BEHAVIORS, ATTITUDES, SKILLS, AND KNOWLEDGE FOR SENIOR STUDENT AFFAIRS OFFICERS: PERCEPTIONS OF LEADERSHIP SUCCESS

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ABSTRACT

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Success of senior student affairs officers (SSAOs) on a college campus involves a number of critical factors set in the context of three themes: effective leadership, constant change, and a connection to the university mission and culture. These critical success factors were couched as behaviors, attitudes, skills, and knowledge (BASK) of current SSAOs. As a profession built by scholar-practitioners, it is important to understand success from the SSAOs doing the job. NASPA members and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) SSAOs known to the researcher were asked to share their point of view about which BASK factors were most important. The purpose of the current study is to assess current SSAOs’ perceptions of the importance of these BASK factors to success in their positions. The research questions asked how current SSAOs rate the importance of the BASK factors relative to one another, to what extent there are group differences in how SSAOs rate the BASK factors, and to what extent there are group differences in how SSAOs rate the order of BASK factors relative to one another.

Integrity in decision making was rated as most important, and presenting sessions at professional conferences and/or submitting articles or book chapters for publication, while still important, was rated as the lowest of the BASK factors. Overall, women and people of color had higher BASK scores. A total of 50 lesbian/gay/bisexual SSAOs participated, representing over 11% of respondents; there were no differences for sexual orientation found in the rating of BASK factors. The relative ranking of BASK factors was similar regardless of SSAOs’ gender identity, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation. This study marks the first time sexual orientation was included as a demographic question in published research about SSAOs. The findings provide a
path for aspiring and new SSAOs and offer implications for practice, policy, and future research pertaining to the training of student affairs professionals.
I dedicate this research study to all the aspiring senior student affairs officers with a special nod to those whose gender identity, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity and/or other aspects of their social identity put additional challenges on their path.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Success in the role of the senior student affairs officer (SSAO) on a college campus requires effectiveness in handling a number of critical factors. When leadership capabilities of the SSAO do not facilitate efficacy in managing these critical factors, success is diminished. The purpose of this study is to understand the critical success factors from the point of view of current SSAOs, and how they perceive those factors contribute to success in their role.

Background

Student affairs originated as a profession rooted in practice, starting “from an apprenticeship type of profession to one with a strong educational base” (Stage & Dannells, 2000, p. 3). The perceptions of SSAOs about what factors lead to their success were critical to the current study “because knowledge about how to do student affairs work is held, in part, by the group of professionals doing it and not exclusively by the literature” (Blimling, 2001, p. 384). Reason and Kimball (2012) described “the origins of the field as one dominated by scholar-practitioners” (p. 373). Kimball and Ryder (2014) postulated that “The student affairs profession is overwhelmingly oriented toward practice. To the extent student affairs work requires foundational knowledge, that knowledge is inextricably linked to the operational details of the work itself” (p. 300). These statements suggest student affairs professionals were doing the work while simultaneously developing and disseminating the foundational knowledge to formulate the standards of practice and bring new professionals into the field.

In looking at the history of the SSAO position, the highest-ranking staff member working with students in the extra curriculum in the United States was originally the dean of students. Ephraim Gurney was a history professor appointed in 1870 as the first dean of the undergraduate college by the president of Harvard University. Gurney had other duties similar to what we would think of today as the senior academic officer, registrar, and as a student affairs officer.
Other than continuing in his teaching role, his primary duty was to handle discipline with the students, removing this from the direct responsibility of the president (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976; Gerda, 2006). In 1890, the president of Harvard decided to split the role of the dean of the undergraduate college into two jobs: one focused on academics, Charles Dunbar, and the other concentrated on students, LeBaron Russell Briggs. Briggs has become known as the first dean of men (Gerda, 2006).

