designed to prove or disprove whether or not the field of student conduct meets the last three criteria laid out by Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950).

Exploring the construct of SCA professional identity is timely, given the level of scrutiny student conduct professionals experience by legislators and the parents of enrolled students (Kelderman, 2015a). The current level of professional scrutiny is the product of the assumptions of legislators and the public that SCAs fail to provide a fundamentally fair process for involved parties, especially in the area of student sexual assault (Kelderman, 2015b; U.S. Department of Education, 2011). If the public and legislators better understand how SCAs function professionally, it may be possible to provide evidence that the process has clarity and that legislation or regulations are not needed. SCAs provide a valuable service for students and the institution as a whole, by providing a fair process by which to resolve student code violations in
an educational way that upholds the institutional mission and vision (Gehring, 2006; Waller, 2013).

For many students, college provides the first opportunity for young adults to live on their own away from their families (Rudolph, 1962). During the college years, students find themselves exposed to unfamiliar situations both within and outside the classroom. As part of the learning process and for the safety of the community, an institution establishes rules identifying acceptable behavior and actions. SCAs interpret and enforce institutional rules, as SCAs address student behavior in what may be a new situation for a student (ASCA, 1993; Waller, 2013). An effective SCA is an educator: “[SCAs] shall make every effort to balance the developmental and educational needs of the student with the obligation of the institution to protect the safety and welfare of the academic community” (ASCA, 1993, p. 1). The functions of the SCA position form the basis of SCA professional identity.

Student Conduct Administrator Professional Identity

The concept of professional identity has been acknowledged and examined in many fields, such as the trade crafts, primary and secondary education, counseling, and student affairs (Bodman, Taylor & Morris, 2012; Rickard, 1988; Williams, 1988; Young, 1985). Due to the diverse nature of professional fields, there is no universal definition of the construct of professional identity. Individual researchers have examined and attempted to identify various components that make up the construct of professional identity (Bodman et al., 2012; Prosek & Hurt, 2014; Williams, 1988; Wrenn & Darley, 1950; Young, 1985). Another researcher looked tangentially at the construct of professional identity of student affairs personnel (Rickard, 1985a, 1985b, 1988). According to Rickard (1988), professional identity is primarily constructed based
on sociological criteria of the profession. This construct is defined differently based on the profession or the group being discussed. Counselor educators Prosek and Hurt (2014) identified common elements among the various definitions, including differences based on the group, job requirements, and choices made in a professional capacity. Rickard (1988), a student affairs professional, provided a figurative model of the various components of a professional paradigm, complete with various examples within the five layers of the construct. These layers included “foci,” “roles,” “skills,” “disciplines/professions,” “models & theories,” and “functional areas” (p. 391). Bodman et al. (2012) further added to this definition by noting that professional identity may be influenced by legislation and politics.

Wrenn and Darley’s (1950) definition of a student affairs profession is the most appropriate description to use to set up a research problem regarding professional identity. The term “professional identity” is not defined by any single attribute of a profession. It is the sum of all professional aspects that comprise the professional identity in a given profession (Bodman et al., 2012; Prosek & Hurt, 2004; Rickard, 1985a, 1988). As an example, counselors’ behavior is guided by their code of ethics (Corey, Corey & Callanan, 2007). However, there is more to being a counselor than just making ethical decisions. Counselors rely on knowledge of theory, application of theory, and other skills to appropriately and effectively perform the function of a counselor. Professional identity is comprised of the performance of the role, taking into account all of the aspects of the position (Prosek & Hurt, 2004). There is an assumption that the professional identity of SCAs is embedded within the concept of professional identity of the entire student affairs profession (Komives & Associates, 2003; Waller, 2013). This study defines
the concept of SCA professional identity more narrowly, specifically, in relation to training
sessions attended, staying up-to-date, and specialized skills possessed by SCAs.

The literature base for student conduct administration does not include existing research
specifically addressing professional identity of SCAs. Given the dynamic nature of the definition
of the term “professional identity” and the fact that there is currently no research on this
construct for student conduct administration, this study is designed to determine if the field of
student conduct meets all 10 of Horton’s (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950) criteria of
what constitutes a profession.

Professional identity provides the basis for defining professionals in any given field, who
they are, what they do, why they perform that line of work (Bodman et al., 2012; Cutler, 2003;
Rickard, 1988). Professional identity gives credence to the professionals who operate in a
specific field (Shores, 2011). For the purpose of this study, the term “professional identity” is
defined as a latent construct comprised of the following variables: staying current on trends and
issues in the field of student conduct, possessing skills not routinely held by the general public,
and receiving specialized training in the field of student conduct. Professional identity is
measured if statistical significance is found in any of the variables identified that create this
latent construct.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is empirical evidence to support the
statement that the field of student conduct now meets the final two criteria described by Horton
(1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950) as necessary qualities of a profession. Currently,
literature exists to confirm that eight of the 10 criteria have been met. This study specifically
focused on the two remaining criteria. Additionally, the study will also confirm whether the literature that supports whether or not the field meets the criteria about the possession of specialized skills, not possessed by the general public is still accurate (Waller, 2013).

This study serves an important need in that it will contribute to the existing literature regarding professional identity within the overarching field of student affairs. Understanding the SCA professional identity will better define SCAs as professionals and lead to a better understanding of the student conduct system (ASCA, 1993; Gehring, 2006; Wrenn & Darley, 1950). Identifying whether the field of student conduct meets all 10 criteria as laid out by Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950) in this time of heightened scrutiny of the field of student conduct may provide greater credibility to SCAs as they provide input on proposed changes affecting their environment (Bodman et al., 2012). The purpose of this study is strategically situated within academic research, specifically in the niche of student affairs.

Location of the Study within Academic Research

This study falls within the field of higher education, specifically within student affairs and student conduct. This researcher sought to extend the extant body of literature within this area by filling in gaps identified by previous researchers (Horton, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950; Rickard, 1988; Wrenn & Darley, 1949). None of these previous scholars specifically addressed the concept of professional identity in the field of student conduct in their research.

Problem Statement

A current issue in the field of student conduct administration is a lack of information regarding the professional identity of the SCA. A partial factor contributing to the paucity of
research in this area is the absence of existing empirical evidence that definitively determines whether or not the role of student conduct administrators can be classified as a true profession. The defining criteria are the 10 characteristics laid out by Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950). The available research addressing professional identity identifies different definitions and components of the construct of professional identity (Bodman et al., 2012; Cutler, 2003; Prosek & Hurt, 2014; Rickard, 1988; Shores, 2011). In order to fill the gap in the literature left by previous researchers, the researcher designed this study to explore the following three criteria: any special training required for individuals who serve as SCAs; any unique skills that SCAs possess; and the methods by which SCAs stay current on evolving issues in the field. This study focused on finding the answers to the following research questions.

Research Questions

This study addressed the following questions:

1. Is there a relationship between the level of importance of specialized training for SCAs and frequency of participation in training, controlled for the number of times that an SCA wanted to attend a training session, but was unable to attend?

2. Is there a relationship between the level of importance of remaining up-to-date on evolving issues and trends in the field for SCAs and frequency in engagement in related activities?

3. Is there a difference in the beliefs of SCAs about the necessity of specialized skills sets based on the number of years in the profession of student conduct?

4. Do the factors of participation in training outside of that provided by the institution, such as orientation, staying up-to-date on relevant trends and topics in the field of student
conduct, and possession of relevant skills not possessed by the general public, predict professional identity of the student conduct administrator?

Importance versus Value

The researcher chose to use the term “importance” instead of “value” in the research questions. The two terms are not synonymous. The term “importance” is used for two reasons. The first reason relates to the current literature base. In many of the studies specifically highlighting attributes of student conduct work, the term “important” or “importance” was used (Dowd, 2012; Hyde, 2014; McNair, 2013; Mikus, 2014; Waller, 2013; Wannamaker, 2005). Therefore, using the term “importance” in this study makes it consistent with previously published literature. The second reason relates to the definition of the term. The term “importance” denotes a hierarchy. Something may have value, but might be more or less important than another item, object, piece of information, etc. Using this terminology for the research questions provides consistency within the research; the results of this study extend the literature base in the field of student conduct by providing the answers necessary to determine whether the final three criteria necessary for consideration as a profession are present for contemporary student conduct administrators.

Significance of the Study

This study has significance across multiple platforms. It provides a base of literature on the topic of SCAs and professional identity. Additionally, the study provides information to legislators and university administrators about how professionals within the field of student conduct carry out an essential function of the position. Additional research is required in this field for the purpose of providing empirical data on the concept of professional identity for
SCAs. The main difference between this study and previous research studies on the topic is that this study introduces the concept of professional identity as an SCA. The functions performed by SCAs vary by institution. Different institutional guidelines identify different ways to resolve student conduct matters.

This study was timely and much needed. The study fits within currently established and published research, yet this study breaks new ground by focusing on the profession of and the professional identity of SCAs. This study’s focus is on whether or not the profession of student conduct fits into Horton’s (1944, as cited in Wrenn in Darley, 1950) profession criteria, as well as looking at the professional identity of SCAs. The dissertation’s conceptual framework is provided is discussed below.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is typically used to frame a research phenomenon through a particular lens. While there are many theories relating to administration in academia, none of them easily lend themselves to the purpose of this study. Student conduct administration is one form of institutional administration (Gehring, 2006; Stoner II & Lowery, 2004). Because of the role of the SCA within the parameters of this study (functioning as an administrator), this role precludes the use of adult education and student development theories as applicable as a theoretical framework. Theories from adult education include experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) and self-directed learning (Knowles, 1984). Theories from student development include Chickering’s (1969) seven vectors, Kohlberg’s (1958) moral development, and Cross’s (1990) theory of nigressance. SCAs do not function primarily as counselors in their role, thus precluding counseling theories as appropriate for a theoretical framework. The researcher is therefore not
utilizing one particular theory as the conceptual framework for this study because there is no specific theory that addresses decision making and professional identity relating specifically to SCAs. Theories from adult and higher education, as well as from sociology, all have a relationship to the field of student conduct (Dowd, 2012; Hyde, 2014; McNair, 2013; Mikus, 2014; Waller, 2013; Wannamaker, 2005). It is necessary to understand how various terms are defined to be able to conceptualize the study.

Definitions

SCA: For the purpose of this study, an SCA is anyone who has any responsibility for investigating and adjudicating matters of student conduct.

Professional Identity: The term “professional identity” is a latent construct comprised of the following variables: institutional factors (written documentation, verbal information, electronic information, institutional policy, type of violation allegedly committed, and prior student conduct history), theory (student development, adult development, and counseling), personal factors (religion, ethics, race, ethnicity, and credibility), and environmental factors (federal law, state law, court cases) (Prosek & Hurt, 2014; Rickard, 1985a, 1985b, 1988; Waller, 2013; Wrenn & Darley, 1950; Young, 1985).

Organization of the Study

This chapter introduced the concept of professional identity and also provided the purpose and significance of the study. The next chapter provides a synthesis of the literature currently available on Horton’s (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950) criteria outlining the necessities of a profession, as well as additional literature on the topic of professional identity.
Chapter 3 provides an in-depth description of the variables and methodology this study will utilize to gather the information, as well as provide several hypotheses the data produced from this study may be able to answer. Chapter 4 provides the results of the study, and Chapter 5 provides implications and thoughts regarding further research.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

SCAs perform a very demanding and critical function at institutions of higher education (Stoner II & Lowery, 2004; Waller, 2013). An effective SCA is a disciplined professional who follows institutional protocol, is ethical, and treats students in a fair and just manner (ASCA, 1993). According to the definition of a profession as set forth by Horton and Wrenn and Darley (1950), it seems apparent that student conduct administration should be considered a profession in itself. However, there is still concern, evidenced by Rickard (1988), that a lack of professional identity exists within the field of student affairs. Where the profession falls short of the outlined criteria provided by Wrenn and Darley (1950) forms the basis of this study and begins to define SCA professional identity.

Scholars have published research regarding the field of student conduct and SCAs as they relate to decision factors (Dowd, 2012; Hyde, 2014; Waller, 2013; Wannamaker, 2005). There is, however, currently no specific research on the professional identity of SCAs. The Board of Directors of the Association for Student Conduct Administration (ASCA) (2014) called on institutions and SCAs to gather and publish data regarding what an institution does to train its student conduct personnel, investigators, and adjudicators, and highlight what factors are considered when decisions are made. This call for data supports the field of student conduct in further defining itself as a profession and forms a base to help define SCA professional identity.
In addition to the professional association’s call for more data, scholars from within the field of student conduct identified specific areas in which further research and data were needed. This study is timely and provided data to extend the literature base to include the professional identity of the SCA (Dowd, 2012; Hyde, 2014; Waller, 2013; Wannamaker, 2005). Previous research had a limited focus of only one or two factors considered by SCAs in a given study (Dowd, 2012; Hyde, 2014; Waller, 2013; Wannamaker, 2005). It is critical that SCAs clearly articulate how their decisions are rendered, so that institutions have a clear understanding of how a student conduct process truly functions, and so that best practices can be developed based on actual data rather than inferences and conjecture. This data sets a base for SCA professional identity because this is a major component of the SCA function (ASCA, 1993). As a starting point for this literature review, it is appropriate to review prior research in the field of student conduct administration.

Prior Research Regarding Student Conduct Administration

The literature in the field on decision-making factors is extensive. Researchers from many fields and disciplines have conducted research adding individual and organizational decision-making factors. Examples of fields and disciplines which provide literature on decision making include counseling, education, legal affairs, and student affairs (Corey et al., 2007; George & Epstein, 1992; Waller, 2013; Wasby, 1988, as cited in George & Epstein, 1992). The primary role of an SCA is to make decisions about a student’s behavior as it relates to institutional policy and to issue sanctions for any violations. Narrowing down the topic to decision making and the unique factors considered by SCAs in the decision-making process limits the quantity of published research. Only a limited number of researchers have conducted
research specifically addressing the topic of factors considered by SCAs in decision making. Specifically, Dowd (2012), Hyde (2014), McNair (2013), Mikus (2014), Waller (2013), and Wannamaker (2005) have published research addressing this topic. Because these previous studies did not consider large sets of potential factors utilized in the process, there is a gap in the literature.

In addition, none of the existing studies included any mention of the concept of professional identity among SCAs. However, literature on the topic of professional identity specifically addressing the field of student affairs and related fields does exist (Horton, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950; Prosek & Hurt, 2014; Rickard, 1988; Wrenn & Darley, 1950). The absence of research on the topic of SCA professional identity creates a gap in the literature, which made this study timely.

While there is minimal research addressing the factors SCAs consider in the decision-making process, decisions at institutions of higher education are typically data driven (Komives, Woodward, & Associates, 2003). This same premise can be applied to the field of student conduct. It is necessary for SCAs to have data to “tell the story of student conduct” (Association for Student Conduct Administration, 2014). SCAs must be able to articulate to multiple constituencies how and why they perform their function. When an SCA takes a position on a particular issue, the position holds more weight if it is supported by empirical evidence. Therefore, it is advisable for an SCA to have data to support the articulation of his or her position (ASCA, 2012).

The factors that the decision-maker considers may be influenced by the person or people impacted by the decision (Gadomski, 2006). There are times when those impacted by the
decision want the decision maker to consider particular factors which may or may not be part of the decision maker’s reasoning process. One of the goals of this study is to attempt to identify the factors that are the most commonly included in an SCA’s reasoning process when determining sanctions for a student found in violation of institutional policy.

The following gaps exist in the literature. Waller (2013) identified the need for further research on SCA “decision-making” (p. 48). Waller (2013) identified the need for further research at “smaller public institutions, private institutions and community colleges” (p. 126). Also, Dowd (2012) suggested further research in the area of decision-making within a theoretical framework. These gaps reflect a paucity of research on decision-making factors of SCAs. This study contributed to the research in each of these areas, by surveying a national sample of participants, incorporating each type of educational institution, and focusing questions on specific topics identified by previous scholars addressing the concept of professional identity for SCAs. It is thus necessary to define the concept of professional identity, specifically as it relates to the SCA.

The Concept of Professional Identity

The field of student affairs has struggled to define itself since it was first identified as a profession in the 1930s (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators [NASPA], 1987; Rudolph, 1962). In the ever-changing landscape of higher education, student affairs units continue to transform and develop to meet changing demands (NASPA, 1987). This study was designed to assess the status of student conduct administration as an independent profession by weighing the characteristics of the job field against the 10 characteristics of a profession, as outlined by Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950).
The concept of professional identity is defined differently based on the profession or the group discussed. Examples of researched professional identity include, examining how professional network with each other and how professionals use theory (Prosek and Hurt, 2014; Rickard, 1988). Prosek and Hurt (2014) corroborated that while there is no universal definition of the term, there are common elements among the various definitions. Researchers have explored the concept of professional identity using graduate students through seasoned professionals. Prosek and Hurt (2014) are counselor educators. Tracey, Hutchinson, and Grzebyk (2014), also counselor educators, defined the term as the manner by which graduate students “examine, integrate and analyze their beliefs, knowledge, and experiences” (p. 329). One of the ways that SCAs seek to establish a professional identity is by distinguishing their work from other professionals.

Professional Distinction

In most higher education institutions, the student conduct office or individuals with SCA responsibilities have their reporting chain within the Student Affairs division (Komives et al., 2003). There are two flagship student affairs professional associations, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), and American College Educators International (ACPA). Both NASPA and ACPA have committees or commissions dedicated to providing resources and networking for SCAs (ACPA, 2016; NASPA, 2016). Both “umbrella” student affairs professional organizations provide exceptional resources to their members in a variety of areas, not just student conduct, including training, programming, and advocacy, to name a few (ACPA, 2016; NASPA, 2016).
There are many stand-alone professional organizations for student affairs departments. Some of these stand-alone organizations include NIRSA, which addresses intramural sports and recreation; NODA, which focuses on orientation; and ACUHO-I, which is the professional association for Housing & Residence Life personnel. These are just a few of the better-known organizations within the field of student affairs. Professional organizations that specialize in a particular practice are known for providing more in-depth resources to members who specialize in that practice (Komives et al., 2003). The founder of the Association for Student Judicial Affairs (ASJA; now Association for Student Conduct Administration, or ASCA) recognized a niche for individuals who practice and hold SCA responsibilities. Gehring (2006) founded ASJA with the intent of providing a professional organization which served SCAs (ASCA, 1993). ASCA touts itself as “premier authority in higher education for student conduct administration and conflict resolution” (ASCA, 2012, p. 1). Neither of the “umbrella” student affairs associations make similar claims about student conduct. Joining ASCA is one of the means by which SCAs set themselves apart in terms of professional identity. In order to have professional identity, there has to be a recognized profession (Wrenn & Darley, 1950).

Identification of a Profession

The researcher acknowledges that at the time Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950) developed the 10 criteria, the state of higher education differed from today. The mid-1940s was the infancy of the field of student affairs (NASPA, 1987). Today, student affairs is an established profession (Komives et al., 2003). The researcher argues that even though the criteria set of interest has been in existence for approximately seven decades, the criteria are still relevant to the field of student affairs today. A search of the literature on any of the criteria yields a dearth
of articles and research related to student affairs with current publication dates. For example, as cited in this literature review, Amada (1992), Gehring (2006), and June (2014) each identify an aspect of the 10 criteria from Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950). In order to determine whether or not the field and practice of student conduct administration can be considered a unique profession it is necessary to identify appropriate criteria on which to investigate its status. Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950) provided the following 10 criteria for determining the existence of a profession:

1. A profession must satisfy an indispensible social need and be based upon well-established and socially accepted scientific principles.
2. It must demand adequate pre-professional and cultural training.
3. It must demand the possession of a body of specialized and systematized knowledge.
4. It must give evidence of needed skills which the general public does not possess…
5. It must have developed a scientific technique which is the result of tested experience.
6. It must require the exercise of discretion and judgment as to the time and manner of the performance of duty…
7. It must be a type of beneficial work, the result of which is not subject to standardization in terms of unit performance or time element.
8. It must have a group consciousness designed to extend scientific knowledge in a technical language.
9. It must have sufficient self-impelling power to retain its members throughout life, i.e., it must not be used as a mere steppingstone to other occupations.
10. It must recognize its obligations to society by insisting that its members live up to an established and accepted code of ethics. (Horton, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, p. 265).