According to most historians, Alice Freeman Palmer was the first dean of women, appointed by the president of the University of Chicago. Palmer had stepped down from the presidency at Wellesley College in 1887 when she married, but wanted to stay active in educational endeavors, so she finally accepted the invitation from the Chicago president in 1892 (Schwartz, 1997). However, there is some evidence to support Elizabeth Powell Bond’s appointment as dean of women at Swarthmore in 1890 as coming prior to both Palmer and Briggs’ selection. Overall, many deans of women positions predated deans of men positions, so “the early deans of women were the first professional ancestors of student affairs” (Gerda, 2006, p. 151). Palmer included Marion Talbot as her assistant dean when she began at Chicago and Talbot took over as dean of women three years later when Palmer left the post. Talbot developed strategies for coeducation “with men and women enrolling together and studying the same subjects with the same professors” (Thelin, 2011, p. 185). Women thrived at Chicago and by 1902 women were nearly half of Chicago’s enrollment, much to the chagrin of the male faculty who “formally approved a new policy of instructional segregation” (Thelin, 2011, p. 185).

Lucy Diggs Slowe was the first African American woman dean, appointed at Howard University in 1922 after completing a student personnel degree at Teacher’s College of Columbia University. Slowe’s view on Black women’s leadership was advanced for the time
because she believed in “not only equality of the races, but gender equality within the race” (Perkins, 1996, p. 92). As other deans of women were appointed, they started to organize, research, and meet to discuss issues of women students in higher education and the concerns of deans of women. These women were foundational leaders in creating the student affairs profession. Their efforts included development of professional preparation programs, professional organizations, scholarly research and writing, and professional practice from orientation to career services (Schwartz, 1997).

When the student affairs profession was forming, the role of *in loco parentis*, or university staff acting in the place of parents, was a framework to handle student conduct and moral development. With an increase in enrollment and less capability to regulate student behavior, those serving in the new position of dean of students began to broaden the scope of their role on campus in the late 1800s (Thelin, 2011). In the twentieth century, the notion of educating the whole student came into play. The role of the dean of students expanded to include counseling, advising, student activities, housing, character development, and administrative functions. The dean was handling student service functions, while developing the overall student (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). A seminal document for student affairs is the *Student Personnel Point of View* (American Council on Education [ACE], 1937) and its revised version in 1949 (ACE, 1949). This document was written by many leaders in education with some representation from the student affairs field. It articulated the student development philosophy and support of the academic mission of universities (Stamatakos, 1991).

After World War II, enrollments flourished, as did the specialization of student affairs staff members. Professional preparation programs grew in number and standards of the profession were developed. By the 1960s, student affairs staffs were handling issues of racial
integration and diversity, student activism, and a fundamental shift from in loco parentis to due process rights in student conduct. This era also marked a profound influence on the profession because, “The dean of students position was elevated to vice president status and became part of the president’s cabinet to reflect the growing importance and increased level of responsibility of the role” in handling the student protest and civil rights movements (Gaston-Gayles, Wolf-Wendel, Tuttle, Twombly, & Ward, 2005, p. 277).

Through the end of the twentieth century, campuses became more diverse including an increase in adult learners. Moving into the twenty-first century, student affairs professionals were grappling with accountability expectations from a diverse set of stakeholders; technological advances; globalization (e.g., providing services to international students, supporting domestic students as they study abroad, satellite campuses in countries throughout the world); increased compliance issues; development of student learning outcomes and assessment to prove the value of programs, services, and facilities, all set in the context of change (Dungy & Gordon, 2011).

By thinking about the entire history of student affairs, Mason (2011) believed more and more professionalization and specialization occurred over time, while the primary value of support and development of the whole student was always present. Now that the history and evolution of the SSAO role has been described and the context in which the position was enacted over time explained, an examination of why it is important for SSAOs to be effective leaders follows.

**Statement of the Problem**

Because the landscape of student affairs and higher education keeps changing, the critical success factors of behaviors, attitudes, skills, and knowledge for SSAOs are continually evolving. “As student affairs evolves as a profession, scholars place increasing attention on studying the profession itself” (Sriram, 2014, p. 349); however, very little research has been done
on SSAOs. Reason and Kimball (2012) discussed competence in student affairs as an unrelated set of abilities that function as a toolkit and vary from professional to professional. The researchers posited the ability to process pertinent information and adjust to new circumstances was important and helped define good student affairs practice. The current study examines the behaviors, attitudes, skills, and knowledge necessary to adapt to the context of the SSAO’s employing institution in terms of what current SSAOs believe is good student affairs practice. There has been no recent research delineating the critical behaviors, attitudes, skills, and knowledge perceived to be needed for SSAOs to be effective leaders, therefore, the current study fills this gap.