Six years later, Wrenn and Darley (1950) considered whether the field of student personnel work, as it was called at the time, constituted a profession, as defined by Horton’s (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950) criteria. Wrenn and Darley (1950) argued that student personnel work, as a whole, was not a profession under the 10 Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950) criteria. However, Wrenn and Darley (1950) evaluated some segments of
student personnel work as coming closer to being considered a profession at that time than others, such as student activities and university housing.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether the field of student conduct administration now meets the criteria outlined by Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950). The 10 criteria are examined throughout the literature review.

Indispensable Social Need and Socially Accepted Scientific Principles (Criterion #1)

Society determined a need for institutions of higher education. Institutions have rules, and someone at the institution must enforce the rules, otherwise institutions would allow all types of behavior. A main responsibility of an SCA is to hold students accountable under the student code of conduct, while another responsibility is to be an educator (ASCA, 2012; Waller, 2013). It is incumbent on an SCA to be proactive in addressing institutional policy violations and ensuring the safety of the university community (Bickel & Lake, 2013; NCHERM, 2014). Many student conduct offices operate according to best practices. The Council for the Advancement of Standards (1986) in effect expanded on Horton’s (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950) criteria and identified further benchmarks that a profession must utilize to operate at best practices level. These benchmarks are set by research and accepted scientific principles.

Specialized and Systematized Knowledge (Criterion #3)

SCAs perform a unique function at an institution. A skilled SCA has knowledge from a variety of fields and combines the knowledge precisely to appropriately and effectively perform the SCA function (Gehring, 2006; Waller, 2013). SCAs incorporate principles from the fields of psychology, sociology, and the law into the execution of their functions (Gehring, 2006; Waller,
Incorporation of the knowledge from these fields, often in precise amounts, creates a specialized and systematized knowledge base which allows for the success of the student in student conduct matters (NCHERM, 2014).

Needed Skills which the General Public Does Not Possess (Criterion #4)

SCAs perform many roles (Bickel & Lake, 2011; Gehring, 2006; Stoner II & Lowery, 2004; Waller, 2013). An effective SCA investigates, adjudicates, and, on occasion, functions as a counselor (Waller, 2013). To be an effective SCA, it is necessary to possess and articulate knowledge, self-confidence, and tact (Waller, 2013; Wannamaker, 2005). While the SCA’s function is to engage in an educational conversation with students, a part of that conversation will most likely include telling students that they have done something wrong by violating a rule. Incorporating education with discipline is not a skill that most of the general public has. One purpose of this study is to determine if there are other skills or skill sets that SCAs possess which are not normally applicable to the general public.

Scientific Technique which is the Result of Tested Experience (Criterion #5)

No two SCAs perform exactly the same way as they carry out their function. The process operates the same way, but the path to get to the outcome is different among institutions and even intra-institutionally between student conduct staff. On its face, it may appear that the field of student conduct does not meet this criterion; however, most SCAs perform by best practice. Best practice is developed by scientific method and is backed up by empirical data (NCHERM, 2014).
Discretion and Judgment as to the Time and Manner of the Performance of Duty (Criterion #6)

Federal and state privacy laws exist to protect individuals involved in student conduct matters (U.S. Congress, 1974). It is a violation of law for SCAs to divulge information outside of some specific parameters, as well as a violation of the ASCA Code of Ethics (ASCA, 1993). Further discretionary authority rests with the SCA who selects appropriate sanctions for a student found responsible for violating institutional policy. Different people learn differently, and one-size-fits-all sanctions are not always the most appropriate educational tool (Komives et al., 2003; NCHERM, 2014; Waller, 2013).

Beneficial Work, the Result of Which is Not Subject to Standardization in Terms of Unit Performance or Time Element (Criterion #7)

SCAs occupy a role that helps to uphold and ensure campus safety (NCHERM, 2014). SCAs hold students accountable and, when necessary, remove from campus those students who do not uphold the student code regulations. By removing those students, SCAs assist in making the campus community safer (ASCA, 1993). The goal of the SCA is to help students learn from their mistakes. Education is a benefit (Gehring, 2006; Waller, 2013; Wannamaker, 2005). The standard of student conduct is to provide an educational opportunity for the student involved in a conduct matter, and to keep the community safe (ASCA, 1993; NCHERM, 2014). Some elements of safety are universal. Every campus, however, does not have the same definition of safety. Therefore, education for students involved in committing an institutional policy violation is not a universal constant. Education thus takes different forms in order to meet this criterion from Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950) it is appropriate for SCAs to treat each
student as an individual when making a decision about appropriate sanctions. The end result of the individual treatment generates beneficial work in which the campus is safe, and the standardization of education for the student is subject only to the individual student.

Group Consciousness (Criterion #8)

As a group, SCAs know the field of student conduct the best of anyone. SCAs have existed since the first institutions of higher education (Rudolph, 1962). In general, however, professionals within the field have not advocated for themselves or the profession as a whole until relatively recently (ASCA, 2014). The professional association (ASCA) and scholars (Dowd, Waller, Wannamaker) have all called for further research on various aspects of the field of student conduct. ASCA, as an association, and individual ASCA members continue to publish scholarly documents and articles for the benefit of the profession and the general public.

Self-impelling Power to Retain its Members throughout Life (Criterion #9)

The Association for Student Conduct Administration was founded in 1989, and today has 2,760 active members (ASCA, 2016a). The Association has consistently grown its membership base since its founding. SCAs recognize the need for a “professional home,” and this is where many of them find it. One aspect that sets ASCA apart from other student conduct organizations and supports the requirement to retain its members is the establishment of the Raymond H. Goldstone Foundation. The foundation’s purpose is to “provide scholarships and opportunities for professionals and graduate students to receive high-quality training at ASCA programs …” (ASCA, 2016b). The continued support of the Goldstone Foundation makes it possible for the Association to retain its members and recruit new members.
The preceding sections discussed the current state of the student conduct profession in relation to Horton’s (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950) criteria. Given the available research, the field of student conduct meets the criteria set forth. There is room for improvement with Criterion #4 (skills not possessed by the general public), which is part of what the researcher seeks to determine in this study. Criteria are important, but are not the only evidence which should be considered when attempting to define professional identity. It is important to relate the concept of professional identity with theory.

Theory Relating to Professional Identity

No specific theory has been posited about professional identity. Scholars researching this topic pick and choose various aspects of established theory and traits (Dollarhide, Gibson, & Moss, 2013). As an example, in counselor education Dollarhide et al. (2013) put together a professional identity model based on qualitative research with counselor education doctoral students. The model proposed by Dollarhide et al. (2013) is not a theory per se. Prosek and Hurt (2014) chose different factors related to theory when discussing professional identity of counselor educators. This concept is not limited to counselor education; student affairs professionals do the same thing, picking and choosing various components of established theories. Rickard (1988) evaluated whether or not the student affairs profession met the criteria proposed by Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950) selected criteria and theories Rickard thought most appropriate.

The closest actual theory about professional identity was presented by Sweitzer (2009) in her article titled “Towards a Theory of Doctoral Student Professional Identity Development: A
Developmental Networks Approach.” Sweitzer uses Social Network Theory as the basis for the importance of networking and building a professional identity in doctoral students.

The functions of student conduct have existed since the first institutions of higher education were established (Komives et al., 2003; Rudolph, 1962). The field of student conduct began to grow its professional roots in the 1930s, after publication of the Student Personnel Point of View and the growth of the Deans of Men and Deans of Women positions (American Council on Education, 1937). The first truly professional organization for student conduct professionals was formed in 1989, the Association for Student Judicial Affairs (ASCA, 1993). Today, based on the available literature, the field of student conduct meets seven of the 10 criteria for a profession as identified by Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950). There is room for this profession to grow, given the deficiencies in the literature. In this study, I seek to expand the literature by addressing these three criteria and closing the gaps. Identification of profession criteria and incorporation of theory are two pieces of the position. The successful and efficient SCA possesses other necessary skills and responsibilities which make the SCA position a hybrid position.

The Student Conduct Administrator: A Hybrid Position

An SCA functions as an investigator, a lawyer, a judge, and sometimes a counselor (Gehring, 2006; Waller, 2013). An effective SCA knows when to switch between these functions when performing position responsibilities. An SCA represents the institution, as campus safety and accountability are pillars of the positional requirements. An SCA makes a decision about whether or not a student is responsible for committing an infraction of institutional policy. With education at the forefront of the SCA’s position, helping students work
through conduct situations often requires the SCA to serve as a counselor. In these ways the SCA position incorporates each of the professional responsibilities of the above listed positions. The ability to know when to perform each function comes with experience, but starts with appropriate training.

Student Conduct Administrator Training

SCAs must be highly trained in order to properly execute the responsibilities of their position (Gehring, 2006; Komives et al., 2003; Rudolph, 1962; Waller, 2013). Gehring (2006) and Waller (2013) outlined several important concepts and skills that an SCA must acquire and operationalize in order to be effective. Each of these provides a basis for an SCA’s professional identity. Once an SCA gains mastery of a skill or competency, it can be personalized to best fit the SCA. It is how the SCA individualizes the application of these skills and concepts that truly forms his or her professional identity (Bodman et al., 2012; Shores, 2011).

An SCA requires a strong understanding of nuance in order to properly execute the responsibilities of the SCA position, regardless of the institutional type. The fundamentals of the student conduct profession have been molded over time through best practices, legislation, and case law (Waller, 2013). There is a fundamental difference in the relationship between an SCA and a student, based on whether or not the institution is public or private; however, the training for an effective SCA remains the same (Gehring, 2006).

An SCA must have knowledge of what “due process” means for students involved in a conduct situation. In Dixon v. Alabama (1961), the court defined “due process” within the higher education environment as “notice and an opportunity to be heard” (p. 5). It should be noted that the concept of due process within a student conduct matter is not the same level of due process
required by the criminal court system (Gehring 2006; Waller, 2013). It is not necessary to have the educational training and credentials of an attorney to function as an SCA, as it is possible to understand the concept of due process as stated in Dixon v. Alabama (1961) without those credentials (Stoner II & Lowery, 2004). Understanding due process as defined in a student conduct matter provides a base for the professional identity of an SCA. The reason for this is because the concept defines a significant component of the environment in which an SCA functions.

Judicial opinions and decisions issued in the 1960s and 1970s identified higher education as a privilege (U.S. District Court for the Western District of Missouri, 1969) and a property right (Goss et al. v. Lopez, 1975). Goss (1975) required that an institution provide due process to a student before removing student status from an enrolled student. The General Order corollary (to a decision rendered by judges in a case) identified specific distinctions between the American criminal justice system and the student discipline system within higher education at publicly supported institutions. The 1969 General Order decision affirmed the notion of and the requirement for due process within the student conduct system, but specifically identified elements which need not be present (U.S. District Court for the Western District of Missouri, 1969). Another skill that an SCA must have knowledge of is investigation of incidents (Gehring, 2006; Waller, 2013).

Investigation

Not all conduct incidents are investigated to the same degree (Association of Title IX Administrators, 2015). The more complex the incident in question is, the more in-depth the investigation undertaken by the SCA (NCHERM, 2014; Waller, 2013). Investigation of
incidents yields information that the SCA may consider when making a decision about responsibility. An SCA who performs a thorough and impartial investigation will ultimately be able to render a fairer decision to all parties involved. The ethical principles put forth by ASCA (2012) and ascribed to by Association members articulate that an SCA render a fair decision. Therefore, if the SCA’s investigatory skills are poor, then it is likely that the final decision rendered may not be fair. Most student conduct systems allow for an appeal process to provide a remedy for a person who believes the SCA’s decision is unfair. This is how the investigatory skills of the SCA tie back to the professional identity of the SCA, through the ethical principles that require fairness in his or her decision.

Another necessary skill an SCA must develop is the ability to effectively sanction in the educational environment for a violation (Danells, 1997; Stoner II & Lowery, 2004; Waller, 2013). It is not always as easy as issuing specific sanctions for a specific violation. It may still be necessary for the SCA to issue customized sanctions to a student found responsible based on the student’s actions within an incident (Danells, 1997; Gehring, 2006). An effective SCA does not function as an automaton, but considers each individual student’s actions within an incident’s context and issues sanctions designed to provide an educational outcome (Danells, 1998; Gehring, 2006; Stoner II & Lowery, 2004; Waller, 2013). As noted earlier, courts have identified higher education as a property right (Goss et al. v. Lopez, 1975). The skills and concepts of due process, investigation, and sanctioning are necessary tools and concepts for the SCA to use in ensuring students continue to be granted this right. Training is another criterion established by Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950). The next section discusses pre-professional and cultural training requirements for SCAs.
Pre-professional and Cultural Training (Criterion #2)

Most SCA positions require a master’s degree and experience. Various SCA positions require specialized training for investigating and responding to incidents covered by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. An understanding of the law and the decision-making process is important to be a successful SCA (Gehring, 2006). Diversity is an important issue at institutions; therefore, administrators at colleges and universities require that SCAs be culturally aware and sensitive (ASCA, 2012). Each year, ASCA sponsors the Donald D. Gehring Training Institute. Faculty teach in one of several tracks. The tracks (Mary Beth Mackin Foundations of Professional Practice, Mid-Level Manager, and Student Conduct Director) provide fundamental training for participants at each of the three levels (ASCA, 2016c). Comprehension and synthesis of the material and topics covered in each of these tracks provide a basis for success by the participating SCA.

Training involves understanding theories that may explain how a student develops and makes decisions in college. Changing college student demographics now require that SCAs understand more than just student development theory. It is now a necessity to understand the expanding field of adult education theory, as many college students are beyond the traditional college age of 24 years (Komives et al., 2003). Training and skills are important and provide a basis for professional identity for all SCAs. The environment in which SCAs function also helps to define professional identity (Dollarhide et al., 2013). To understand the environment, it is important to look at the influence of society on higher education.
The Influence of Society on Higher Education

Institutions of higher education exist because society determined a need for individuals to receive high quality education in order to perform societal, vocational, and professional tasks (Rudolph, 1962). A considerable amount of education takes place within structured primary, secondary, and higher educational institutions. Primary and secondary education has been institutionalized within society. This is a result of the establishment of the Office of Primary and Secondary Education (34 CFR 200.1). Children in the United States under the age of 18 are required to receive educational instruction in specific content areas and meet identified standards established by the federal and various state governments (34 CFR 200).

Through our understanding of societal behavior, laws are established to promote the general welfare (U.S. Constitution, 1787). It is the expectation of society that citizens will observe and obey the laws. Not everyone follows the laws; therefore, it is necessary to have a criminal justice system in place. While the student conduct system is not designed to mimic the criminal justice system directly, it does borrow some of its principles (Danells, 1997; Gehring, 2006; Stoner II & Lowery, 2004). The creation and operation of a student conduct system within higher education is based on the structure of the criminal justice system. Administrators at institutions of higher education understood that if civil society is to have a structure in place to hold citizens accountable in the event that a law is violated, the institution should do the same (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997; Rudolph, 1962). Society’s influence on higher education also manifests itself in how higher education functions; in some ways, higher education is a microcosm of society.
Higher Education is a Microcosm of Society

Institutions of higher education vary in size, including physical land space, enrollment, and staffing. Most institutions have security personnel or sworn law enforcement officers in place. Some institutions even have fire and emergency medical service departments (Komives et al., 2003). Colleges and universities offer counseling services, health services, tutoring services, residential facilities, and food services (Komives et al.; Rudolph, 1962). Institutions tout maintenance crews with every trade represented, all so that the institution can function self-sufficiently for the students, staff, and faculty who work and attend there each day. Given that institutions are patterned on society, the rules and policies that institutions have in place governing student behavior are also patterned on societal law (Dannells, 1997; Dowd, 2012; Hyde, 2014; Justice, 2008; Waller, 2013). Higher education and the practice of student conduct changed over time. In order to understand why SCAs consider the factors which they do today, and how this creates or provides a portion of the the SCA’s professional identity, it is necessary to understand how the higher education landscape changed. The following section discusses the history of higher education within the United States and provides information from the relevant literature on the formation and changes within higher education throughout its history.

The History of Higher Education in the United States

The history of higher education in the United States is full of change (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997; Rudolph, 1962). Colonial colleges were not nearly the complex institutions of today (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997). Colonial colleges followed the European model of higher education, with a limited curriculum. Colonial colleges provided a liberal arts education to colonists of
wealthy means. The curriculum was not as advanced as it is today (Rudolph, 1962). Over time, the number of colleges and universities expanded in the United States, through public support and legislation (Bogue & Aper, 2000; Rudolph, 1962). Over time, the purpose of education shifted and education was made available to more segments of the population and for different reasons, such as learning a trade (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997; Rudolph, 1962). As technology became more advanced and the need for further innovation became necessary, institutions of higher education focused more on research (Rudolph, 1962).

The creation of the research university in Europe and the adoption of the research university within the United States helped to pave the way for the current model of American higher education (Bogue & Aper, 2000). The research university allowed faculty to spend more time focused on research and required that institutions create positions staffed by administrators. The function of these administrators was to look after the students, a function once carried out by faculty (Bogue & Aper, 2000).

The creation of administrative positions at institutions ushered in the birth of the field of student affairs. Separating the history of higher education from the history of student affairs is an almost impossible task (Nuss, 1996). It took time to build to this point; the creation and staffing of these administrative positions, most notably the “Dean” position, was a turning point in shaping the modern American college and university (Rhatigan, 2009).

The positions of Deans of Men and Deans of Women began to emerge at almost all colleges and universities in the early 1900s (Komives et al., 2003; Rudolph, 1962). The purpose of the position was to focus on the non-academic portions of a student’s college experience (Waller, 2013). Specific duties of a Dean of Men included “an emphasis on the welfare of the
whole student, responsibility for student discipline, and a genuine care for offering students advice and support” (Rhatigan, 2009, p. 5).

There have been several notable points in time in the American higher education system that shaped modern higher education, and had an effect on the field of student conduct. Higher education and student conduct do not exist in a vacuum. This review highlights the most salient points related to the history of higher education as a whole, and identifies the turning points relation to student conduct. The history of the field of student conduct is quite specific unto itself.