As garnered from the literature, three factors are critical relative to determining the success of SSAOs. The first is the broad picture of effective leadership (Biddix, 2011; Clayborne & Hamrick, 2007; Davis, 2002; Herdlein, 2004; Smith & Hughey, 2006). The second is the context of the environment of student affairs and higher education as dynamic and constantly changing (Davis, 2002; Gaston-Gayles et al., 2005; Kuk, Banning, & Amey, 2010; Locke & Guglielmino, 2006; Sporn, 2001). Finally, the third is the connection of the SSAO’s role to the institutional mission and culture (Dungy & Gordon, 2011; Manning, Kinzie, & Schuh, 2014; Sporn, 2001; Westfall, 2011). These concepts help to frame the role and the environment in which SSAOs function. A brief understanding of these constructs comes next; these ideas are more fully developed in the literature review to follow.

The necessity of effective leadership for SSAOs has always been a cornerstone of the student affairs profession and this need was evidenced with the first deans of men and women. These deans originated the student affairs profession through their standard of practice, or in other words, their benchmark of quality in working with students (Dean & Jones, 2014;
DiRamio, 2014). The standards of practice have evolved tremendously since the late 1800s, from *in loco parentis* to student development to the current student learning focus (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). Barr, McClellan, and Sandeen (2014) believed effectiveness was critical for SSAOs who must “adapt their professional practice to the times” to be successful (p. 165). The authors clarified further,

> The best student affairs professionals have always adapted their actions to the needs of their institutions, the needs and characteristics of their students, the culture of the communities where they are located, the priorities of their presidents, and their own values and beliefs. (Barr et al., 2014, p. 169)

Given the difficult and ever-changing landscape in which the SSAO must navigate, being effective is essential to success. Being an effective leader leads to the organization’s success. An examination of the context of change as the backdrop for SSAO’s professional practice follows.

**Change**

Student affairs work is set in the ever-changing landscape of higher education which is embedded in the context of local, national, and global issues. Expectations for accountability and continuous improvement are standards set by governmental bodies, students and their parents, employers, and the public. This rapidly changing landscape provides a challenging setting in which SSAOs must lead. Given this backdrop, it is crucial that SSAOs are not only competent, but effective (Balzer, 2010; Manning et al., 2014; Warner, 2011). Looking to the future and anticipating what college will be like is the next step to envision successful leadership enactment for those in higher education, including the SSAO.
To highlight anticipated changes coming by the year 2020, Van Der Werf and Sabatier (2009) projected a number of differences from how colleges operate currently. The number of adult students (over twenty-five years old) will steadily increase, as will the number of students of color. Online services will be expected, as well as around-the-clock convenience. Students will enter college (virtually, face-to-face, or a hybrid of the two) with heightened expectations about the use of technology and receiving information in ways that accommodates different learning styles.

Similarly, Levine and Dean (2012) described contemporary college students as digital natives, the most diverse cohort in U.S. history, connected to their tribe of friends and family at all times, and living in a world in constant flux. The SSAO of the near future will have to meet students’ expectations by delivering programs and services through technology, in addition to offices on campus. Edonick, Mastroieni, and Ortiz (2014) lent support to this idea of using technology to provide online engagement for the 24/7 student culture. The authors suggested taking on-campus events and services online, such as cocurricular programming, conduct hearings, and orientation.

Another viewpoint on the changes coming for higher education was discussed by Mrig (2013). He postulated the challenges for leaders were embedded in the rapidly changing landscape. Leaders needed to focus on the things they can control, define the appropriate issues to handle, and challenge assumptions in the academy preventing innovation and courageous action. Smith and Blixt (2015) pointed to “the changing demographics and psychographics of the new digital generation of students, increasing internal competition for shrinking financial resources, student expectations for outstanding delivery of programs and services, and new technologies transforming the delivery of programs and services” (p. xv) as the most significant
of the many forces driving change. To drill down further on the anticipated future for student affairs, Kuk et al. (2010) highlighted the sustainability of change. The authors described sustainability of change as organizations and the leaders within being able to not only adapt to the constant change, but to create a culture that expects it.

Continuing on this theme of a dynamic environment, Sandeen and Barr (2006) defined a number of critical issues that must be faced by SSAOs and the student affairs profession as a whole. Many of the issues they put forth speak to the ever-changing landscape of higher education and the need for flexibility in approaching resolution for these problems. Some of the issues they examined were how to use technology to support students who are not located on a main campus, the challenge of legal and ethical concerns regarding the lives of students, the role of assessment in the age of accountability, and how to educate students about diversity, while attracting and sustaining a diverse staff. Shutt, Garrett, Lynch, and Dean (2012) also looked at the student affairs landscape as ever-changing. The authors suggested that altering demographics, financial constraints, technology, and roles played by staff were the factors that rose to the top in student affairs administration.

Finally, Manning et al. (2014) emphasized the need to integrate how student affairs operates with the institutional mission. Successful leadership can never be separated from the context of the individual university. Similarly, Westfall (2011) spoke of the vast differences among small colleges and emphasized small college SSAOs must understand the institutional mission and be committed to it. As the landscape changes, it may be necessary for the institutional mission to change based on economic realities; if the institution switches from predominantly residential to commuter, the mission may also need to change to meet the needs of the current student population.
Dungy and Gordon (2011) determined, “From the diversification of types of institutions and the changing nature of students, the student affairs profession has been nimble and has adapted to institutional missions and the needs of students” (p. 75). It will be the onus of the SSAO in the coming years to synthesize these predictions and dilemmas from different sources for adaptation to the changing landscape. These anticipated changes are massive and will require visionary leaders to meet these challenges of revolutionary transformation (Manning et al., 2014).

**Theory of Adaptation**

To ground the aforementioned factors in theory, Sporn’s (2001) framework of adaptation for organizations in higher education was utilized. Based on her research, Sporn suggested a grounded theory of university adaptation. Her inquiry to develop this theory encompassed seven propositions: environment; mission and goals; culture; structure; management; governance; and leadership.

Sporn (2001) described the environment as external and triggering a demand that can be interpreted as either a prospect or a threat. A clear mission was important to any kind of upcoming change. She suggested a culture that was entrepreneurial in nature would have the best chance of successful change in response to the triggers of the environment. She believed a differentiated structure was the most flexible with a balance of autonomy and accountability. Sporn (1999) described a differentiated structure as different groups within the complex university forming subunits under a larger university umbrella. She posited a professionalized management (staff and faculty trained as leaders and administrators) was necessary and that ongoing talent development would enhance these roles. Shared governance was crucial to making decisions through consensus whenever possible. The more stakeholders were engaged,
the more likely the institution could successfully adapt. Leadership committed to adaptive strategies and new ways of doing things could be communicated throughout the organization. This commitment could serve as a motivational factor in getting other constituents on board.

Sporn’s comprehensive view of university adaptation encompassed all the factors that were found repeatedly in the literature that are critical to the success of SSAOs: effective leadership, the context of change, and the connection to institutional mission and culture. Although Sporn’s theory of university adaptation (as demonstrated through her seven propositions) is broader than these three constructs identified for SSAO success, it is still an appropriate lens to use because the three constructs for SSAOs are embedded in Sporn’s model.

**Purpose of the Study**

A number of behaviors, attitudes, skills, and knowledge (BASK) areas have been identified in the literature as critical to the success of SSAOs. The purpose of the current quantitative study is to assess current SSAOs’ perceptions of the importance of these BASK factors to success in their positions (see Appendix A). The plan for the current research formed after finding a previous investigation in which the researcher did a thorough search of the literature to create a list of critical factors relevant to the success of SSAOs. The researcher grouped the factors into categories and used these success factors to create an instrument to measure the perceptions of SSAOs to determine whether or not the critical success factors informed their practice (Davis, 2002).