The History of Higher Education Related to Student Conduct

The way in which an institution operates reflects the results of continued change and interpretation. Initially, institutions operated from a standpoint of *in loco parentis* (Gehring, 2006). This philosophy would change over time and with the intervention of the court system. Institutions tended to govern themselves, and it was not unless something went wrong that the courts or the government stepped in. One of the most notable cases that influenced higher education is *Gott v. Berea College* (1913). In *Gott* (1913), the U.S. Supreme Court effectively ruled in favor of the idea of *in loco parentis*. The court affirmed the idea that an institution should act “in place of the parents” since because the parents did not accompany the students to school. This ruling gave students few constitutional rights when attending college. Institutions became all-powerful and attempted to mold students in the way the institution president and faculty believed fit the ideals of the institution. The Gott decision would remain until 1961, when the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit ruled in opposition to this controlling decision and provided college students more rights.
**Dixon v. Alabama State College** (1961) is an appellate decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals from the 5th Circuit which established the right of students to have “due process” within student conduct hearings. It is a 180-degree shift from *Gott*, because the court mandated in *Dixon* (1961) that college students must be given “notice and an opportunity to be heard” (p. 5). These are not the only court cases to involve higher education, but they are two of the most significant cases that have had a far-reaching impact on shaping higher education and the field of student conduct (Smith, 2005). The court cases and the subsequent laws which usually succeed a court case shape higher education in an attempt to make it fairer or safer for all (Lowery, 2009).

Laws and history are fundamental influences on the current student conduct system. They shaped the conduct system with ideals and practices still in place today. Court cases and legal precedents are not the only influences on today’s student conduct system. If the law provides for education, and institutions are created to encourage student success, it is necessary for institutions to develop rules for students to be successful at the institution (Rudolph, 1962).

Higher education is influenced by and mimics society. The law provides for higher education and, for the most part, trusts institutions of higher education to run autonomously. This literature review has already highlighted some of the similarities in how procedures are completed and functions occur between society and higher education. As previously mentioned, the SCA position is a hybrid, comprised of the functions of several professionals. It is necessary to delve deeper into the criminal justice system to further explain the similarities in the decision-making process within the criminal justice system as it relates to the issuance of sentences for guilty parties and the student conduct system.
Decision Making in the American Criminal Justice System

Literature within the field of legal decision making outlined two predominant models of decision making, the legal model and the extralegal model. Both models have been in use in the United States since the late 1800s (George & Epstein, 1992). The fundamental idea of the legal model is that “judges [are] constrained decision makers who will base their opinions on precedent and will adhere to the doctrine of *stare decisis*” (Wasby [1988], cited in George & Epstein, 1992, p. 324). Gibson (1980) published results of a study in which he developed a representational model of the legal decision. By looking at judicial decisions within a given county in a Midwestern state, Gibson (1980) posited that the legal model would accurately predict the sentences issued by the specific judges for the cases before them. The results of the research proved the hypothesis to be true. Confining decisions to a single factor may limit the ability of the judge to consider other aggravating or mitigating factors in making the decision. Under the doctrine of *stare decisis*, the only way the judge may consider aggravating or mitigating factors is if those factors were part of the precedent-setting case (George & Epstein, 1992). Some refer to this model of decision making as “mechanical jurisprudence” (p. 324).

Further explanation of the legal model of decision making includes “(1) observation of a similarity between cases, (2) announcement of the rule of law inherent in the first case, and (3) application of that rule to the second case” (p. 324). The use of *stare decisis* is expected in the American criminal justice system, as judges routinely see similar types of cases before them, including property crimes, crimes against persons, etc. Sentencing guidelines are built upon the legal model of judicial decision making (Gilman, 2001). The legal model of *stare decisis*,...
however, is not the only model available to judges as they make decisions about criminal defendants; there is another model that may be used.

A second model of decision making within the American criminal justice system is the extralegal model. This model provides for the consideration of multiple factors, not just prior legal precedent (George & Epstein, 1992). In 1881, Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes said, “the life of the law has not been logic; it has been experience” (George & Epstein, 1992, p. 324). This statement exemplifies ways in which judges can consider additional factors of the individual defendant, regardless of precedent. Judges who use the extralegal model of decision making are able to consider aggravating and mitigating factors for each defendant. The extralegal model of decision making is grounded in the psychological theory of behaviorism (George & Epstein, 1992). Gehring (2006) advocated that SCAs consider all factors when making a decision. In this way, Gehring (2006) recommended that an SCA should use the extralegal model when making decisions in a conduct matter.

In an attempt to quantify what is truly a subjective action, decision-making scholars devised mathematical equations that can be used to predict the effectiveness of both the legal and extralegal models and the decision that a judge will reach when using them (George & Epstein, 1992). There is nothing preventing the application of these equations to an SCA’s decision-making process; however, the ultimate goals of the criminal justice system and the student conduct system are different. The equations used in the criminal justice system do not provide enough latitude to factor in the individual student characteristics that SCAs should consider when making a decision in the best educational interests of the accused student and the educational community (Bickel & Lake, 2011; Gehring, 2006; Stoner II & Lowery, 2004). The
use of these equations within the field of student conduct would inhibit the individual attention given to students by SCAs. The equations take into account multiple factors; for example, one of the most researched factors within the criminal justice system is the race of the presiding judge compared to the race of the defendant. Race of the accused student and race of the SCA is important, as that is cited as a factor which may be considered when issuing sanctions (Dowd, 2012).

Race in Decisions

Judges can consider many factors when deciding a case and imposing a sentence. One of the most predominant factors studied is that of race. (Cook (1973), Combes and Gruhl (1988), Crockett (1984), Dixon (1995), Hogarth (1971), Kramer and Steffensmeier (1993), Mann (1993), Welch (1993), and Zatz (1987), as cited in Feld, 1998) all published results of studies on both the race of the judge and the race of the defendant. Researchers explored the actual sentences imposed on defendants by comparing the race of the sentencing judge to the defendant’s race. The studies found that African American judges sanctioned African American defendants more harshly than Caucasian judges for the same crimes (Steffensmeier & Britt, 2001). The similarities between sentencing in the criminal justice system related to race are relevant to the student conduct system in that an SCA functions, in effect, as a judge. Hyde (2014) and Waller (2013) identified race of the accused student and race of the SCA as factors warranting attention in previously published research.

Decision making in the criminal justice system is relevant to the student conduct system because judges make decisions in the criminal justice system about whether or not a defendant is guilty of violating a law. SCAs make decisions about whether or not a student committed a
violation of a Student Code of Conduct. SCAs and judges, however, may use the same decision-making models. Race is an identified factor in both the criminal justice system and the student conduct system (Cook, 1973; Combes and Gruhl, 1988; Crockett, 1984; Dixon, 1995; Hogarth, 1971; Hyde, 2014; Kramer and Steffensmeier, 1993; Mann, 1993; Welch, 1993; Zatz, 1987, as cited in Feld, 1998). Given the shaping role of the criminal justice system on the student conduct system, it is important to understand how the criminal justice system operates in terms of decision making and relevant identified factors. While there are similarities between higher education and the adult criminal justice system, there are also similarities to the juvenile justice system. In fact, given the research about the age at which juveniles physiologically become adults, that which occurs in the juvenile justice system has considerable bearing on the student conduct system within higher education.

Understanding the Juvenile Justice System

Juveniles are not strangers to the criminal justice system. States have different laws and regulations regarding the decision to try and sentence a juvenile as an adult for a criminal act. These laws and regulations vary by state. There is also research regarding the effects of the criminal justice system on juveniles (Feld, 1998; Pyne, 2010). Much of the existing research addressed the sentencing of juveniles. The philosophy of juvenile justice sentencing is based on education and rehabilitation rather than solely punishment, as found in the adult criminal justice system (Feld, 1998). The criminal justice systems for adult and juvenile offenders are different in philosophy and sentencing (Feld, 1998). The philosophy of the juvenile justice system as it relates to sentencing is very much in line with the philosophy of the higher education student conduct system (ASCA, 1993; Feld, 1998; Gehring, 2006; Stoner II & Lowery, 2004; Waller,
The Supreme Court mandated that the adult criminal justice system be separate from the juvenile justice system (McKeiver v. Pennsylvania, 1971). This notion of separation in McKeiver exemplifies and gives credence to the best practices espoused by scholars and the professional organizations in the field of student conduct. While education and rehabilitation is one philosophy used to sentence juveniles, it is not the only way (National Center for Higher Education Risk Management, 2014; Stoner II & Lowery, 2004).

There are two schools of thought when it comes to the sentencing of juveniles (Feld, 1998; Pyne, 2010). The first school involves treatment or less severe sentences of incarceration. The second school involves increased punishment and longer sentences of incarceration (Feld, 1998). The first school advocates benevolence for juvenile offenders. It seeks to provide juvenile offenders guidance and resources to allow for rehabilitation (Feld, 1998). In many states, there are mandatory minimum sentences for juveniles (Feld, 1998). The concept of minimum sanctions for students is a structure used by many institutions, such as Northern Illinois University (2015). The implications of an individual being a first-time offender may also influence the sentence imposed (Pyne, 2010).

Research on the “Principle of the Offense” (Feld, 1998, p. 230) identified the fact that the juvenile offender’s sentence is based on the judge’s interpretation of the facts of the present offense combined with the offender’s prior conviction history (Feld, 1998). When it became apparent that the juvenile offender’s continued behavior warranted more treatment than the court can or will impose, the court tended to favor more severe punishment rather than treatment (Feld, 1998). This is in line with institutions of higher education which also utilize progressive

Research indicates that juvenile offenders within the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom are less likely than juveniles outside of these countries to receive incarceration as a sentence for a juvenile criminal offense (Pyne, 2010; Von Hirsch, 2001). The U.S. Supreme Court determined that juveniles have “diminished culpability” (Pyne, 2010, p. 352) in the case of *Roper v. Simmons* (2005). Researchers conducted studies throughout the world and the results showed empirical evidence that juveniles are seen as less culpable than adults (Feld, 1998; Zimring, 1998, cited in von Hirsch, 2001). Another reason for potentially less incarceration time for juveniles stems from the fact that juveniles are considered “psychologically less resilient” (Von Hirsch, 2001, p. 227) than adults. For a court to impose a sentence involving longer time periods in prison or a youth detention facility would theoretically cause more harm to the juvenile offender. To impose such a harsh penalty would go against empirical research and the philosophy of the juvenile court system (Feld, 1998). Similar to the adult criminal justice system, there are mathematical formulas for predicting whether or not it is advisable to send a juvenile offender to incarceration or provide some other form of treatment (Pyne, 2010). The same reason that the field of student conduct does not use the mathematical equations provided in the adult criminal justice system applies to the mathematical equations provided for in the juvenile justice system.

(2006) suggested that SCAs should keep this concept in mind when determining sanctions for students found responsible for violating a student code of conduct. Research suggested that tolerance should be a consideration in issuing consequences for juveniles (Von Hirsch, 2001). Juveniles and students want to push the boundaries in their environment; and juvenile judges and SCAs are aware of the “pushing the boundaries” concept when they make decisions.

Interpretations of research and court decisions indicate deference in juvenile matters toward a lenient sentence or punishment. This is the argument for leniency within the juvenile justice system. Lenient sentences are only one option for juvenile judges to issue to offenders. The other option is for a juvenile judge to issue a more stringent or harsh sentence to a juvenile offender.

There is an argument and data for more stringent sentencing of juvenile offenders. Woolard, Fondacaro, and Slobogin (2001, p. 13) argued that “[t]he common wisdom in juvenile justice policy is that [the idea of] rehabilitation” is in serious decline. The idea of treating and rehabilitating juveniles instead of incarcerating them in a prison or prison-like system stems from a movement during the 1800s (Feld, 1998). Many states have changed their laws and regulations to mandate more significant incarceration for juvenile offenders (Feld, 1998). Research regarding the developmental differences between adolescents and adults was mostly conducted in contexts outside of the criminal justice system, and therefore may be less than reliable in determining whether or not treatment and rehabilitation is more successful than punitive consequences (Woodward et al., 2004). Lipsey (1992) conducted research that showed a 24% higher recidivism rate for juveniles than their adult counterparts if the juvenile was issued a lenient sentence. The results displayed information that by increasing the harshness of the sentence, juvenile offenders would be less likely to reoffend by almost 25%, if the initial
sentence was harsh. Juveniles may have tested limits, and been caught, resulting in the sentence (Lipsey, 1992).

The concept of harsher sentences is now being applied within higher education to the field of student conduct. The concept of less rehabilitation is paralleled in the new call for action in the oversight and enforcement of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, for gender discrimination offenses, by the U.S. Department of Education (Pavela, 2015). Many institutions set penalties of suspension or expulsion for violations related to offenses covered under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and other serious offenses (NCHERM, 2014; Pavela, 2015). Physiologically and psychologically, juvenile offenders are similar to college students (Feld, 1998; Von Hirsch, 2001). How juvenile judges make decisions regarding juvenile offenders provides context for how an SCA may treat a similar student in the student conduct system with educational sanctions versus more stringent sanctions of suspension or expulsion, especially for a first-time offense (Stoner II & Lowery, 2004; Waller, 2013).

The decision-making factors in the adult and juvenile criminal justice systems have bearing on how SCAs make decisions in student conduct matters. Considering the factors is one piece of the equation. The next logical step is to discuss the environment of the SCA and discuss in detail specific factors found in higher education. These fall into the categories of environmental, institutional, and individual factors.

Environmental Factors

Environmental factors are those factors that impact the SCA in the campus environment. Environmental factors include laws and regulations, as well as controlling court decisions. Environmental factors can be defined in a variety of ways; prior researchers defined factors
differently, according their study (Dowd, 2012; Hyde, 2014; Waller, 2013; Wannamaker, 2005). The researcher for this study will consider the definitions provided in previous research to form the definition of the term “environmental factors” for this study. This review will focus on the environmental factors starting with the factors having the broadest effect, and moving through the environmental factors with the narrowest effect on SCAs.

Federal Legislation, Laws, and Regulations

Legislation has an effect on institutional policies and also the decision making of SCAs (Waller, 2013). Notable legislation such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA), the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), the Jeanne Cleary Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Crime Statistics Act of 1990 (Clery), and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1994 (ADA) have had major effects on the practice of student conduct and the rights enjoyed by students, as well as the policies that students are expected to follow (Lake, 2013; Stoner II & Lowery, 2004). The influence of these laws on decisions and policies varies.

Some laws such as FERPA give students rights in the student conduct process; other laws mandate reporting of particular crimes such as Clery. Congress passed two types of laws: protective policy or redistributive laws (Lowery, 2009). Protective policy laws are designed to protect students from government or institutional overreach, while redistributive laws are designed to level the playing field for all students. The Clery Act is an example of a protective policy law, while the ADA is an example of a redistributive law (Lowery, 2009).

Federal law recognizes the importance of the field of student conduct to higher education, as student conduct is sometimes cited in federal law (S. 590, 2015). In addition to federal
legislation, student conduct is also codified into federal regulations which function as the enforcement pieces of laws which are passed. The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) (1968) specifically cited higher education and touched on the field of student conduct: “Justice is not the concern solely of the courts. Education is equally concerned with achievement of ideal justice” (Waller, 2013, p. 2). The CFR (1968) codified the oversight and enforcement authority of the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR), given to the Department by legislative mandate. Congress passed a bill, the HEA of 1965, which specifically provided oversight authority to the U.S. Department of Education. The codification of that law is enacted through federal regulations that are published in the CFR. OCR is part of a federal agency, not affiliated with the judicial system. Once laws are passed, regulations are created. These regulations provide guidance on what an institution must do to be in compliance with the law (Lowery, 2009). At that point, the legislative effect on campus institutional policy and/or decision making begins. The Clery Act is one example of a law which impacts institutions of higher education, and specifically student conduct.

“The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Crime Statistics Act has drawn both praise and criticism from the higher education community” (Gregory & Janosik, 2003, p. 764). Legislation that imposes reporting requirements and calls for plans and processes to be in place tends to be seen by representatives of institutions of higher education as an unfunded mandate (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). College and university administrators are concerned that these unfunded mandates will monopolize time and resources of the institution and potentially take away from other institutional priorities (Smith, 2005). The consequence for non-compliance with federal laws is a monetary penalty. Institutions of higher
education that do not comply with legislation risk not only a monetary fine, but also risk losing all federal funding issued to them under Title IV of the HEA (1965).

The Clery Act is an example of the way in which federal legislation may affect SCAs and their decision making as well as institutional policy and practices. The Clery Act does not necessarily require an SCA to make a decision about whether or not a student committed a violation in a particular way; however, it does require SCAs to know whether or not a particular incident is classified under the various definitions provided by the law, as necessary to count the statistic in the institution’s Annual Security Report, or whether an aspect of a student conduct matter falls under the timely warning requirements of the Act’s provisions (20 U.S.C. 1092(f)).

Passage of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (2013) amended the Clery Act to now require institutions to count additional incident types, such as dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking, under the Clery Act crimes. The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (2013) and its change of the requirements of another federal law, Clery, are designed to bolster the impact of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX). The Clery Act is only one example of federal legislation which impacts the field of student conduct. Title IX is another federal law impacting student conduct.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

Title IX provides that no person shall be denied the benefits of higher education on the basis of sex (18 U.S.C. 1681). The guidance surrounding the law has always implied that the law was meant to affect more than just intercollegiate athletics (U.S. Department of Education, 1975, 2001, 2011, 2014). Enforcement for this federally protected civil right occurs through OCR. Regulations now require SCAs to arrive at decisions using a certain standard of proof,
Preponderance of the evidence versus clear and convincing, or beyond a reasonable doubt (U.S. Congress, 2013). This type of mandate directly affects how an SCA makes a decision. Adopted laws are not the only source of legislative factors SCAs must consider.

State Legislation/Laws/Regulation

Most state legislation centers around issues of security on a college campus (June, 2014; Kelderman, 2015a). Similar to the U.S. Congress, state legislatures also generally pass two types of laws: protective policy and redistributive policy (Lowery, 2009). For instance, many states are considering or already have legislation regulating the concealed carry of firearms on campus. Examples of these states with firearm legislation include Utah, Texas, Arizona, Illinois, Georgia, and Wisconsin (ASCA, 2012; Kelderman, 2015a). Concealed-carry laws relate to the protection of the campus community. Whether or not a state allows campus community members to carry concealed weapons influences whether or not a violation of the Student Code or other institutional policies exist. When a legislator decides what is, and is not, a violation of institutional policy, this decision is taken away from an SCA. It is necessary for an SCA to be cognizant of the laws of the state in which he or she works, as this will influence the student code of conduct (Gehring, 2006; NCHERM, 2014; Stoner II & Lowery, 2004).

Some states have legislation that is similar to the provisions of the Clery Act (ASCA, 2014). The same requirements and considerations taken into account by an SCA for the federal reporting requirements apply to an institution which has a state reporting requirement. The impact on an SCA of the reporting requirements for a state report is similar, if not identical, to the federal requirements.
Howell (1997) provided an example of a way that state legislation affects institutions of higher education. Howell (1997) surveyed institutions of higher education in the State of California about the effects of Assembly Bill 1725. This bill was developed to increase the shared governance role at community colleges and allow California community colleges to function more like the larger state institutions (Howell, 1997).

The findings of the survey indicated mixed reactions to the legislation. One respondent stated, “Accountability and responsiveness are the keys from my perspective. Until faculty can be held more accountable and in fact are more responsive, further movement toward a truly collegial model will be difficult” (p. 641). Another respondent offered the following comment: “The impact of AB 1725 has been to greatly improve morale, commitment, acceptance of decisions, relationships, etc. On the other hand, faculty leadership is having a hard time with the load associated with this additional work and decision-making has slowed tremendously” (p. 642).

Shared governance is a feature of many institutions. It allows all stakeholders to provide feedback and have buy-in to the various documents of the institution (Komives et al., 2003). Each person who comes into contact with a document may interpret it differently (Thomason, 2015). An institution’s faculty sometimes has a different opinion of how to respond to particular violations of the student code, or what constitutes a violation of the student code (Komives et al., 2003). Assembly Bill 1725 had the ability to influence an SCA in a community college in California to include or exclude certain provisions in the student code of conduct (Howell, 1997). This is another example of why an SCA must be knowledgeable about the laws of the state in which he or she works. State legislation can have varying levels of influence on SCAs. Assembly
Bill 1725 has had little to moderate impact on SCAs in California. Other states passed legislation with a more profound impact on SCAs.