In the current study, the researcher served as a job analyst with the assistance of current and former SSAOs (who served as subject matter experts) and placed the behaviors, attitudes, skills, and knowledge factors into functional categories; these categories were adaptation and change, communication, leadership and supervision, personal qualities, planning and goal
setting, political environment, professional development, student learning, and supervisor relationship. In addition, the categories were chosen based on an a priori analysis of the literature and previous research. The reliability for each category will be detailed in Chapter III. Based on the feedback of the current and former SSAOs, the researcher grouped the BASK items into appropriate categories (Cranny & Doherty, 1988). With permission granted from the original author (S. Davis Little, personal communication, October 25, 2013); see Appendix B, the literature review and instrument were updated to reflect changes in student affairs and the SSAO role over the last 13 years. The Davis (2002) instrument was foundational in creating the BASK Inventory; however, the current research is not a replication of the Davis study. The research questions to follow demonstrated how mean group differences were sought.

**Research Questions**

There were three research questions (RQs) for this study. There were anticipated group differences based on the perceptions of SSAOs, because differences were found in the previous research study examining these factors with the exception of sexual orientation, as these data were not collected in the original research (Davis, 2002). The research questions were stated “in a way that will lead to collecting useful new data” (Mayer, 2008, p. 22).

RQ1: How do current SSAOs rate the importance of the BASK factors relative to one another?

RQ2: To what extent are there group differences in how SSAOs rate the BASK factors?

RQ3: To what extent are there group differences in how SSAOs rate the order of BASK factors relative to one another?

**Definitions**

The following definitions are for the purposes of this study:
Student affairs: The organizational unit on a college campus responsible for the cocurriculum through its staff, programs, and facilities. Philosophically, student affairs has “situated learning at the epicenter of the cocurriculum, with development and service as its foundation” (Magolda & Baxter Magolda, 2011, p. xviii).

Student affairs functional units: Departments reporting in the student affairs division vary from campus to campus, but often include academic and learning assistance centers; alcohol, tobacco, and other drug programs; assessment; auxiliary services (including bookstore, card office, dining); career services; commuter student services; counseling and health centers; dean of students; disability services; first-year experience; fraternity and sorority life; housing/residence life; multicultural affairs (often including African American, Asian American, Latino/a, and North American Indian programs and centers, as well as international programs and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender student programs and centers); orientation; parent programs; recreational sports; religious and spiritual programs; student activities; student conduct and crisis intervention; student leadership; student union; veteran’s programs; and others (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2012).

Senior student affairs officer: The SSAO is the executive-level university official responsible for the division of student affairs and is most often referred to as the vice president or vice chancellor for student affairs and/or the dean of students (Hammonds, 2012).

Success factors: The types of behaviors (e.g., keeping staff informed), attitudes (e.g., compassion for students), skills (e.g., talent development), and knowledge (e.g., Title IX compliance) used in practice to enact effective leadership.

Effective SSAO leadership: “SSAOs need technical expertise, the legitimacy of a terminal academic degree, wide knowledge across many dimensions of the student experience, and a wide
range of executive skills sets and abilities regarding organizational and administrative
environments” (Mason, 2011). In other words, effective leadership is the blending of behaviors,
attitudes, skills, and knowledge into a single construct for success (Rosch & Kusel, 2010).

*College and university:* These terms are used generically for postsecondary educational
institutions, including public and independent affiliations (Miller, Winston, & Barr, 1991).

**Significance of the Study**

There is a lack of investigation in the contemporary literature into the SSAO role and
what constitutes effective leadership. The current study will fill a gap formed by the dearth of
literature (Davis, 2002; Lindsay, 2014; Smith, Lara, & Hughey, 2009; Sriram, 2014; Wesaw &
Sponsler, 2014). A second reason for this study is the institution-level changes seen that impact
student affairs practice, especially a guiding philosophy that supports and enhances the
university’s mission and culture (Manning et al., 2014). It takes an effective leader in student
affairs to interpret and set direction based on the institutional mission and culture, so that staff
members understand their role and act to carry it out.

A third reason for this study is the need to find effective leaders who can successfully
pilot in the context of change in which student affairs and higher education is embedded. A
highly volatile environment calls for leaders who are effective in different circumstances. In the
current state of shrinking resources and more accountability, a leader at the helm who can
successfully navigate these rough seas is needed (Moneta & Jackson, 2011). The current study
will identify whether current SSAOs view adaptability to change as important to success in their
role.