In 2015, the Governor of the State of Illinois signed into law the Preventing Sexual Violence in Higher Education Act. This law, which took effect on August 1, 2016, imposes reporting requirements on all institutions of higher education in the state. Additionally, the law imposes policy requirements and new training requirements for individuals involved in the investigation and adjudication of sexual misconduct incidents at institutions of higher education (State of Illinois, 2015). This law directly impacts SCAs within the State of Illinois who have responsibility for investigation and adjudication of such violations. Failure to follow the directives of this law will result in substantial penalties to the institution and possibly to the individual employee (State of Illinois, 2015). Laws and regulations are not the only thing which can influence the decision-making behavior of an SCA. Court cases have the applicability of law in the specified jurisdiction.

Court Cases

Court cases have had a profound impact on SCAs (Smith, 2005). Court cases at both the federal and state level address issues from admissions to free speech, free association to the right of privacy to students and student records (Hammond & Shaffer, 1978). SCAs and university attorneys attempt to correctly interpret a student’s constitutional and legal rights in all situations. When the student does not agree with the interpretation, it may be necessary to move the issue to the justice system and allow the court to render the final opinion. SCAs change practice and procedure to accommodate court decisions (Gregory & Janosik, 2003). Court decisions are fluid; people, not automatons, make the decisions. The decision of one court is not necessarily the
same as another court. Issues within higher education have a tendency to resurface from time to
time (Komives et al., 2003; Rudolph, 1962). If an attorney argues a case on a specific issue in
front of a court today, the judge or judges make a decision. If an attorney argues a case in the
same court, before the same judge or judges years later, the decision may be different. SCAs
must remain vigilant of changing decisions in order to remain compliant in the student conduct
process (ASCA, 2012). When an SCA makes a decision contrary to the controlling case law, that
opens up the institution and the SCA to personal liability (Jeanne Meyer, personal
communication, July 27, 2015).

Institutional Factors

Institutional factors are specific to an SCA’s institution. These factors include the specific
Student Code of Conduct, institutional policy, or administrative procedure set forth by the
institution that directly or indirectly affect the SCA’s decision-making process (Komives et al.,
2003; Stoner II & Lowery, 2004; Waller, 2013). Institutional factors may influence a decision
reached and/or sanctions imposed by an SCA. Often the most influential institutional factor is the
type of violation (Waller, 2013).

Type of Violation

Waller (2013), found that each SCA considered the type of violation being adjudicated in
their decision-making process. One participant stated, “Everyone is different. Every
circumstance is different” (p. 95). In other studies conducted, type of violation was not
accounted for. Different institutions categorize the severity of different types of violations
differently. This is an area that requires further research to more clearly determine whether or not
the violation type is a variable that influences the SCA’s decision making. In addition to the type of violation being considered, another identified factor considered by an SCA is the prior conduct history of the accused student.

Prior Student Conduct History

Waller (2013) identified prior conduct history as germane to decision-making factors considered by an SCA. Institutions maintain conduct files for various time periods. Certain violation types, such as Clery reportable violations, must be held for seven years (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). Best practice as identified by ASCA (2012) and the National Center for Higher Education Risk Management (NCHERM) (2014) identify holding all records for a minimum of seven years. An SCA has the ability to review a student’s conduct record to view previous violations, determine a pattern of behavior, if appropriate, and inform the decision regarding appropriate sanctions for this violation. Going hand-in-hand with prior conduct history is the idea of progressive sanctioning.

Some institutions employ a progressive sanctioning approach (NCHERM, 2014; Stoner II & Lowery, 2004). Progressive sanctioning means that sanctions increase for each subsequent violation of the Student Code. Progressive sanctioning does not mean that the student must commit the same offense multiple times for the sanctions to be increased (Gehring, 2006; Stoner II & Lowery, 2004; Waller, 2013). Northern Illinois University (2015), for example, utilizes progressive sanctioning, as exemplified in the sanction grid printed in the Student Code of Conduct. The institution identifies six of the 26 proscribed conduct infractions as requiring minimum sanctions to be imposed if a violation is determined. Successful violations of the same
identified six provisions result in more serious sanctions issued (Northern Illinois University, 2015).

Not all SCAs consider prior student conduct history in decision making. For instance, Hyde (2014) did not identify prior conduct history as a factor in decision making in “Christian Higher Education” (p. 1). It is unclear whether this is a factor considered by SCAs who work in this institutional type or not. Considering prior student conduct history may be germane to determining whether or not a student committed another student code violation. Best practice for an SCA is to consider prior student conduct history when determining sanctions, but not when making a decision about the current conduct matter (ASCA, 1993; NCHERM, 2014). Not all institutions follow best practice within their institutional policies.

Institutional Policy

Institutional policies take many forms; some are mandated by state or federal law and others are created in response to events and incidents that occur on campus or in the surrounding community. Institutional policies cover a broad range of topics; some policies are applicable to faculty, staff, and students, while other policies are applicable to one or two subgroups. This review will highlight institutional policies specifically applicable to the student conduct process, starting with the Student Code of Conduct.

Student Codes of Conduct

Just as public communities have laws which govern community behavior, institutions of higher education have student codes of conduct which govern student behavior on and (some) off campus (NCHERM, 2014; Stoner II & Lowery, 2004). Student codes of conduct are based on
institutional ideals and incorporate applicable provisions from state and federal statutes (Stoner II & Lowery, 2004). Public institutions are required by law to provide due process rights to students. Private institutions have a contractual relationship with students and are not subject to the same due process requirements as public institutions. Students have legal rights at both public and private institutions, and this construct is outlined and defined within the student code of conduct (Letzring & Holcomb, 1996; McNair, 2013). The SCA must make a decision based on the process and procedure outlined within the student code.

The quality with which the student code is crafted will have a major influence on the SCA when making a decision. Amada (1992) argued that “the need for a well-defined and publicized set of codes and procedures governing student conduct” (p. 203) is critical. Amada (1992) particularly emphasized the need for a clear definition of terminology. Without clear policies and terminology, administrators and students who read and attempt to follow the policy or use it for decision making will be at a disadvantage. A student code of conduct is a critical document which is heavily utilized by an SCA when making decisions (Gehring, 2006; NCHERM, 2014; Stoner II & Lowery, 2004; Waller, 2013). The student code of conduct is the backbone of the institutional student conduct system. This document lays out the process, procedure, terms, and definitions that an institution and an SCA will use when making a decision about an accused student on behalf of the institution. Generally codified within the student code of conduct, perhaps among other places, is the institutional belief system.
Institutional Belief Systems

Every institution represents a specific set of beliefs related to its mission; some institutions are religiously affiliated, while others are land-grant institutions (Rudolph, 1962). When a student enrolls at an institution, the student accepts responsibility for upholding the institutional belief system of the respective institution. Faculty and staff are often asked to uphold the institutional belief system as well. If that belief system is defined and articulated within the student code of conduct, SCAs must abide by that document and therefore uphold the institutional belief system (Hyde, 2014).

Religious affiliation by an institution is a type of an institutional belief system that may affect an SCA when a decision has to be made. Religious belief by itself can be a stand-alone factor or it can be an institutionally based factor. Religiously based or affiliated institutions often incorporate religious doctrine or beliefs into the student code of conduct (Rudolph, 1962). The expectation is that these institutions require that an SCA utilize the principles defined by the religious doctrine to arrive at a decision and adjudicate a student conduct matter (Central Baptist College, 2015). Many of the early institutions of higher education were founded by a variety of religious organizations and religion was an integrated part of the curriculum (Rudolph, 1962). Many of these institutions still exist and some have transitioned into public or private institutions. The differences between secular and religious-based institutional student codes of conduct often become apparent in additional rules restricting or prohibiting social contact in a residential environment or restricted or prohibited sexual contact between non-married individuals (Central Baptist College, 2015). Compare a public institution’s student code of conduct with a religiously affiliated institution and the additional restrictions will not be included
in the public institution’s student code. Institutional factors affect all SCAs at a given institution. Individual factors considered by SCAs vary from one SCA to another.

Individual Factors

An SCA, when making a decision, may consider individual factors; some of these factors may be subjective, while other factors may be more objective (Stoner II & Lowery, 2004). There is not a right or wrong way for an SCA to consider individual factors when making a decision about student responsibility in a conduct matter. SCAs are individuals who may have a preference for the consideration of one factor or set of factors versus another factor or set of factors. This individual preference may come from experience, training, or study (Gehring, 2006). It is therefore important to look at the SCA as an individual. The subjectivity of the decision making can potentially lead to unethical decisions made by the SCA. Ethics in decision making are important to the decision, according to ASCA (1993). An SCA who does not act ethically when making decisions mars the process. Why an SCA may consider individual factors or a set of factors has to do with the SCA’s personal belief system.

Personal Belief System

Those who enter the field of student conduct tend to have a belief system which reflects the ideals of accountability and responsibility (Dowd, 2012; Hyde, 2014; Wannamaker, 2005). SCAs generally have respect for the system and the governing laws and regulations found within it (Dowd, 2012; Waller, 2013). Personal beliefs may influence every aspect of the student conduct process. In most institutions, SCAs are given discretionary power relating to whether or not a student should be charged with a code violation (Gehring, 2006; Stoner II & Lowery, 2004).
The question of the degree to which an SCA relies on a belief system crosses a boundary into ethics.

The SCA’s personal religious beliefs may also play a part in student conduct decisions. The decision to incorporate personal religious beliefs into a decision by an SCA can have great influence on the outcome of an incident. In many institutions, SCAs are given the autonomy to make a decision regarding whether or not a violation of the student code occurred (ASCA, 2012). When the religious beliefs of the SCA and the institution collide, the SCA faces an ethical dilemma. Personal ethics are one of the individual factors that are considered by an SCA.

Ethical Principles and Standards of Conduct (Criterion #10)

ASCA established a Code of Ethics at its founding. The document was updated in 1993 and remains in force today. Membership in the association is contingent on following the Code of Ethics (ASCA, 1993). Adherence to a code of ethics is the final criterion in Horton’s (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950) list of requirements for a profession.

All professional associations have an ethical principles statement or a Code of Ethics; this is one of the governing documents of the organization (Komives et al., 2003). ASCA is the “premier authority in higher education for student conduct administration and conflict resolution” (ASCA, 2012). The Preamble to the Ethical Principles document states:

The Association for Student Conduct Administration (ASCA) is an organization of professional educators, many of whom hold responsibility for administering standards of student conduct within colleges and universities. The membership of ASCA believes that a primary purpose for the enforcement of such standards is to maintain and strengthen the ethical climate and to promote the academic integrity of our institutions. Clearly articulated and consistently administered standards of conduct form the basis for behavioral expectations within an academic community. The enforcement of such standards should be accomplished in a manner that protects the rights, health and safety of members of that community so that they may pursue their educational goals without
undue interference. As a means of supporting our individual commitments to fairness, honesty, equity and responsibility, the members of ASCA subscribe to the following ethical principles and standards of conduct in their professional practice. Acceptance of membership in ASCA signifies that the individual member agrees to adhere to the principles in this statement. (ASCA, 1993)

The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) and American College Educators International (ACPA), other professional associations for student affairs practitioners, also have ethical principles statements. Each statement holds a member to a standard of professional behavior. While adherence to these statements is voluntary, members do take their obligation seriously, as noted in research provided by Wannamaker (2005), Waller (2013), and Hyde (2014).

Dowd (2012) examined the relationship between student development theory and ethics. Ethical beliefs are a factor considered by an SCA when making a decision. The purpose of the ethical principles is to ensure that the SCA will treat the student fairly and in accordance with the established procedure. Ethics allow for autonomy, but also set forth a structure in conjunction with established policies and procedures. Policies, procedures, and individual beliefs are important to the SCA, but another factor is also important: years in the profession.

Years in the Profession

The number of years in the profession for an SCA has been identified as a factor in decision making (Dowd, 2012; Hyde, 2014; Waller, 2013; Wannamaker, 2005). Waller (2013) referred to a study by Scott (2000), who surveyed SCAs with five to eight years in the profession. The results from that study highlighted particular factors considered by SCAs with that amount of experience when adjudicating cases.
In a more detailed study, Wannamaker (2005) provided the number of years in the field for 396 SCAs. The results of Wannamaker’s (2005) study indicated that the longer an SCA functioned in the field of student conduct, the more selective the SCA was about the factors considered in making a decision. Some case types may become routine, but the sanctions imposed by the SCA should be appropriate for the particular student (ASCA, 2012; Waller, 2013). With more years of experience, an SCA adjudicates more conduct cases and gains more experience in identifying individual student needs, thus being able to provide individualized sanctions to a student and provide an educational opportunity (Waller, 2013).

SCAs should not simply issue the same sanctions to each student for the same violation; that may be counterproductive to the student’s educational career and to the educational nature of the student conduct process (ASCA, 2012). Some institutions have a policy of mandatory or minimum sanctions for certain offense types. Minimum or mandatory sanctions negate the factor of years of experience for the SCA (NCHERM, 2014). If employed by such an institution, an SCA without the autonomy to issue individualized sanctions for an offense, regardless of his or her number of years in the profession, is placed at a disadvantage (ASCA, 2012; Dowd, 2012; Hyde, 2014; Waller, 2013; Wannamaker, 2005). Given this information, the number of years in the profession has been identified by multiple researchers as an important factor to consider for SCAs when making a decision about a student conduct matter (Dowd, 2012; Hyde, 2014; Waller, 2013; Wannamaker, 2005). Years in the profession is an important factor to consider regarding SCAs’ decision-making process. Another factor is whether or not an SCA functions in the role full-time or part-time.
Full-time or Part-time Student Conduct Administrator Responsibilities

Waller (2013) identified the factor of whether or not an SCA performs functions full-time or part-time as important in her study of decision making for SCAs. Danells (1998) also established full-time or part-time status as important as it related to research in this field. Danells (1998) pinpointed four levels of student conduct professionals: graduate student, entry level, mid-level, and senior student affairs officer. Each level of SCA receives progressively more responsibility within the field of student conduct (Danells, 1998). Because of the progressive responsibility, it is necessary for an SCA to understand the responsibilities of the SCA at the lower level. Understanding of lower level responsibilities can be achieved by an SCA with full-time or part-time status. Prior researchers identified that the length of time in the field of student conduct changed the factors considered by an SCA. Danells (1997) concluded that full-time SCAs were more dedicated to the position than those who performed SCA functions only part time.

Evidence/Information Known to the Student Conduct Administrator at the Time of Decision

Every study exploring SCA decision making identified the evidence or information known to the SCA at the time of the decision as a critical factor (Danells, 1998; Dowd, 2012; Hyde, 2014; Waller, 2013; Wannamaker, 2005). An SCA must determine if the accused student committed a violation. To reach that decision, the SCA will consider all of the physical, verbal, documentary, and electronic evidence presented to him or her about the matter (Danells, 1997, 1998; Dowd, 2012; Hyde, 2014; Stoner II & Lowery, 2004; Waller, 2013; Wannamaker, 2005). Dowd (2012) pointed out that one of the ethical dilemmas faced by SCAs occurs when there are
obvious gaps in the information presented to the SCA and the way in which the SCA makes the
decision about whether the accused student committed a violation. This factor is the most
important of all (Danells, 1998; NCHHERM, 2014; Stoner II & Lowery, 2004). Without the
facts of the matter, the SCA cannot make an informed decision.

Theory and Its Relation to Student Conduct Administrator Decision Making

Theory plays a considerable role within higher education, not just within student conduct
administration. Theory can assist in providing an explanation of the way in which a student will
function in the higher education environment (Dowd, 2012; Hamrick, Evans & Shuh, 2002;
Komives et al., 2003; Waller, 2013). Theory and its proper application can assist an SCA in
knowing where a student is in relation to a variety of matters. Theory can provide a baseline for
understanding, inquiry, and dialogue between the student and the SCA. Murdock’s (2004) three-
step model provided a global method of the relation of the application of theory to any
profession. As noted previously, three main types of theories are relevant to student conduct
administration: student development theory, adult education theory, and counseling theory.
While these theories do not provide a basis to act as a theoretical framework in this study, they
may be utilized by an SCA making a decision about what sanctions are appropriate for a student
found responsible for violating institutional policy.

Conclusion

This literature review covered a variety of areas related to SCAs’ decision making.
Throughout this review, information has been shared related to the ways in which judges in the
adult and juvenile criminal justice systems make decisions, and how each of the justice systems
relate to the student conduct system (Feld, 1998; Payne, 2010). Decision making is a dynamic process, and factors relating to decision making may change with varying frequency (Gadomski, 2006). These dynamic factors include court decisions and institutional values. When these factors change, policies may change or interpretations of policy may change. All of these changes are interpreted by an SCA and will influence the decisions made for accused students.

There are a variety of factor types that have a role in an SCA’s decision making regarding appropriate sanctions. These factor types include environmental, institutional-based, and individual factors. The degree to which the factors influence an SCA is unique to each individual SCA. There is applicability and relation to SCA decision making through each of the lenses discussed in this review. Legislation blends into institutional policy, which is supported by student development theory, and is wrapped together by ethics.

This researcher sought to determine whether existing research provides support for the conceptualization of student conduct administration as a profession, as defined by Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950). If the evidence shows it is a profession, research can and should be conducted on the professional identity of the SCA. As described earlier, Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950) identified 10 criteria providing a baseline for what constitutes a profession. Throughout the last 72 years, researchers have attempted to codify whether or not a given practice of work met the definition of a profession. Originally explored by Wrenn and Darley (1950), student conduct did not meet all of the criteria. Rickard (1988) later assessed student affairs as a whole and purported that some aspects of the profession still did not meet the criteria outlined by Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950). Given the existing research and the empirical data, this researcher posits that the field of student conduct meets all
of the criteria identified by Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950). However, more research was clearly needed to further define the manner in which the field of student conduct administration meets two specific criteria for professional identity. These two points are the fourth one, *skills not possessed by the general public*, and the seventh one, *beneficial work not subject to standardization*. This study was designed to determine if the procedures in place for contemporary SCAs meet these final indicators of a professional identity.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The role of the SCA has existed in every institution of higher education throughout history (Rudolph, 1962). Chapter 2 of this dissertation identified how the practice of student conduct meets the criteria laid out by Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950), and where the profession may fall short of meeting those criteria. This chapter outlines a research project designed to provide data which should expand the literature base and fill in information about whether or not the field of student conduct in fact meets all of the criteria laid out by Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950), in terms of whether or not the field of student conduct meets the criteria of a profession. This chapter describes the target population, survey instrument, ethical considerations, data collection method, research questions and hypotheses, study variable, data analysis, and limitations of the study.

The Study Population

The target population (N) for this study included all SCAs in higher education institutions, worldwide; “N” is unknown. In an attempt to extrapolate data for “N,” the researcher surveyed a sample of the population (n), which is comprised of 2,760 members of the Association for Student Conduct Administration (ASCA, 2016a). ASCA is a 501(c)(3) entity and is the “premier authority in higher education for student conduct administration and conflict resolution” (ASCA, 2012, p. 1). ASCA is a diverse organization with members representing each type of higher education institution present in the United States of America. The Association also has international members as well. Therefore, the results of this study identified factors
important to SCAs outside the United States. The study population included SCAs representing a variety of education and backgrounds, a variety of years on the job, and a variety of institutional types. All self-reported ASCA members active as of June 1, 2016 received an invitation to complete the study.