One thing we would lose if the current study was not conducted is inclusion of a more
diverse pool of SSAOs in the research literature, especially related to sexual orientation and
gender identity. Although there may be research that includes these demographic variables, the researcher has yet to uncover it. Kezar and Lester (2010) looked at successful leadership in terms of “intersecting identities, power relations, and context” (p. 166). Their belief was that pushing the boundaries of the leadership construct by being more inclusive of the whole person (e.g., sexual orientation, class, and educational level) was necessary and termed this pluralistic leadership. They described pluralistic leadership as a “complex understanding that looks at a variety of conditions that shape beliefs” (p. 179). As times change, it is imperative to have a broader view of who enacts leadership. Including sexual orientation was important for the current research because more and more leaders are open about their sexual orientation, yet there was little data about this group. Johnson (2013) offered another reason to include sexual orientation, “Being nonheterosexual in student affairs can leave an administrator feeling marginalized and lonely despite the inclusive mission statements, diversity philosophies, ally trainings, and mottos they espouse” (p. 4). Broido (2000) talked about sexual orientation taking “different forms in different eras” (p. 13) and the current era has more leaders in higher education who identified as LGBTQ including 48 “out” college presidents (Rivard, 2014). This notion of looking beyond one or two characteristics (e.g., gender, race) in thinking about leadership enactment was important for the current study, because demographic information was sought beyond gender and race (e.g., sexual orientation, gender identity).

**Summary**

Postsecondary educational environments are dynamic places under great stress. Higher education and student affairs leaders have to meet the increased needs of a diverse set of stakeholders including students, parents, faculty, university administration, legislators, and accrediting agencies. Each group has continuing demands and high expectations for quality.
Effective leadership is necessary to operate in this context of rapid change and to answer the call for excellence (Balzer, 2010; Kuk et al., 2010). Given the diversity of college environments in which student affairs is embedded, a student affairs leader must make a connection to the individual mission and culture of the institution to work successfully. Identifying the specific behaviors, attitudes, skills, and knowledge necessary for the student affairs leader to be effective, as perceived by those in the role, is the aim of this study. The literature review to follow will delve into the constructs of effective leadership, change, and institutional mission and culture, as they relate to the behaviors, attitudes, skills, and knowledge to enact successful professional practice for SSAOs.
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In an examination of the literature about effective leadership for SSAOs, three themes emerged. The first was the broad view of effective leadership. The second was that student affairs, and higher education in general, were set in the context of change. The third theme was the connection between successful SSAO leaders and the institutional mission and culture of the employing college. Although other themes were present, these three appeared repeatedly in the literature. Because these themes appeared throughout the literature, the behaviors, attitudes, skills, and knowledge needed for successful navigation of the SSAO role should not be separated from effective leadership, the context of change, and the mission and culture of the university.

Because differences among SSAOs by demographic characteristics (i.e., gender identity, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation) were of interest, literature examining these characteristics was also reviewed. As Aguirre and Martinez (2006) did in their research, all constructs were examined by using studies and theoretical and applied writings from a variety of fields, including higher education, student affairs, business, leadership, psychology, sociology, and others.

Overview

First, a look at how various scholars and practitioners discussed effective leadership; this was drawn primarily from higher education and student affairs literature. Next was a look at research and scholarly writing on change as a constant for the environment and how a connection to the institutional mission and culture was necessary. One theory supported the constructs of effective leadership, change, and institutional mission and culture: adaptation theory. Finally, the specific behaviors, attitudes, skills, and knowledge needed for success in the SSAO role were described.
Effective Leadership in Higher Education

A comprehensive literature review of effective leadership in higher education at the department level spanning the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia was conducted by Bryman (2007). He searched for what approaches were effective, but found very little empirical evidence on what behavior made leaders successful in higher education. He did find an extensive list of refereed journal articles supporting his finding of 13 areas of leader behavior associated with effectiveness. Some examples were strategic vision, trustworthiness, and development of a positive and collegial work place. Bryman found his competency-based list could be foundational for leaders, but there were a number of caveats to evaluate. The categories he used were very broad and he did not specify how to accomplish them. For example, trustworthiness was a common goal, but there was no specific action associated with the concept.

Bryman (2007) also found behavior was likely to vary depending on the context, and this situational diversity was accounted for in his literature review. A theme throughout many of the studies he reviewed was a high regard for worker participation in decision making. Another theme was professionals in higher education need very little task supervision, but rather a focus on support for the individual and the department/unit.

As a follow-up to Bryman’s literature review, Bryman and Lilley (2009) conducted a qualitative research study interviewing leadership researchers on their views of leadership in higher education. They found adherence to a list of leader behaviors was ineffective when taken out of context. The specific context was more important than the particular leader behavior. Another characteristic unique to higher education was the allegiance of people to a discipline first and the institution second. In other words, faculty members showed loyalty first to their discipline (e.g., psychology) and second to the universities where they were employed.
Additional findings revealed trustworthiness and integrity as integral to success. Leaders who failed to consult with others on decisions and who refused to confront inappropriate behavior were viewed as ineffective. A number of the participants referred to leadership in higher education as trying to herd cats (Bryman & Lilley, 2009). Specific behaviors, attitudes, skills, and knowledge were important, however these “will vary depending on situational and contextual factors” (Spendlove, 2007, p. 414). Shahmandi, Silong, Ismail, Samah, and Othman (2011) provided additional support for this viewpoint stating, “Adaptability is the extent to which the leaders are able to vary their style in response to the demands of a particular situation or problem” (p. 47). In synthesizing the work of all of these higher education researchers, situational leadership was an appropriate lens for effective academic leadership in higher education institutions. The researchers’ findings can be generalized to SSAOs because of the broad view of effective leadership and the context of the higher education setting.

Theories and practices about leadership in higher education began to change by including multiculturalism and the context in which leadership was enacted. The construct of positionality grounded in contextual conditions was proposed by Kezar (2002) as the foundation for successful leadership. She defined positionality as multiple factors (e.g., gender, race, role, and position) that exist for each individual, and how those factors intersect influenced how someone constructed leadership. She described overlapping identities as inclusive of varied demographics (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, position) making multiple and fluid identities. She looked at how power was manifested on different campuses, and postulated the context in which people work helped in understanding their perspective. She advocated for a pluralistic leadership environment which was inclusive of different beliefs and styles of behavior.
Building on Kezar’s (2002) work, Kezar and Carducci (2006) suggested there was change and disruption in leadership theories for higher education. In their view, there was a fundamental shift from hierarchical, positional leadership to revolutionary outlooks focused on teams and social change. A change from social control and authority-based leadership to context-specific, international, and process-oriented standpoints made an appearance in the last 30 years. From the student affairs lens, Evans and Reason (2001) stated the need for a critical lens, “In addition to being service providers and educators, to truly be effective, student affairs professionals must explicitly embrace the roles of student advocate and social activist” (p. 376). Komives, Wagner, and Associates (2009) lent support to this notion of leadership in support of social change, they stated, leadership “is a purposeful, collaborative, values-based process that results in positive social change” (p. xii). Komives (2011) postulated that this view of leadership “serves as a useful model to guide student affairs practice” (p. 359) and was “affirming of a social justice commitment to professional practice” (p. 360) in student affairs. The intersection of leadership identity with one’s other social identities was another connection between multiculturalism and leadership in professional practice (Aguirre & Martinez, 2006; Komives, 2011).

Continuing the connection between multiculturalism and leadership, Aguirre and Martinez (2006) examined how diversity practices were woven into the fabric of higher education organizational culture. They posited two tracks: representational diversity and reframing diversity as an inclusive process. They advocated reframing diversity, because “responsibility for ensuring that individuals acquire the social and human capital required for living in a diverse society lies with the nation’s educational systems, especially higher education” (p. 88). The researchers went on to describe the “synergistic relationship between
diversity and leadership practices” needed to move beyond representational diversity to “reframing diversity as an inclusive process in a learning organization” (p. 89).