A non-experimental design using an electronic survey was distributed to the entire active membership of ASCA. The number of active members who completed the survey yielded the sample size. Even though the membership of ASCA is diverse, the sample was a convenience sample. G*Power freeware was used to compute the \textit{a priori} analysis to determine the appropriate number of participants for each statistical test to be run. ANOVA has the following characteristics: $d=0.25$, $\alpha < 0.05$, and $\beta=0.80$, scientifically agreed-upon statistical thresholds (Field, 2013). The G*Power analysis estimated that the ANOVA test required a minimum of 180 participants with the thresholds.

Multiple linear regression has the following characteristics: $r^2=0.15$, $\alpha < 0.05$, and $\beta=0.80$, scientifically agreed-upon statistical thresholds (Field, 2013). The G*Power analysis estimated that the multiple linear regression test required a minimum response rate of 55 participants with the thresholds.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlations have the following characteristics: $d=0.3$, $\alpha < 0.05$, and $\beta=0.80$, scientifically agreed-upon statistical thresholds (Field, 2013). The G*Power analysis estimated that the correlation test required a minimum response rate of 82 participants with the thresholds.
Based on all of the information provided by G*Power, *a priori*, it was necessary to have a minimum of 180 responses to the survey instrument to ensure validity in the results, and that not more than an acceptable level of Type I or Type II error was committed.

**Piloting the Survey**

The researcher sought to ensure that the data collected would be accurate and free of errors. To aid the data collection process, the researcher therefore pilot-tested the survey instrument. This pilot test was conducted with a group of 38 SCAs from around the United States. The pilot group included graduate students, full-time SCAs, and Senior Student Affairs Officers. The survey was distributed electronically; participants were given one week to complete the instrument. The pilot data was used to verify that the survey would most likely provide accurate and reliable data when the survey was generally dispersed.

To ensure accuracy and reliability in data collection, during the pilot test, the researcher ensured that the survey was equally distributed to SCAs classified as graduate student, entry level, mid-level, and Senior Student Affairs Officers. The researcher utilized statistical tests designed to verify data reliability once the pilot sample data was received. The researcher performed the same statistical tests for the pilot study that were completed for the final data, including correlation, ANOVA, and multiple linear regression analyses. Each of the tests for the pilot study yielded statistical significance.

**Survey of the Population**

After pilot testing and any related revisions were completed, the survey was distributed to the entire membership of ASCA as of June 1, 2016. The survey respondents functioned as SCAs
from graduate assistant to senior student affairs officer and were from a variety of institutional types. Survey respondents held operational responsibilities as SCAs, but may also have operational responsibilities in other areas, including a Dean of Students, Residence Life, and an Advocacy office. ASCA members were located in each of the 50 United States and around the world. Each participant’s student conduct responsibilities qualified the SCA to answer the questions about professional identity.

Ethical Considerations

The Northern Illinois University Institutional Review Board reviewed and approved the study and consent documentation. Participation in this survey was voluntary. The consent documentation included information on the particulars of the study, why the study was timely, and what information the researcher hoped to gather from the participants completing this study. The data gathered from this survey did not include personally identifiable information, and data was reported in aggregate, further eliminating potential harm to prospective participants. The researcher sought to disseminate the survey to the ASCA membership. ASCA has a protocol in place whereby the ASCA Research Committee, in conjunction with the Executive Director, reviewed and approved the study prior to the survey link being sent to the membership.

Data Collection Method

The researcher created the survey instrument in Qualtrics survey software, and the instrument was administered through the ASCA Central Office (See Appendix A for the entire instrument). The data collected was in aggregate and participants were assigned a unique
identifier in the form of a sequentially generated number to provide confidentiality when the data was downloaded into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.

Participants were given four weeks to complete the survey, with a reminder email sent out 23 days after the initial invitation to participate in the study. It was expected that the survey would take no more than 15-20 minutes for the participant to complete. The researcher sought to answer the following research questions and hypotheses.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study was designed to answer the following research questions and hypotheses.

RQ 1: Is there a relationship between the level of importance of specialized training for SCAs and frequency of participation in training, controlled for the number of times that an SCA wanted to attend a training session, but was unable to attend?

H$_{01}$: There is no relationship between the level of importance of specialized training for SCAs and frequency of participation in training, while controlling for the number of times that an SCA wanted to attend a training session, but was unable to attend.

H$_{11}$: There will be a relationship between the importance of specialized training for SCAs and the frequency of participation in training, while controlling for the number of times that an SCA wanted to attend a training session, but was unable to attend.

RQ 2: Is there a relationship between the level of importance of remaining up-to-date on evolving issues and trends in the field for SCAs and frequency in engagement in related activities?
\[H_{02} :\] There is no relationship between the level of importance of remaining up-to-date on evolving issues and trends in the field for SCAs and frequency of engagement in related activities.

\[H_{12} :\] There will be a relationship between the importance of remaining up-to-date on evolving issues and trends in the field for SCAs and frequency of engagement in related activities.

RQ 3: Is there a difference in the beliefs of SCAs about the necessity of specialized skills sets based on the number of years in the profession of student conduct?

\[H_{03} :\] There is no difference in beliefs by SCAs about the necessity of specialized skills sets based on the number of years in the profession of student conduct.

\[H_{13} :\] There will be a difference in beliefs by SCAs about the necessity of specialized skills sets based on the number of years in the profession of student conduct.

RQ 4: Do the factors of: participation in training outside of that provided by the institution, as orientation, staying up-to-date on relevant trends and topics in the field of student conduct, and possession of relevant skills not possessed by the general public, predict professional identity of the student conduct administrator?

\[H_{04} :\] Participation in training outside of that provided by the institution, as orientation, staying up-to-date, and possession of relevant skills not possessed by the general public does not predict student conduct administrator professional identity.

\[H_{14} :\] Participation in training outside of that provided by the institution, as orientation, staying up-to-date, and possession of relevant skills not possessed by the general public predicts student conduct administrator professional identity.
Data was collected and the following analyses were performed to answer the stated hypotheses. To answer these questions, the researcher identified the following study variables.

**Study Variables**

**Independent Variables**

*Sources used to stay up-to-date on trends and current topics.* Sources identified by the SCA used to stay up-to-date on trends and current topics in the field of student conduct include online and print sources, media sources, resources provided by multiple professional organizations, and any other source identified by the survey participant.

*Specialized training.* Specified training, above and beyond position orientation provided by the institution to the SCA, which may help the SCA complete position responsibilities. Such training may include various tracks at the Donald D. Gehring Academy, attendance at a national conference, participation in webinars, or any other training identified by the survey participant.

*Specialized skill sets.* Specialized skill sets identified by the literature as necessary and important for an effective SCA to possess and master include investigatory skills, conflict resolution skills, legal knowledge, and familiarity with discipline-specific theories, as well as any other survey participant identified skills.

*“z” variable.* The “z” variable functions as a check question for the independent variable of attendance and/or participation in additional training. The researcher recognizes that there may be personal, professional, and/or financial reasons why an SCA may want to attend training, but is not able to attend or participate. This “z” variable will be used to perform a partial correlation related to Research Question 3.
Dependent Variables

**Staying current on trends and issues in the field of student conduct.** Respondents will identify the ways, and the frequency with which they stay current on trends and issues in the field of student conduct.

**Possessing skills not routinely held by the general public.** Respondents will identify skills they possess, necessary for position performance. Skills listed in the survey instrument have been identified in the literature as necessary for effective and efficient performance by an SCA.

**Receiving specialized training in the field of student conduct.** Respondents will identify any additional training that they received or participated in, above and beyond the position orientation provided by their employing institution.

**Professional identity.** The term “professional identity” is a latent construct comprised of the following variables:

1. *staying current on trends and issues in the field of student conduct,*
2. *possessing skills not routinely held by the general public,* and
3. *receiving specialized training in the field of student conduct*
4. *Respondent belief about student conduct holding a unique and distinct professional identity.*

Each of these variables, that represent the remaining three characteristics of a profession that have not yet been examined by the existing literature on Student Conduct Administration, will be measured on a separate ordinal scale that reflects each unique variable. The higher the score on each variable, the higher the level of support that is
provided as evidence for that characteristic of a profession being present in the field of student conduct administration.

Demographic Information

The following demographic information was collected to describe the participant group:

1. Gender
2. Position classification
3. Number of years in the profession
4. Professional status (full-time/part-time)
5. Highest degree attained
6. Job title
7. Institutional type

Demographic information collected during the study was used for a post-hoc analysis of the data and may provide or suggest additional relationships not originally asked in the stated research questions.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed through Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and, multiple linear regression. This section describes each of the methods to be used, specifically for each hypothesis. For a graphical representation of the involved variables, see Table 1.

Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation. These two hypotheses are similar. The premise underpinning each of them assumes a relationship between
the variable, staying current on topics, specialized training, and possession of relevant skills, to the practice of student conduct as a profession and to the professional identity of the SCA. The variable for Hypothesis 1 is identification of any specialized training attended by the SCA, above and beyond the position orientation given by the employing institution. The variable for Hypothesis 2 is the engagement of the SCA by staying up-to-date on current topics and trends in the practice of student conduct administration. Although the scales used for the variables included in Hypotheses 1 and 2 are ordinal, rather than interval, because the sample size is greater than 30, Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation is appropriate.

Table 1
Variable Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ</th>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Variable (DV)</th>
<th>Independent variable (IV)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>Specialized training</td>
<td>Identified training sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>Staying up-to-date on topics</td>
<td>Sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>ANOVA</td>
<td>Specialized skill sets</td>
<td>Identified skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Multiple Linear Regression</td>
<td>Belief of professional identity</td>
<td>Relation of DVs 1-3 to professional identity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis 3 was tested using ANOVA. This variable has four different levels; thus, an ANOVA test is the most appropriate test for this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4 was tested using multiple linear regression, and specifically prediction. The researcher made a prediction about whether or not SCAs believe that staying up-to-date on current topics, attendance at training above and beyond position orientation, and possession of relevant skills have any relationship to SCA professional identity. Using prediction from linear regression allowed the researcher to validate or reject the initial prediction. The variable in
Hypothesis 4 is the combination of the first three variables as they relate to the survey participant’s belief of the practice of student conduct as a stand-alone profession.

Variable Constructs

The term “professional identity” is a latent construct comprised of the following variables: institutional factors (written documentation, verbal information, electronic information, institutional policy, type of violation allegedly committed, and prior student conduct history), theory (student development, adult development, and counseling), personal factors (religion, ethics, race, ethnicity, and credibility), and environmental factors (federal law, state law, court cases) (Prosek & Hurt, 2014; Rickard, 1985a, 1985b, 1988; Waller, 2013; Wrenn & Darley, 1950; Young, 1985). For a visual representation of the questions on the survey used to compute the variable “professional identity,” see Table 2.

All participants completing the survey had their scores averaged for the creation of a grand mean. The grand mean was comprised of the answers to each of the five-point Likert scale questions. The computation of the grand mean helped to protect the integrity of the survey by not causing the $\alpha$ and $\beta$ values to become artificially inflated above acceptable levels because of repeated statistical tests with similar variables. For a visual representation of the questions on the survey used to comprise the grand mean, see Table 2.

Significance Level

The minimum level of significance ($\alpha$) is set to $\alpha < .05$, indicating that the level of Type I error acceptable to the researcher is less than 5%. $\beta \leq .80$, indicating that the level of Type II error acceptable to the researcher is less than or equal to 20% in this study. In this way, there is a 20%
or less chance that the researcher did not find statistical significance when there should have been statistical significance. In order to achieve a Type I error rate of $\alpha < .05$, and a Type II error rate of $\beta \leq 80$, the minimum sample size must be at least 180 participants. The 180 participant number is derived from the necessity to have at least 55 participants complete the survey for the multiple linear regression models, at least 82 participants complete the survey for the correlation models, and 180 participants complete the survey for the ANOVA. Descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, skewness ($S_3$), and kurtosis ($K_4$) were used to look at the distribution of the dependent variables. The researcher identified the following limitations which impacted the data analysis of this study.

Table 2
Survey Question Variable Construct

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Survey Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Identity* (Latent Construct)</td>
<td>9,13,18,19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructed from:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying up-to-date</td>
<td>2-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized skill sets</td>
<td>11-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying up-to-date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized skill sets</td>
<td>15-18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
*Professional Identity disaggregated is constructed by the variables identifying importance of training, staying up-to-date, specialized skill sets, and the belief regarding a unique and distinct profession.
Limitations

This study was designed to provide information on a national level, attempting to survey each level of student conduct professional who works in the field. This was a convenience sample of the target population. ASCA is comprised of a diverse group of members with varying backgrounds, age, years of experience, and type of experience. The researcher had no control over which of the ASCA members completed the survey; however, the researcher made every attempt to ensure proportionality between the population and the sample size. The proportionality between the sample and the population was based on years of experience in the profession. The three dependent variables, plus the composite variable of professional identity, make the most sense when defined by the number of years the participant has practiced student conduct (Waryold & Lancaster, 2013). This proportionality provided reliability in the results. ASCA has 2,760 members (ASCA, 2016a); however, the membership is not equally distributed among all SCA types. Types of SCAs include full- or part-time conduct responsibilities, years in the field, and position level of the SCA (graduate student through senior student affairs officer). The membership of ASCA is not evenly distributed between the number of graduate, entry-level, mid-level, and senior-level SCAs. There are more entry-level and mid-level professionals compared with graduate or senior-level professionals in the Association (Association for Student Conduct Administration, 2014). ASCA does not maintain the number of graduate, entry-level, mid-level, and senior-level members (Jennifer Waller, personal communication, July 11, 2016). Additionally, ASCA under-reported the number of members listed as “Assistant Hall Directors,” based on the information the association maintains. The researcher identified the issue when
analyzing the demographic data. The method of sample selection is a census of the ASCA membership.

A convenience sample raised threats to internal and external validity. Study participants self-selected. Study participants chose how they should answer. The researcher is also a member of ASCA. As such, some of the study participants have a personal and/or professional relationship with the researcher. This may bias the data provided by the study participant, in terms of who completed the survey and what data was reported by the participants. A convenience sample is usually not generalizable to the larger population, because the researcher cannot guarantee a truly random sample. The sample can be severely compromised, affecting the research if the sample is not comprised of both a control and experimental group. The data provided may ultimately be skewed because of the convenience sample. If the sample size was less than 128 participants, the results may not yield reliable data due to the amount of Type I and Type II errors.

A participant was invited to add additional factors not presented on the survey instrument. Self-report data is inherently biased (Dowd, 2012). The researcher specifically highlights the self-reported data of the variables identifying specific skills utilized by the SCA. The researcher is deliberately not defining the terms of basic, average, and, superior when asking the participant to rate the level of knowledge for a specific skill. Prior researchers identified the skill levels as subjective (Dowd, 2012; Mikus, 2014; Waller, 2013; Wannamaker, 2005). It was therefore inappropriate for this researcher to define these levels for this project. There is also the concern that the survey respondent would provide data that he or she believed
the researcher seeks, and/or what is morally or socially acceptable (Dowd, 2012; Wannamaker, 2005).

Another limitation of this study was that segments of the target population were over-sampled. The over-sampling occurred in both the respondents’ institutional type and the reported position title. The over-sampling does not appear to have affected the study’s results. It does, however, potentially represent a threat to the external validity and generalizability of the results beyond this dissertation.

The final limitation to the study was that there was a loss of 51 responses constitutes a loss of 13% of the response rate. It was not possible to impute the mean for the data points with missing data. The cases excluded were missing data from multiple questions, both related to the research questions and also demographic information. Imputing the mean would potentially skew the results. After careful deliberation, the researcher chose to exclude the responses from the results, because there were more than enough responses to meet the a priori requirements for the statistical tests.

Summary

This project was designed to fill in the gaps left by Rickard (1988) in determining whether or not the field of student conduct constitutes a profession as laid out by Horton (as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950) in the ten criteria. Chapter 2 of this dissertation specified three criteria where the profession of student conduct may fall short. This non-experimental survey, distributed to a large number of professional and para-professional SCAs, was designed to capture data specifically to fill in the gaps in the literature. The survey instrument was developed to be as comprehensive as possible and to provide each participant with the opportunity to
include additional data beyond the factors selected based on the existing literature as potentially relevant to defining SCA professional identity. The researcher addressed ethical considerations and limitations of the study as currently known based on both researcher knowledge and the currently available literature. The researcher was aware that there may be additional information made available when the data was analyzed. The additional information and the results of the hypotheses and research questions are set out in Chapter 4.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

In Chapter 3, the researcher outlined the methodology for collecting and analyzing the data for this study. The researcher selected a quantitative study method. This chapter provides the results and analysis of the data. Before the researcher shares the results, it is appropriate to provide a description of the sample.

Description of the Sample

To gather data for this project, a survey instrument was created and an invitation to complete the assessment was disseminated to 2,760 members of the Association for Student Conduct Administration (ASCA). The membership of ASCA comprised the target population. The survey assessed information on four main topics: specialized training received by SCAs; staying current or up-to-date on topics or trends within the field of student conduct; specialized skills needed by an SCA to appropriately perform the function of the SCA role; and professional identity of the SCA. The researcher received 399 responses. This is a 14.4% response rate.

Because ASCA does not maintain the number of graduate, entry-level, mid-level, and senior-level professionals, it was not possible to compare the sample to the target population. Of the 399 responses, only 348 surveys contained complete data. To achieve the required power level ($\beta \geq 0.80$), it was necessary to have at least 180 responses. The 348 responses exceed the a priori
count to achieve the appropriate power level. What follows is the breakdown of the respondent demographic information.

Demographic Information

The researcher asked respondents to provide demographic information so that the responses could be analyzed. This information was collected and reported in aggregate to protect the respondents’ privacy. The researcher collected the following demographic information from respondents:

- Gender;
- Professional status (graduate student, entry-level, mid-level, senior level SCA);
- Number of years in the profession;
- Full-time or part-time SCA status;
- Highest degree earned;
- Position title; and
- Institution type

The researcher collected data from a convenience sample comprised of members from the target population. The convenience sample may affect the ability to generalize the results of the study to the greater population. In an attempt to gather further information about the target population, the researcher collected available demographic data from the Association for Student Conduct Administration (ASCA) about its members. The ASCA Central Office does not maintain all of the demographic information asked by the researcher of the respondents in this study. Information not maintained by ASCA is notated in the table by an asterisk. Table 3 highlights the breakdown of the collected demographic information. The identification of “N” is the target population (ASCA membership as a whole), while the identification of “n” are the respondents. The various percentages relate to either the target population or survey respondents.
Table 3
Description of Respondents by Demographic Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variable</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>n%</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>N%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>42.80</td>
<td>946</td>
<td>34.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>55.50</td>
<td>1281</td>
<td>46.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender-Fluid</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>19.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior-student affairs officer</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8.60</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior-level student affairs</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>15.20</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>officer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior-level conduct administrator</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>25.90</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-level conduct administrator</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>37.10</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry-level conduct administrator</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>10.60</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate assistant</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Years in the Profession</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 or more years</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>17.50</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14 years</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>17.20</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9 years</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>35.30</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-4 years</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>29.90</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Full-time/Part-time status</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>64.10</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>35.90</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest Degree Earned</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>15.80</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juris Doctor</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>75.00</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Position Title</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President or Vice Chancellor</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate or Assistant Vice</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>4.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chancellor or Associate or Assistant Vice President</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continued on the following page)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Counts</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>9.20</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>8.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate or Assistant Dean</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>19.00</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>12.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>20.10</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>16.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate or Assistant Director</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>20.40</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>13.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>12.60</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>5.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex or Area Coordinator</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence Life Coordinator</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall Director</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>2.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Hall Director</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>14.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institution Type</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community College</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>12.10</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>4.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Institution</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>53.70</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>16.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Institution</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>34.20</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>12.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary Institution Type</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For-profit Institution</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land-grant Institution</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>10.30</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Serving Institution</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historically Black College or University</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiously-affiliated Institution</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>12.90</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flagship Institution</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>10.90</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Institution</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>17.20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Secondary Institutional Types</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>35.90</td>
<td>1780</td>
<td>64.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Not reported by the Association for Student Conduct Administration
The next portion of the results discusses in depth the descriptive statistics used in the study instrument.

Descriptive Statistics for the Instrument Used in the Study

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics for the instrument used in the study. These descriptive statistics include the mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis values for the respondents related to each of the variables. The variables include: specialized training, skills used by the SCA, staying up-to-date on current topics and trends, and SCA professional identity.

Summary of the Descriptive Statistics for all Instruments

The researcher used only one instrument for this study. The researcher brought together observable items based on the available literature and research related to SCAs and professional identity. These observable items formed the basis of the latent constructs referenced earlier in Chapter 3. These constructs related to the three outstanding criteria identified by Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950) identifying whether or not the work done may be classified as a profession. The first three constructs each related to a single outstanding criterion from Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950). The three outstanding criteria were: what special training do SCAs possess, how do SCAs stay up-to-date on topics and trends in the field of student conduct, and what specialized skills do SCAs use when they meet with students and student organizations? The final construct was comprised of the grand means from the first three constructs, as well as an additional question asked on the instrument about the respondent’s opinion as to whether or not student conduct had a unique and distinct professional identity in relation to other student affairs fields.
Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for the Survey Instrument

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specialized Training</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of trainings participated in</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>-1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number times unable to participate</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend ASCA annual conference</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASCA sponsored webinars</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>-.73</td>
<td>-.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local/Regional training</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>-.42</td>
<td>-.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For-profit training</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>-1.40</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of specialized training</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staying Up-to-date</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of sources</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use online sources</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow news</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASCA resources</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different professional association</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For-profit resources</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>-.24</td>
<td>-.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track legislation</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>-.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dept. of Education resources</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government resources</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>-.105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of staying up-to-date</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specialized Skills</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self mastery-investigation</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-mastery-conflict resolution</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>-.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-mastery-legal knowledge</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>-.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-mastery-theory</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimal performance-investigation</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimal performance-conflict resolution</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimal performance-legal knowledge</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>-.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimal performance-theory</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>-.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill level needed-investigation</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill level needed-conflict resolution</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>-.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill level needed-legal knowledge</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>1.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill level needed-theory</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Identity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique professional identity</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first construct (training) was comprised of a total of nine questions on the instrument. Each of the questions asked respondents how many times the respondent participated in various training activities, or how important additional training was to the SCA position. The second construct (staying up-to-date) consisted of four questions with nine identified sources that SCAs might use to stay up-to-date on current trends and topics in the field of student conduct. The researcher asked the question of respondents regarding how important it was for an SCA to stay up-to-date on current topics in the field. The third construct (specialized skills) consisted of four questions, with four identified skills (investigatory skills, conflict resolution, legal knowledge, and theory), and asked each respondent to rate his or her level of mastery of the skill, the level at which the respondent thought an SCA should be proficient with each skill, and how important the skill was to be a successful SCA. In order to create the final construct of professional identity, the researcher took the mean scores for each of the responses from the prior constructs (training, staying up-to-date, and specialized skills) and created a grand mean score, in addition to asking a singular question about the respondents’ belief that the field of student conduct had a unique and distinct professional identity from other student affairs fields. The grand mean score was calculated by taking the average score of the responses to each of the individual questions for the constructs of additional training, staying up-to-date, and specialized skills.

The calculated values for the mean of each construct (additional training, staying up-to-date, specialized skills, and professional identity) ranged from 1.88 to 3.12. The standard deviations ranged from .76 to 1.18. For this study, it is important to look at the individual item mean and standard deviation to determine the variability of each item. For instance, respondents in this study reported that they participated in 2.59 training sessions over the last year. That
participation level varied by as much as 1.32 training sessions, meaning that the number of training sessions respondents participated in were as few as one session and as many as four sessions. Table 4 outlines the means, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis values for the different variable constructs and the item subcomponents.

Acceptable ranges for the value of skewness fall between a range of +2.00 and -2.00. The only statistic of concern identified in Table 4 is the mean skewness of the construct of professional identity. Table 4 shows a slight positive skewness to that mean, falling just outside the range of +2.00 (value=2.34). Table 4 does not identify any kurtotic data, as no values fall outside of the acceptable range between +2.00 and -2.00 (Field, 2013).

Variable Descriptive Statistics Breakdown

This study was designed to survey the target population of SCAs. The respondents comprised a convenience sample derived from the target population. The observable items, used to build latent constructs for the survey instrument, were developed from the available literature and research on the topic. The constructs, although defined by the researcher, are broad.

The researcher formulated questions for the survey instrument which when put together allowed the researcher to put together latent constructs. By including the questions on the instrument, the researcher was able to calculate results for four different latent constructs, when the answers to multiple and identified questions were combined. The mean values for each of the constructs are as follows: Specialized training (3.12), Staying up-to-date (2.40), Specialized skills (1.88), and Professional identity (1.61). The mean values provide the average for each of the latent constructs from the 348 usable responses. Each construct is different in what it measures. Respondents attended an average of three (3.12) additional training sessions, not
provided by their institution, over the last 12 months. Respondents used just over two (2.40) sources to stay up-to-date on current topics and trends in the field of student conduct. SCAs used an average of two (1.88) skills when meeting with students or student organizations. The final construct of professional identity average indicates that respondents “agree” that the field of student conduct has a unique and distinct professional identity (0-4 scale). The construct of professional identity is comprised of the grand mean values for the constructs of specialized training, staying up-to-date, and specialized skills. There is a sizeable degree of variability given the standard deviations in each of the constructs. For specialized training the standard deviation ranges from .64 to 1.63 training sessions attended. For the staying up-to-date variable, the standard deviation ranges from .51 to 1.00 sources used to stay up-to-date. The variability for how many sources respondents reported using is less than one. SCAs may have a preference for source types to get information.

The other reason that participants may have varied their responses to this question is because of the case types that an SCA may investigate and adjudicate. An SCA who does not investigate or resolve Title IX cases will not need to rely on information from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR), but may rely on information put out from the Association for Student Conduct Administration (ASCA) on creative sanctioning for conduct matters in general. The mean for the number of sources a respondent uses to stay up-to-date is 2.40. The types of cases the respondent is involved with could explain the small variability. Another explanation of the variability may be the position of the respondent: for example, a senior-level conduct administrator may only focus on items from OCR and not the day-to-day resources of ASCA. The specialized skills variable has standard deviation ranges
from .51 to .96, relating to the number of specialized skills an SCA possesses and uses with a student. The purpose of this study was to identify professional identity components of the SCA. The researcher defined the term “professional identity” as the compilation of the three constructs related to the outstanding criteria by Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950), in addition to placing a single question on the instrument. The professional identity construct consisted of the grand mean of the outstanding criteria constructs, as well as factoring in the additional single question specifically asking about professional identity.

Reliability Analysis for Instruments Used in the Study

The researcher sought to determine if there is evidence that the practice of student conduct can be considered a stand-alone profession. There is limited published research available to which the results of this study may be compared. Since there is currently no published research that provides Cronbach’s alpha values for similar variables or constructs, the researcher can only report the alpha values for this study, without comparison to published research. The variables in this study had the potential to be correlated among them. The researcher calculated Cronbach’s Alpha to determine correlation and co-efficiency between the variables and the resulting constructs. The researcher created the instrument for this study, and therefore, the instrument was not previously generated or referenced by another researcher in the literature. Table 5 provides the reported Cronbach’s Alpha value for the study.

Values for Cronbach’s Alpha fall between a range of 0.00 and 1.00. Cronbach’s alpha value provides a measure of internal consistency for the reported results. The higher the reported alpha value is for a given variable or construct, the more consistent the data results are and the more the results can be generalized to the population. Accepted values for reliability of results
involving Cronbach’s Alpha fall between a range of 0.70 and 1.00. In a truly exploratory study, a value of alpha greater than or equal to .70 is considered acceptable (Field, 2013). For studies that predict or attempt to predict a phenomenon, an alpha value of greater than or equal to .80 is generally considered acceptable (Field, 2013). This was not a truly exploratory study. The hypotheses for this study focused on prediction, not exploration. For this study, only the value for the construct of specialized training falls below the commonly accepted value (.57 < .70). The reason for this low value may be due to the limited number of items on the survey that make up the construct. Further information about the results and their reliability will be discussed as each hypothesis is reviewed in detail.

Table 5
Alpha Coefficient for the Constructs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latent Construct</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
<th>Reported Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specialized Training</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying Up-to-date</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized Skills</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Identity</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis Testing

In this section, the results for each of the four hypotheses tested will be presented and discussed. Each of the research questions and hypotheses are restated here for the ease of the reader. Results are presented and discussed. Tables and figures are also provided for each hypothesis as an aid for the reader.
Research Question 1

The researcher posed the first research question to attempt to provide evidence related to the three identified outstanding profession criteria identified by Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950). The first research question focused on any potential relationship between the perception of the importance of training participation by the SCA and the frequency of SCA training participation. The alternative hypothesis identified a positive relationship.

RQ 1: Is there a relationship between the level of importance of specialized training for SCAs and frequency of participation in training, controlled for the number of times that an SCA wanted to attend a training session, but was unable to attend?

H₀₁: There is no relationship between the level of importance of specialized training for SCAs and frequency of participation in training, while controlling for the number of times that an SCA wanted to attend a training session, but was unable to attend.

H₁₁: There will be a relationship between the importance of specialized training for SCAs and the frequency of participation in training, while controlling for the number of times that an SCA wanted to attend a training session, but was unable to attend.

The results for this question were generated using a Partial Correlation test. The observable items considered in this question were the number of times in the last 12 months the respondent participated in training sessions presented by an entity other than the respondent’s home institution, correlated to the variable How important is specific, job-related training for individuals who perform the duties of a student conduct administrator? The researcher controlled
for the variable *How many times have you (the respondent) been unable to attend or participate in training due to circumstances beyond your control?* The researcher is aware that there are many reasons why an SCA would like to attend or participate in training, but is unable to do so. The use of a control variable provides data that is more accurate. By including a control variable, it is possible to delineate a quantifiable amount of correlation between two related variables (Field, 2013). In today’s higher education economy, it is less conceivable that an SCA is able to attend or participate in all requested training sessions. The use of the control variable provides a more realistic picture of the current state of higher education. Table 6 provides the data about this correlation.

Table 6
Pearson Product-Moment Correlation for Research Question 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control Variables</th>
<th>In the last 12 months, how many times did you participate in additional training sessions?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the last 12 months, how many times have you been unable to attend or participate in training due to circumstances beyond your control?</td>
<td>How important is specific, job-related training for individuals performing the duties of a student conduct administrator?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With evidence of statistical significance, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis for this research question. The statistical significance identified
by the researcher in answer to this research question suggests that the field of student conduct meets the first of three outstanding criteria proposed by Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950), that the field of student conduct may be considered a stand-alone profession, when controlling for the variable of how many times an SCA wanted to attend training, but was unable to do so. Further research must be conducted on this question to verify this claim.

The $r^2$ value (effect size) (.17) between the belief of an SCA in the importance of specialized training and how often the SCA attends specialized training sessions demonstrates that about 17 percent of the relationship between how often an SCA attends training and how important the SCA believes additional training is explained, when controlling for the variable of how many times an SCA wanted to attend training, but was unable to do so. SCAs identified the fact that they wish to attend or participate in training but are unable to do so, for reasons beyond their control. The mean of the control variable in this question (How many times have you been unable to attend training?) is 3.22. With the answer choices to this question being 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 or more times, this value (3.22) provides further proof that attending additional training is important for someone who performs SCA responsibilities. Only about one-fourth of the respondents (86, 24%) indicated that they attended all of the training sessions they wished to go to (answer 0).

Table 6 shows the correlations between the importance of additional SCA training compared to the various types of training sessions offered. The post-hoc power for this hypothesis is .99, indicating that an effect will be observed 99% of the time when the effect is supposed to occur and is reflected in the data for this study, given the sampled population.
Research Question 2

Research Question 2 related to the second of three outstanding criteria defined by Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950). This researcher formulated this question to attempt to determine if there was any relationship between the importance of SCAs staying up-to-date on current trends and evolving issues in the field of student conduct, and the frequency with which SCAs stayed up-to-date. The alternative hypothesis for this research question identified a positive relationship for this question.

RQ 2: Is there a relationship between the level of importance of remaining up-to-date on evolving issues and trends in the field for SCAs and frequency in engagement in related activities?

H$_{02}$: There is no relationship between the level of importance of remaining up-to-date on evolving issues and trends in the field for SCAs and frequency of engagement in related activities.

H$_{12}$: There will be a relationship between the importance of remaining up-to-date on evolving issues and trends in the field for SCAs and frequency of engagement in related activities.

Research Question 2 provides evidence regarding the relationship between how important the respondent believes it is for an SCA to remain up-to-date on current trends and topics within the profession of student conduct, compared to how many methods the respondent uses to stay up-to-date. The mean for the number of sources an SCA uses to stay up-to-date is 2.40. The average SCA is using multiple sources to remain current on topics and trends related to the profession of student conduct. The practice of student conduct has grown more complex over
time (Stoner II & Lowery, 2004). Given the field’s increasing complexity, a prudent SCA will use multiple sources to keep up-to-date on trends and issues. The researcher did not gather data or control for the following: *How much time does the SCA spend keeping up-to-date on trends and current topics in student conduct, in a given period?* The results of this study place the relationship between staying up-to-date and the number of sources used by an SCA at .27. The *a priori* established alpha level was .05. The calculations regarding statistical significance of this relationship confirm that the relationship is statistically significant at the .001 level. The researcher did not gather data or control for *If given additional time to stay current on trends and topics, would the SCA utilize that time so appropriately?* Table 7 displays a low correlation, which is statistically significant, between the number of sources used to stay up-to-date and how important it is for the SCA to stay up-to-date. The $r^2$ value for this correlation (.07) indicates a seven percent of the variance in this model is explained by the relationship between the number of sources used by an SCA to stay up-to-date on current topics, and the importance of staying up-to-date by the SCA. With evidence of statistical significance, the researcher finds that there is a small, positive correlation between the importance of SCAs staying up-to-date on current topics and trends in student conduct and in what ways SCAs choose to stay up-to-date. The answer to this research question provides further proof that the field of student conduct meets the second outstanding criterion proposed by Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950). This suggests that the field of student conduct may be considered a stand-alone profession. Additional research is necessary to confirm this claim.
Table 7
Correlation Between Sources Used and Importance of Staying Up-to-date

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Over the course of the last 12 months, how many different methods have you used to stay current on...</th>
<th>How important is it for student conduct administrators to stay up-to-date on evolving issues in t...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over the course of the last 12 months, how many different methods have you used to stay current on...</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation: 1</td>
<td>.27**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed): .00</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sum of Squares and Cross-products: 261.26</td>
<td>41.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Covariance: .75</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N: 348</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important is it for student conduct administrators to stay up-to-date on evolving issues in t...</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation: .27**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed): .00</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sum of Squares and Cross-products: 41.02</td>
<td>91.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Covariance: .12</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N: 348</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 provides the final hypothesis relating to the outstanding criteria identified by Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950). The final criterion for which there was no empirical research is the identification of specialized skills required by SCAs that
the general public does not possess. The researcher hypothesized that the number of skills used by a SCA increased based on the number of years the SCA worked in the profession. The alternative hypothesis predicted a difference in the number of skills based on years in the profession.

RQ 3: Is there a difference in the beliefs of SCAs about the necessity of specialized skills sets based on the number of years in the profession of student conduct?

H₀₃: There is no difference in beliefs by SCAs about the necessity of specialized skills sets based on the number of years in the profession of student conduct.

H₁₃: There will be a difference in beliefs by SCAs about the necessity of specialized skills sets based on the number of years in the profession of student conduct.

Research Question 3 was designed to elicit whether or not there was a change in the skills that were necessary for an SCA to use given how many years the SCA had in the profession. There were four ranges given for how long an SCA held his or her position. The four ranges of the independent variable were 0-4 years, 5-9 years, 10-14 years, and 15 or more years. The multiple range choices allowed the researcher to examine the variance difference between the age ranges.

Assumption Tests

Homogeneity of Variance and Statistically Significant Pairs

For the purposes of this study, the researcher assumed homogeneity of variance between the groups (number of years as an SCA). To confirm this assumption, the researcher calculated the Levene’s Homogeneity of Variance statistic (1.99). The statistical significance value of the “Levene’s test” equaled .12. The statistical significance value of the Levene statistic confirmed
the homogeneity of variance for the different groups of the independent variable (Number of years), .12 > .05.

Table 8 shows which group means are normally distributed and which group means are not normally distributed. Additionally, Table 8 shows that for the groups whose means are normally distributed, the groups results are representative to the target population. The groups whose means are not normally distributed may not be representative of the target population.

Because ASCA does not maintain a record of how long each member has functioned in the field of student conduct, it is not possible to determine if the target population is comparable to the response group. Table 9 highlights that only the levels of 5-9 years and 10-14 years are normally distributed. The other two group means, 0-4 years and 15 or more years, that are not normally distributed indicate that the results of this study for those two groups are not necessarily representative of the target population.

Table 8
Tests of Normality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I have been a student conduct administrator for the following number of years.</th>
<th>Kolmogorov-Smirnov*</th>
<th>Shapiro-Wilk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>df</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Mean Special Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 or more years</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14 years</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9 years</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-4 years</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction
Table 9
ANOVA Number of Skills by Years in the Profession

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>7.55</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>55.05</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58.68</td>
<td>347</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANOVA

The F value for this ANOVA is 7.55. From this value it is possible to calculate the amount of variance between the means of the respective years in the profession, related to the number of skills used by an SCA when speaking with a student. The omnibus F statistic (7.55) is the computed ratio between the variability among the number of skills used by an SCA and the variability among the SCAs based on the number of years in the profession. The F statistic for this ANOVA is statistically significant (p=.00). Table 9 illustrates the ANOVA. In order to determine which pairs are statistically different, the researcher ran post-hoc tests on the pairs of results, based on the existence of the omnibus F statistic.

Post-Hoc Tests

Because there is statistical significance between and within the means of the groups (number of years in the profession), it is necessary to determine which pairs of means are statistically different. The researcher ran Tukey’s Honestly Significant Difference post-hoc test to determine statistically different pairs. These pairs are the four levels that comprise the factor (years of experience) and the potential means differences on the dependent variable (number of skills used). The post-hoc power for this test is .99, which highlights the degree of certainty with
which this model accurately relates the number of years in the conduct field with the number of 
skills used by an SCA when working with a student.

The results of the Tukey post hoc test are laid out in Table 10. Table 11 highlights that 
the pairs of 0-4 years as an SCA are statistically significant with each of the other year ranges. 
This is confirmed by the Tukey statistics. Each of the other pairs of years are not statistically 
significant.

Table 10
Multiple Comparisons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(I) I have been a student conduct administrator for the following number of years.</th>
<th>(J) I have been a student conduct administrator for the following number of years.</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I- J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tukey HSD</td>
<td>15 or more years</td>
<td>10-14 years</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5-9 years</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0-4 years</td>
<td>-.29*</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10-14 years</td>
<td>15 or more years</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5-9 years</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0-4 years</td>
<td>-.19*</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-9 years</td>
<td>15 or more years</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10-14 years</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0-4 years</td>
<td>-.16*</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-4 years</td>
<td>15 or more years</td>
<td>.29*</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10-14 years</td>
<td>.19*</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5-9 years</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 11**

Effect size of ANOVA for RQ3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
<th>Noncent. Parameter</th>
<th>Observed Power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td>3.63a</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>7.55</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>22.66</td>
<td>.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>1098.20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1098.20</td>
<td>6862.21</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>6862.21</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num Years</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>7.55</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>22.66</td>
<td>.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>55.05</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>7.55</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>22.66</td>
<td>.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1292.76</td>
<td>348</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>58.68</td>
<td>347</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. R Squared = .062 (Adjusted R Squared = .054)
b. Computed using alpha = .05

**Effect Size**

This study is not a true experimental design study, because it was based on the opinions of the respondents. The effect size for this study is .054, which for a true experimental design equates to a moderate effect size; the results of this study may not be generalizable to a larger population. The effect size for this study is the variance accounted for in the number of skills used by an SCA when speaking with a student based on the number of years the SCA has worked in the profession. While there is a very high degree of observed power, the effect only accounts for just over five percent of the variance in the number of skills used by an SCA as a result of the number of years in the profession.

Table 11 delineates the amount of error in the model. The results from this model explain the amount of error in terms of the number of skills that an SCA uses when speaking with a
student, based on the number of years in the profession. The value equals .40 skills or about half of one skill ($\sqrt{.16} = .40$).

Figure 1 displays a graphical representation of the ANOVA means plot for this question. The figure shows that the number of skills used by an SCA increases the longer the SCA remains in the profession.

![ANOVA Means Plot: Number of Skills Used by SCAs Based on Years in the Profession](image)

Figure 1. Number of skills used by SCAs based on years in the profession.

With evidence of statistical significance for this research question, the researcher provides evidence that there is a difference in the number of skills used by an SCA when
working with a student or student organization, based on the number of years that an SCA has worked in the profession.

Research Question 4

The researcher structured the final research question to provide evidence about SCA professional identity. For the purpose of this study, the researcher put together the construct of professional identity in the following format. The basis of SCA professional identity is formed by the information provided by respondents related to the three outstanding criteria from Horton (as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950): Specialized training, Staying up-to-date, and Specialized skills. The instrument asked respondents to provide their opinion on several items related to these outstanding criteria. In addition to the outstanding criteria information, the instrument also contained a question that specifically asked the respondents whether or not it was their belief that the field of student conduct contained a distinct and unique professional identity from other fields in student affairs. The construct of professional identity for this study is created by averaging the data collected from each of the outstanding criteria along with the data for the individual professional identity question. The purpose of this research question is to provide information about the components of SCA professional identity, and the degree to which each of the factors may contribute to the creation of SCA professional identity. The alternative hypotheses for Research Question 4 indicate that each of the given factors predict SCA professional identity.

RQ 4: Do the factors of: participation in training outside of that provided by the institution, as orientation, staying up-to-date on relevant trends and topics in the field of student
conduct, and possession of relevant skills not possessed by the general public, predict professional identity of the student conduct administrator?

H₀₄: Participation in training outside of that provided by the institution, as orientation, staying up-to-date, and possession of relevant skills not possessed by the general public, does not predict student conduct administrator professional identity.

H₁₄: Participation in training outside of that provided by the institution, as orientation, staying up-to-date, and possession of relevant skills not possessed by the general public predicts student conduct administrator professional identity.

To garner this information, multiple linear regression was conducted, with the dependent variable being the value of the belief by respondents that student conduct has a unique and distinct professional identity compared to other student affairs entities. The three independent factors were training, staying up-to-date, and specialized skills.

Model ANOVA

Table 12 displays the model summary. The standard error of the estimate states that there is almost a one-point (7/10) difference in the belief that an SCA holds related to whether there is a unique and distinct professional identity for SCAs compared to other student affairs entities. The adjusted R² value (.09) indicates that the amount of variance in the model for SCA professional identity is nine percent explained with the variables of training, special skills, and staying up-to-date included in the model.
Table 12
Model Summary for Research Question 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>Durbin-Watson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.31a</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>1.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Grand Mean Special Skills, Grand Mean Training, Grand Mean Staying Up-to-date
b. Dependent Variable: I believe that student conduct administrators have a unique and distinct professional identity co...

Correlation

The results from the correlations indicate that each of the independent variables are all positively related to each other, but not necessarily to the latent construct of professional identity (.22, .15, and .26). Each of the variables are statistically significant (.00, .00, .00) bivariate relationships between the criteria and the construct of SCA professional identity. In rank order, the variables include special skills (.26), additional training (.22), and staying up-to-date (.15). These independent variable inter-correlations are all in the low range, some higher than others (.15, .44, and .52), meaning that there is no multicollinearity between the independent variables. The results displayed in Table 12 highlight that there is little error (.72) in model. Table 13 displays the correlation data for Research Question 4.
Prediction Factors

Table 13 displays the coefficients for the results of Research Question 4. Both training and special skills have a positive relationship, which are statistically significant predictors of SCA professional identity. The specialized skills that an SCA possesses and uses has a larger relationship to professional identity than the additional training sessions attended by an SCA (.46 > .21 or .21 > .17). There are three predictors in this model: training, staying up-to-date, and specialized skills. The prediction power of each of the independent variables as they accurately predict the dependent variable is computed by squaring the value of the part correlation. The squared value of the part correlation delineates by how much the prediction power the model will lose if any of the respective variables are removed as predictors. Each of the independent variables (training, staying up-to-date, and specialized skills are positively related to the professional identity of the SCA, and are statistically significant predictors of SCA professional identity. A researcher performs regression analysis to determine specifically which factors are predictors of an effect on the dependent variable. It is possible to determine in which order factors have the most or least prediction effect on a model. The next section identifies the predictors from most to least significant. Prediction of a factor is stated in terms of effect size (.00 to .06). All of the standardized coefficients have a positive relationship with SCA professional identity. Each factor is a statistically significant predictor of SCA professional identity.
Table 13
Correlation for RQ4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>I believe that SCAs have a unique and distinct professional identity</th>
<th>Grand Mean Training</th>
<th>Grand Mean Staying Up-to-date</th>
<th>Grand Mean Special Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
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<td>.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td>348</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>348</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>348</td>
<td>348</td>
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<td></td>
<td>348</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Not all of the predictors have the effect on the model of determining SCA professional identity. This paragraph explains the predictive values of the factors included in the model.

Removing the predictor of the number of specialized skills used by a conduct administrator will reduce the prediction power of the model by five percent (.21 = .05). As the number of specialized skills known to an SCA increases (B = .32) by one standard deviation or just under one half of a skill (SD = .41), SCA professional identity increases by .14 points (1/5 point) (.32 x .41 = .13), holding all other predictors steady. This is the most important predictor in the model.

Removing the predictor of the number of training sessions attended by an SCA will reduce the prediction power of the model by three percent (.17 = .03). As the number of specialized training sessions attended by an SCA increases (B = .53) by one standard deviation (SD = .67) or just over one half of a training session, SCA professional identity increases by .36 points (just over 1/3 of a point) (.53 x .67 = .36), holding all other predictors steady. This is the second most important predictor in the model.

Removing the predictor of staying up-to-date will not impact the professional identity of SCAs (.05 = .00). In other words, most of the independent variables (Training sessions attended and Specialized skills) predict SCA professional identity. While there is statistical significance to the practice of staying up-to-date, that task alone does not have as much of an impact on SCA professional identity. This information is relayed in Table 14. Table 15 provides the descriptive data for these statistics.
Table 14

Coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Part Correlation</th>
<th>Part Correlation Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (Constant)</td>
<td>-2.01E-15</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Mean Training</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>341101508.8</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Mean Staying Up-to-date</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>246518378.3</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Mean Special Skills</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>197089801.4</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15

Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grand Mean Professional Identity</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>.426</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Mean Training</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>.677</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Mean Staying Up-to-date</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>.557</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Mean Special Skills</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>.411</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graphical Representation

Figure 2 is a scatter plot of SCA professional identity. The scatter plot displays the standardized values of the respondents for the question of whether or not respondents believe that student conduct has a unique and distinct professional identity. Given the setup of the
question, the scatter plot displays the visual effect of “binning.” “Binning” is a term used to describe the image seen on a graph in which the answers to a question have specific values, and are incremental, not continuous. The scatter plot shows that the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement regarding professional identity for SCAs. This visual representation is supported by the statistical significance in the model shown in Table 13.

Figure 2. Scatter plot of Student Conduct Administrator professional identity.
While the fundamentals of the profession have remained relatively the same (Gehring, 2006), the responsibilities of the SCA have changed. The case types investigated and resolved by SCAs are more complex today than when the first institutions of higher education were established (Waller, 2013). SCAs have more position responsibilities today than any other time in history; such requirements include increased reporting responsibilities, Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Deputy Coordinator functions, coordination with institutional, community, and governmental agencies (National Association of Higher Education Risk Management, 2014). Staying up-to-date on current topics and trends makes one a good professional (Council for the Advancement of Standards, 1986).

Conclusion

Given the results of the multiple linear regression analyses, the researcher can provide evidence that the specialized skills known and used by SCAs predict part of SCA professional identity. With this information, the researcher accepts the alternative hypothesis that specialized skills account, in part, for SCA professional identity. The results of the multiple linear regression analyses also indicate that the additional training sessions attended by SCAs predict part of SCA professional identity. With this information, the researcher accepts the alternative hypothesis that additional training accounts, in part, for SCA professional identity. Finally, given the results of the multiple linear regression analyses, the researcher cannot provide evidence that staying up-to-date on current topics and trends in the field of student conduct predict part of SCA professional identity. With this information, the researcher does not accept the alternative hypothesis that staying up-to-date on current topics and trends accounts, in part, for SCA professional identity.
The information provided by the quantitative data is only one portion of this research project; another portion of the project is the qualitative information provided by the respondents. That information is discussed in detail in the next section.

Ancillary Analysis

Respondents were asked three qualitative questions during the survey. Each of these questions provided an opportunity for respondents to identify additional and specific information related to training sessions attended, specialized skills used when speaking with students, or sources used to stay up-to-date on current topics and trends in the field of student conduct. The survey could not cover all possible answers. By providing respondents an opportunity to input their own information, the project provided greater reliability and more generalizability to the population. Each of the next three sections presents the results from the qualitative questions asked on the survey.

Training

The first qualitative statement asked on the survey was, “Please describe any other forms of training which you have participated in (not listed above) and include the frequency.” This statement related to the first of Horton’s (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950) outstanding professional criteria that the field of student conduct had not met at the time of this project. Of the 399 respondents, 92 provided information regarding this statement. In responding to the statement, 62 of the 92 respondents (67%) identified specific forms of training asked about in other survey questions, such as training from local or regional entities, webinars, other
professional associations, or for-profit entity training sessions. The following training sessions were identified by respondents that were not asked about elsewhere in the survey:

- Institutional training (variety of topics);
- Conduct software training;
- The Donald D. Gehring Institute;
- Topical trainings (Workplace Violence, Trauma-Informed, Restorative Justice, etc.);
- Training sessions with law enforcement personnel;
- Self-paced training sessions;
- Review of scholarly publications;
- Taking academic courses;
- Executive coaching;
- General Counsel;
- Social media; and
- Mentoring

These additional training opportunities provide SCAs with relevant information specific to areas that interact with the practice of student conduct. Different SCAs respond to different conduct matters. It is not necessary that all SCAs know and master all skills. It is necessary for SCAs to appropriately identify skills and topics on which they need additional training, seek out, and participate in said training. The information provided in the qualitative statement on this topic highlights this premise.

Staying Up-to-date

The next qualitative statement in the survey provided an opportunity for respondents to identify any sources not listed on the survey that the SCA used to stay up-to-date on current topics and trends in the field of student conduct. The statement said, “If you utilize sources/means not listed above, please describe these and include the frequency of use.” Only 48 respondents provided information regarding this question. There was some repetition of answers; however, this space provided the largest diversity of answers of any of the qualitative statements.
Here are the additional sources used by SCAs to keep up-to-date on topics and trends in the field of student conduct that were not addressed by the survey.

- Alerts;
- Mentors;
- Social media;
- Books;
- Governing entities;
- Colleagues;
- Conferences; and
- Scholarly literature

The bullet list above consists of the categories of sources SCAs use to remain up-to-date on topics and trends in the field of student conduct. These categories, combined with the sources listed in the survey, prove that staying up-to-date is an important part of being a professional SCA. The data may say that staying up-to-date contributes to the professional identity of the SCA, but that does not stop SCAs from staying up-to-date.

Specialized Skills or Knowledge

The final qualitative statement that provided respondents an opportunity to provide data related to specialized skills or knowledge possessed by the SCA. The survey and the literature review identified core competencies required of all SCAs. This qualitative statement provided SCAs an opportunity to provide greater detail about other skills which they found necessary and helpful when meeting with students. A total of 77 respondents provided data in response to this statement. Below is a list of the categories of skills identified.

- Cultural competency;
- Administrative skills;
- Alcohol and drug intervention strategies;
- Writing skills;
• Technological skills;
• Supervision;
• Rapport building;
• Listening skills;
• Understanding of different campus entities;
• Social justice;
• Communication skills;
• Navigation of politics;
• Counseling skills;
• Crisis management skills;
• Empathy;
• Presentation skills;
• Common sense;
• Conversational skills; and
• Program development

The final portion of the project consisted of the demographic information collected from the respondents. This information is discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Conclusion

The data provided in the answers to the research questions provides empirical proof that the field of student conduct is a profession. The researcher makes this claim because there is now empirical evidence that the profession meets all of the criteria identified by Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950). This study strictly focused on testing for Horton’s last three outstanding criteria. Chapter 2 contains a discussion of the empirical data which already existed about how the practice of student conduct already met the remaining seven criteria. It is the researcher’s position that because there is now empirical evidence that the practice of student conduct meets all ten criteria set forth by Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950), this is proof that the practice of student conduct can now be considered a profession.
The first three research questions were specifically designed to elicit quantitative information to determine whether or not the field of student conduct met the outstanding three criteria developed by Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950). The qualitative data provided an opportunity for respondents to give in-depth information about further skills, training, and sources used to stay up-to-date on the field of student conduct. Finally, the demographic information helped to paint a picture of who the respondents and SCAs are in general. The project built on itself, with each portion—research questions, qualitative data, and demographic information—providing more and more data, and a clearer picture of the profession of student conduct and SCAs. At this time, it is necessary to tie together the literature and theory from Chapters 1 and 2 with the data from Chapter 4.
CHAPTER 5
OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

This chapter presents an overview of the study. Additionally, implications of the findings are shared, limitations of the study are discussed, and opportunities for further research are suggested. All dissertations are required to be either original research or replications of existing research studies to determine if the original research still holds true. This dissertation is original research, borrowing from other scholars in the field of student conduct (Dowd, 2012; Gehring, 2006; Hyde, 2014; Stoner II & Lowery, 2004; Waller, 2013; Wannamaker, 2005). The prior research is important, as it helped to form the basis of this dissertation. This dissertation did not just build on existing research, but in fact, it broke new ground. This new ground constitutes the implications of this research project.

The researcher for this study used the work of Horton (1944, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950), who identified 10 criteria for determining if work performed constituted a profession. The researcher identified two outstanding criteria which had yet to be addressed in the student conduct literature. The two outstanding criteria were the need for specialized training and the importance of staying up-to-date. The researcher confirmed the work of Waller (2013) regarding the possession of specialized skills that the general public does not possess (Horton, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950). In addition to looking at these outstanding criteria, the researcher also constructed a variable defined as professional identity of Student Conduct Administrators.
(SCAs). The researcher created a new survey instrument and invited the members of the Association for Student Conduct Administration (ASCA) to participate in the study. The researcher collected the data and tabulated the results. The researcher will now highlight the implications of the results.

Implications of This Research

There are several implications of this research. The first implication relates to the SCA professional identity. The other implications of the research that correspond to identification of an independent profession, impact SCAs at the professional association, institutional, and individual levels. There is interrelationship between identification of an independent profession and also SCA professional identity.

Student Conduct Administrator Professional Identity

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, the concept of professional identity has been defined in multiple ways by different scholars and researchers (Prosek and Hurt, 2014; Rickard, 1988). This is the first time that the construct of professional identity has been applied to SCAs. Through this research, SCAs may begin to better articulate how we function to complete our assigned tasks and responsibilities. What does it mean when someone says “I am a student conduct administrator?” There is now an evidence-based response. This research lays the foundation for the development of specific aspects of professional identity for SCAs in terms of specialized skills, additional training, and staying current on topics and trends in the profession. This study just opened the door to the role of professional identity for SCAs. There are new opportunities to further define what the concept of professional identity means for SCAs.
SCA Professional Identity, Effect on the Association

When Dr. Donald Gehring founded the Association for Student Judicial Affairs in 1987 (Association for Student Conduct Administration, 1993), along with the other founders, it is reasonable to assume, that they probably conceived of student conduct as a profession. Without knowledge of the ten professional criteria (Horton, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950), some people and entities may already consider the Association for Student Conduct Administration (ASCA) a professional organization. This research study provides information that suggests that the practice of student conduct now meets all of the ten criteria. ASCA now has a stronger claim to call itself a professional organization.

ASCA is being recognized by outside entities for the expertise of its members on topics related to student conduct and conflict resolution (Association for Student Conduct Administration, 2014). If the Association utilizes this research and commissions or receives additional research, further defining SCA professional identity, then there may be greater credibility and professional stature to the Association. The Association is currently called upon to provide an opinion on matters related to student conduct. Publication of this research study will hopefully increase the frequency of the Association to be called upon by outside entities to provide authoritative response and insight into matters relating to student conduct and conflict resolution.

Denotation as an independent profession provides the imperative or gives credibility to ASCA to continue to be the “premier entity in student conduct and conflict resolution” (Association for Student Conduct Administration, 1993). With documented evidence of an independent profession, the veracity of this claim is strengthened. There should be a renewed call
to examine the status-quo and develop new best practices to a continually changing environment in which SCAs function. This includes the development of education, training, and other aspects incorporated into the professional identity of SCAs, as identified by future research. The responsibility lies with all members of the Association to move the entity forward. Student Conduct Administrators should never forget the foundations on which the association was founded. Those pillars will always be fundamentally important to the practice of student conduct (Gehring, 2006). Another implication of this research affects the Association’s work with Alternative Dispute Resolution.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

The subfield of alternative dispute resolution has been an emerging trend in ASCA for about eight years now. The reason for the emergence of this trend came from the need for institutions to respond to conflict between institutional community members that did not rise to the level of a student code violation (Schrage & Giacomini, 2009). The Association has done work in the area of creating best practices around this subfield, including the creation of publications. The Association maintains a Community of Practice comprised of professionals dedicated to the work of alternative dispute resolution. There is still more work to be done. Institutions continue to struggle with the concept of alternative dispute resolution (Jeanne Meyer, personal communication, February 26, 2016). Alternative dispute resolution is in some ways opposite of what normally happens in the practice of student conduct (Schrage & Giacomini, 2009). Therefore, the creation of more resources and information on this topic is necessary. The creation of these materials is a void that ASCA can fulfill. Being an independent profession
provides the mandate to create and evaluate best practices and materials (Council for the Advancement of Standards, 1986).

There is further work to complete at the professional association level in regard to the professional identity of SCAs. ASCA is in a unique vantage point to call for, commission, and publish the necessary work. The Association is not the only place where the effects of SCA professional identity can be felt. Individual institutions of higher education will also be provided with an opportunity to enjoy the benefits of SCA professional identity.

Institutional Effect of Student Conduct Administrator Professional Identity

At most institutions across the United States, the student conduct office is one of several departments within the Student Affairs Division (Waller, 2013). The designation of student conduct as a profession will provide some opportunities for institutions. Being classified as a profession requires the creation of best practices, and benchmarks (Council for the Advancement of Standards, 1986; Horton, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950). With the creation of these benchmarks and best practices, institutions will have a repository to draw from, in advancing their student conduct department forward. Additionally, the profession designation for student conduct will allow institutions to know what benchmarks the student conduct staff should be held to. Scholars in the field of student conduct have published literature on standards for conduct offices and professionals. Institutions may shift operational responsibilities among departments to accommodate best practices for student conduct professionals.

There are additional impacts for independent profession designation on institutions. The designation of a profession on student conduct professionals may allow for examination and possible realignment of operational responsibilities. If the position is not seen as “an other duty
as assigned” function, appropriate resources and responsibilities should be provided to the professional(s) in the department. In many institutions, student conduct is not a large department. Often it may be one, two, or three people responsible for handling the functions of the campus conduct. The designation of a profession is not going to suddenly cause an influx of money, resources, and personnel into the field. It is possible that the professional designation may move a few dollars or a person. What is more likely to happen is that institutions will reexamine their conduct practice and procedure, expand the institutional roles and responsibilities of student conduct, and assign operational responsibilities to the conduct staff, in-line with current best practice. Finally, there is an effect on SCA professional identity for individual SCAs.

Individual Effect of Student Conduct Administrator Professional Identity

Being designated as an independent profession would provide the basis for the individual credibility of SCAs and the work of the conduct office at an institutional level, to increase. The expectation has always been and will continue to be that student conduct personnel are knowledgeable and proficient in their responsibilities. Such responsibilities may include assistance with or responsibility for tracking, assembly, and dissemination of the institution’s Annual Security Report as provided for under the Clery Act (United States Congress, 1990).

Another responsibility may be to take a more proactive approach to educating the campus community about the rules, roles and responsibilities of campus community members. This may include taking the lead in developing student culture, developing campus behavioral norms, engaging in discussions on civil discourse, and inclusive dialogues on a variety of topics. Included in these conversations and discussions are the subjects of Title IX of the Higher
Education Amendments of 1972, philosophical conversations on the alignment of student, student-staff, and staff employee discipline, and general grievance procedures.

The whole goal of student conduct is to be educational, not punitive (Gehring, 2006; Stoner II & Lowery, 2004; Waller, 2013). What better way to accomplish the education then by talking to a student about the rules before the student commits the violation? Students come to college to learn and improve their future (Dowd, 2012). There is no reason why students cannot have fun while at college, while being safe and following the rules. Students do not generally read the Student Code of Conduct before starting college. The information contained in the student code is important and needs to be relayed to the incoming students. Student Conduct professionals have an obligation to set students up for success by ensuring that students are aware of and follow the rules of the campus community. If students are made knowledgeable about the rules at the time of admission, this goes a long way in shaping how students will respond during the school year (Waller, 2013).

Holding conversations and providing education and information for students is only one part of the responsibility of SCAs. Another part of the conversation must be with faculty and staff members about the rules of the institution. Faculty must know and understand the student conduct process related to academic misconduct and be willing to engage students in this conversation. A starting point for the faculty is to engage in a conversation with the conduct office. By designation as an independent profession, it is possible that faculty may see SCAs as experts and be willing to engage in a conversation about campus norms and rules.

It is good professional practice for institutions to allow all of their employees to receive continued training (Council for the Advancement of Standards, 1986). The profession of student
conduct progressively changes (Stoner II & Lowery, 2004). It is therefore necessary for SCAs to stay up-to-date on new topics and best practices. If it is not happening already, SCAs should be briefing their administration on current trends and topics within the profession. This briefing should include information on emerging legislation related to the field of student conduct.

Recently there has been an increase in the number of students and parents who are unhappy with the outcome of a student conduct proceeding. Some concerned parents and students speak to their legislator about the matter (June, 2014). Depending on the knowledge level of the legislator, he or she may think this is normal practice at an institution, and attempt to introduce legislation designed to proscribe how future conduct matters are to be handled. It is still important to ensure that student conduct personnel and institutional administration are aware of pending and adopted legislation to mitigate institutional liability. The SCA is in the best position to know how proposed and adopted legislation will impact the profession and the institution. With increased credibility, expanded roles, institutional administrators who do not rely on their student conduct staff to provide legislative information and updates may increasingly do so.

The concept of SCA professional identity and the designation of student conduct as an independent profession has effects on the professional association, the institutional, and the individual SCA level. The concept of SCA professional identity is linked to the evidence that suggests the field of student conduct meets all ten of the profession criteria (Horton, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950). This study is only one small piece of the larger concept of SCA professional identity. There are more opportunities for further research on this topic.
Opportunities for Further Research

Based on existing research and literature, the researcher chose to define the construct of professional identity in terms of specialized skills, staying up-to-date, and specialized training received by SCAs (Horton, as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950; Prosek & Hurt, 2014; Rickard, 1988). This set of criteria was chosen because there was no evidence that student conduct administration met all of the requirements for identification as a profession. Now such evidence exists. This evidence now opens up opportunities for future researchers and scholars to define the concept of SCA professional identity in new ways. Professionals in any field have pride in their work.

There is a story to how a profession developed. Professional identity allows a professional to tell the story of the work that the professional does. SCAs now have the ability to start to tell that story, differently and more comprehensively. The functions of the SCA existed since the first institutions of higher education (Komives & Associates, 2003; Rudolph, 1962; Stoner II & Lowery, 2004). The individuals performing the functions, and the function the individuals had to perform changed over time (Gehring, 2006; Waller, 2013). There is published research on some of the SCA functions (Gehring, 2006, Mikus, 2014; Stoner II & Lowery, 2004; Waller, 2013; Wannamaker, 2005). This study provides the first time that there is published research on how the functions start to define who SCAs are as professionals. This is where the gap in the literature exists and needs to be filled.

Some of these ways include looking at SCAs in terms of what factors SCAs consider when they make decisions. Another future study could be to define SCAs based on the different functions they perform, such as adjudication, dispute resolution, and threat assessment. Are there
differences in SCA professional identity between those SCAs who work at private institutions, versus public institutions, versus community colleges, or by institutional type, HBCU, HIS, regional, flagship, etc.? Further research on the topic of SCA professional identity will help to provide a broader definition of the concept. Three aspects of the position (training, skills, and staying up-to-date) do not define SCAs in their entirety.

The researcher asked respondents to provide their gender or gender identity. The researcher collected the information to ensure that a representative sample was present. The researcher did not answer questions based on the relationship of gender or gender identity to any of the professional identity constructs. Does professional identity of the SCA change based on how long the SCA has worked in the profession? Does professional identity of the SCA change based on location of the institution (pacific northwest, mid-Atlantic, etc.)? What does SCA professional identity look like when an SCA specializes in alternative dispute resolution, or working with student organizations? These are all questions that ASCA should ask and answer with empirical research. There are numerous research studies still ripe to pursue.

Another area in which more research must be conducted is to further define if there is a unique and distinct professional identity between student conduct administrators and the broader field of student affairs. Student affairs professionals often cross train and have overlapping skills and knowledge. Each professional applies this information and skills in different ways to perform their assigned function. With this overlapping knowledge and cross training, the question arises, how do SCAs distinguish themselves from their fellow student affairs colleagues in housing, or financial aid, or campus resource centers? This is an area of research of significant importance.
Conclusion

The goal of this study was to confirm whether or not the practice of student conduct administration constituted an independent profession based on the characteristics as outlined by Horton (as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950). Additionally, assuming the practice constituted a profession, this further goal was to start to define the term of professional identity related to an SCA. In setting out to accomplish this task, the researcher compiled information on literature related to the fundamentals of the field of student conduct, skills and training. The researcher identified several common ways of staying up-to-date on current topics or trends in the field. A survey was developed and distributed to the membership of a national association. The results were compiled and statistical significance was found in each of the areas this survey sought to assess. Finally, the implications of the research and opportunities for further research were discussed.

There is now empirical evidence that supports the researcher’s claim that the practice of student conduct may be considered a stand-alone profession. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the functions of an SCA have been an essential component of the field since the first institutions of higher education opened. It was not until 1944 when Horton published the 10 criteria for classifying a profession (as cited in Wrenn & Darley, 1950). It took another 72 years for research to be conducted to determine if student conduct could be considered a stand-alone profession. This research provides new information that may confirm that the practice of student conduct meets all 10 criteria necessary to be classified as a profession. The remaining two criteria were what this project tested: what special training do SCAs receive to perform their functions, and how do SCAs stay up-to-date on current topics and trends in the field (Horton, as cited in Wrenn
& Darley, 1950)? The research also confirmed the work of Waller (2013) who reported on a set of skills necessary to the success of SCAs, not possessed by the general public. The essential next step is to conduct that further research.
REFERENCES


Association for Student Conduct Administration. (2014). Dana Jutenin, chair, Business meeting, Annual Conference, Clearwater Beach, FL.

Association for Student Conduct Administration. (2016a). Matthew Sullivan, chair, Business meeting, Annual Conference, St. Pete Beach, FL.


Dixon v. Alabama, 294 F. 2d 150 (5th Cir. 1961)


McKeiver v. Pennsylvania, 403 U.S. 528 (1971)


Roper v. Simmons (543 U.S. 551, 2005)


APPENDIX A

SURVEY CORRESPONDENCE
Greetings <<FIRST_NAME>>,

I am writing to solicit the voluntary participation of Association members in a research study regarding the professional identity of student conduct administrators. This study will be in fulfillment of my doctoral dissertation in Adult and Higher Education at Northern Illinois University.

This study will examine the habits of student conduct administrators related to how often and in what ways they stay up-to-date on topics and trends in the field of student conduct, identifying any special skills possessed by student conduct administrators, above and beyond what is considered a skill held by the general public, and what training a student conduct administrator receives, above and beyond institutional position orientation. The study also examines how a student conduct administrator defines professional identity.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please visit the link below and complete a short (24 question) survey. Surveys are being accepted through June 17, 2016.

The survey can be found at https://niu.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_abFsPRuGvuIyhet

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at z1566349@students.niu.edu.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Brian M. Glick
Doctoral Candidate, Adult & Higher Education, Northern Illinois University
Follow-Up Reminder Survey Email

June 24, 2016

Greetings <<FIRST_NAME>>,

This email is to remind you that your participation in a doctoral research study on the professional identity of student conduct administrators has been requested by Brian Glick of Northern Illinois University. This study is intended for all ASCA members. The survey can be found at https://niu.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_abFsPRuGvuIyhet

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have already completed this survey, please disregard this request. If you are interested in participating in this study, the survey link will remain active until June 30, 2016.

If you have any questions about the research study, please contact me at z1566349@students.niu.edu.

Sincerely,

Brian M. Glick
Doctoral Candidate, Adult & Higher Education, Northern Illinois University
Survey Instrument Q1 Consent to Participate. I agree to participate in the research project titled Professional Identity of Student Conduct Administrators, being conducted by Brian M. Glick, doctoral student at Northern Illinois University. Dr. Suzanne Degges-White is the committee chair/faculty director for this study. I have been informed that the purpose of the study is:

1. To determine if the field of student conduct is considered a stand-alone profession as defined by criteria identified in the literature;
2. To determine what specialized training student conduct administrators possess which enables them to complete position responsibilities as student conduct administrators;
3. To determine how student conduct administrators stay current on relevant topics and trends related to the field of student conduct;
4. To determine what specialized skill sets student conduct administrators possess which enable them to complete position responsibilities as a student conduct administrator;
5. To determine if there is a unique and distinct professional identity among student conduct administrators.

I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I will be asked to do the following:
1. Complete an online questionnaire, totaling approximately 30 questions;
2. That this questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

I am aware that my participation is voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time without penalty or prejudice. If I have any additional questions concerning this study, I may contact Brian Glick at z1566349@students.niu.edu or 815-753-9288, or Dr. Suzanne Degges-White at sdeggeswhite@niu.edu or 815-753-1648.

I understand that if I would like further information regarding my rights as a research subject, I may contact the Office of Research Compliance at Northern Illinois University at (815) 753-8588.

I understand that the intended benefits of this of this study include:
1. Expansion of the knowledge base and empirical research regarding the field of student conduct;
2. Empirical data about the professional identity of the student conduct administrator. I have been informed that potential risks and/or discomforts I could experience during this study include nothing more harmful than the completion of any other daily activity related to using an electronic device to complete the survey instrument.

I understand that all information gathered during this experiment will be kept confidential by:
1. Not collecting IP addresses from respondents;
2. Maintaining data results on computers requiring a password which only the researchers have access to;
3. Not collecting personally identifiable information on the questionnaire;
4. Destroying the data in compliance with university policy on research compliance. I understand that my consent to participate in this project does not constitute a waiver of any legal rights or redress I might have as a result of my participation, and I acknowledge that I have read and understand the information contained in this consent form.

☐ I Agree
☐ No thanks, I do not wish to participate

Q2 In the last 12 months, how many times have you participated in additional training, not provided by your institution, to help you become more proficient in the position as a student conduct administrator?

☐ Four or more times
☐ Three Times
☐ Twice
☐ Once
☐ None

Q3 In the last 12 months, how many times have you been unable to attend or participate in training due to circumstances beyond your control? (i.e. budget constraints, time, personal or professional obligations, etc). This training should not have been offered by your institution, and should have been related to your responsibilities as a student conduct administrator.

☐ Four or more times
☐ Three times
☐ Twice
☐ Once
☐ None

Q4 Where did you acquire the majority of training for your position as a student conduct administrator?

☐ Graduate program
☐ Practical, on-the-job experience
☐ Mentoring
☐ Professional student conduct training, provided external to the institution (Professional associations, for-profit training, etc.)
Q5 How often do you attend the Association for Student Conduct Administration (ASCA) annual conference?
- Annually
- Most every year
- Every second or third year
- Every few years
- None

Q6 In the last 12 months, how many times did you participate in ASCA-sponsored webinars for additional training?
- Four or more times
- Three times
- Twice
- Once
- None

Q7 In the last 12 months, how many times did you participate in local or regional training sessions sponsored by other institutions or not-for-profit entities, related to your student conduct responsibilities?
- Four or more times
- Three times
- Twice
- Once
- None

Q8 In the last 12 months, how many times did you participate in training sessions sponsored by for-profit entities, related to your student conduct responsibilities?
- Four or more times
- Three times
- Twice
- Once
- None
Q9 How important is specific, job-related training for individuals performing the duties of a student conduct administrator today?
- Extremely important
- Very important
- Moderately important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

Q10 Please describe any other forms of training in which you have participated (not listed above) and include the frequency.
Q11 Over the course of the last 12 months, how many different methods have you used to stay current on the trends and issues in the field of student conduct? (Examples include trainings, reading, conferences, etc.)
○ Four or more
○ Three
○ Two
○ One
○ None

Q12 How often do you use the following resources to stay current on the trends and issues in the field of student conduct?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online/In-print sources such as The Chronicle of Higher Education,</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HigherEd Today, or Inside Higher Ed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following local, regional, or national news related to higher education</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilization of resources provided by the Association of Student Conduct Administration</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilization of resources provided by a different professional association</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilization of resources provided by a for-profit entity</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracking federal or state legislation related to student conduct</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Education resources (including OCR)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal or state government communication/guidance</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q13 If you utilize sources/means not listed above, please describe these and include the frequency of use.

Q14 How important is it for student conduct administrators to stay up-to-date on evolving issues in the field of student conduct?
- Extremely important
- Very important
- Moderately important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

Q15 Please rate your mastery of the following skill sets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Set</th>
<th>Very Strong</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Beginning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investigatory skills</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict resolution skills</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal knowledge (including professionally relevant federal and state laws)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity with discipline-specific theories (including student development, academic achievement, etc)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q16 Please indicate how important you feel these skills are to optimal performance of your position as a student conduct administrator.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Extremely important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Moderately important</th>
<th>Slightly important</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investigatory skills</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict resolution skills</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal knowledge (including professionally relevant federal and state laws)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity with discipline-specific theories (including student development, academic achievement, etc)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q17 Please describe any other specialized skills or knowledge that you believe are essential to optimal performance as a student conduct administrator and include your level of importance.
Q18 For each of the following skills, please indicate the level of skill needed by a student conduct administrator to best perform their roles, as compared to the overall general population. The term “general population” is defined as ordinary citizens.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Description</th>
<th>Much higher than average</th>
<th>Higher than average</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Below average</th>
<th>Much below average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investigatory skills</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict resolution skills</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal knowledge (including professionally relevant federal and state laws)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity with discipline-specific theories (including student development, academic achievement, etc)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q19 I believe that student conduct administrators have a unique and distinct professional identity compared to all other student affairs professionals.

○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Neither agree nor disagree
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree
Q20 Please indicate your gender.
- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Gender-Fluid
- Prefer not to answer

Q21 What is your current professional status, as it relates to your student conduct responsibilities?
- Senior student affairs officer
- Senior-level student affairs officer
- Senior-level conduct administrator
- Mid-level conduct administrator
- Entry-level conduct administrator
- Graduate assistant

Q22 I have been a student conduct administrator for the following number of years.
- 15 or more years
- 10-14 years
- 5-9 years
- 0-4 years

Q23 Do you devote more than 80% of your time to completing student conduct administrator functions?
- Yes
- No
Q24 Please indicate your highest degree earned.
- Doctorate (Ed.D. or Ph.D)
- Juris doctorate (J.D.)
- Master’s degree (M.A., M.S., M.Ed.)
- Bachelor’s degree (B.A. or B.S.)
- Associate’s degree (A.A. or A.S.)

Q25 Please indicate your current position title.
- Vice President or Vice Chancellor
- Associate or Assistant Vice President or Associate or Assistant Vice Chancellor
- General Counsel
- Deputy, Associate, or Assistant General Counsel
- Dean
- Associate or Assistant Dean
- Director
- Associate or Assistant Director
- Coordinator
- Complex or Area Coordinator
- Residence Life Coordinator
- Hall Director
- Assistant Hall Director
- Other

Q26 Please select your institution type
- Community College (2-year institution)
- Public Institution (4-year institution)
- Private Institution (4-year institution)
Q27 Please select a secondary institution type:
- For-profit institution
- Land grant institution
- Hispanic-serving institution
- Historically Black college or university
- Tribal college
- Trade school
- Religiously affiliated institution
- Flagship institution
- Regional institution
- Multiple secondary institutional types
- None

Q28 Thank you for your participation. If you have any questions or would like to receive a copy of the final study results, please contact Brian M. Glick at z1566349@students.niu.edu. Please click the ">>" button to record your results.