Baxter Magolda (2014) offered another viewpoint on the connection between leadership and multiculturalism set in the context of a learning environment. She stated, “The ability to use multiple cultural frames, an internal sense of identity that is not threatened by difference, and the capacity for interdependent relationships grounded in an appreciation for difference” (p. 5) described the leader in student affairs who focused on “conceptualizing and implementing learning-oriented practice” (p. 5) in the context of intercultural maturity. This perspective enabled “the ability to extract oneself from oppressive social systems . . . to reflect upon them” (p. 5). Student affairs leaders with this ability were better able to balance multiple perspectives at the same time, thus assisting leaders in “dealing with conflict, ambiguity, difference, and effective decision making” (p. 4).

The frame of reference for leadership comes into play as researchers added this to the conversation. Amey (2006) examined leadership in higher education by reviewing a number of studies with different frames of reference. Her viewpoint was that higher education leaders must understand organizational culture and values, and provide direction based on serious reflection. This can be accomplished by creating environments that serve the learning needs of others, as well as continuing to learn as leaders through professional development. This was the first time the concept of a learning organization was found in the student affairs literature.

Leaders’ frame of reference and worldviews were scrutinized by Pasque (2010), as she examined higher education’s relationship to society. She posited leaders must be aware of the chasm between knowledge and action. Knowledge needed to underpin how everyday-decisions were made. She saw the role of leadership as making pervasive change. The foundation of the
knowledge used for making decisions about change included views from all people and was inclusive of people with marginalized perspectives. This inclusion made equitable change possible to address societal needs.

In review of each of the investigations on leadership, the researchers demonstrated leadership success through their literature reviews or empirical data. A leader’s behavior is still articulated as the reason for achievement. The emphasis on leader behavior continues to be transferred from the corporate/business setting to higher education. Leadership models started in the corporate sector before adaptation by higher education. Often, the business world had moved on to the next, greatest leadership model before higher education had implemented the last one (Birnbaum, 2000).

Since corporations had a fundamentally different mission (maximizing profit) than higher education’s mission of teaching, researching, and serving, did it ever make sense to apply these models? The answer lies in the pressure from internal stakeholders and the public to keep current with the leadership trends. The other key difference between the corporate world and higher education is governance. In the hierarchical business world, application of different leadership styles or techniques can be dictated, whereas in higher education with its shared governance, buy-in from constituents is needed for these to be successful (Birnbaum, 2000). In the contemporary setting, the corporate world and higher education are moving away from an exclusive focus on the behavior of the leader. Instead, there is urgency for Leaders to be different: to join people, to connect work to the organization’s purpose, to inspire, to move away from silos and toward a flow of ideas and information across the workplace, to create a sense of safety so that people can bring their best selves to work—
all to foster an inclusive workplace in which collaboration can flourish. (Katz & Miller, 2014, p. 40)

In summary, a fundamental shift was taking place in the study of leadership toward an ethical and social justice focus. Katz and Miller (2014) described the leadership role in the new marketplace as fostering “a collaborative, inclusive workplace” (p. 40). Inclusiveness of underrepresented groups and points of view, and concerns about social justice were part of the dialogue. Ethical considerations, including examining the values of individuals and organizations, and the context of situations, were part of the framework for leadership. Integrity took a seat at the leadership table. Decision making transferring from a positional leader to leadership teams was a pivotal change. Lawrence (2006) offered an overarching view of how the leadership literature changed, “Leadership in universities becomes more powerful when it is widely distributed, its goals are universally understood, and its accomplishments become the responsibility of the entire organization” (p. 445). This shift toward the inclusive work environment where all members had a voice was seen across different types of organizations, from corporations to universities. Delving into the leadership literature in student affairs comes next.

**Leadership in Student Affairs**

A bridge between the broad leadership in higher education to student affairs specifically was provided by Smith and Hughey’s (2006) literature review. They started with a broad overview of academic leadership and then moved to student affairs administration. The researchers examined how different leadership models applied to the academic and administrative side of a college or university. The researchers reported that in general a collegial approach functioned within academic affairs, and conversely, a bureaucratic model operated on
the administrative side. In turning to student affairs, the leadership model shifted again to focus on characteristics valued in leaders. These characteristics were integrity, conflict resolution, decisiveness, support of the academic mission, and student advocacy. As with academic leaders, student affairs leaders played the dual role of educator and leader. As educators, they provided developmental opportunities for student learning. As leaders, they motivated their staff, advocated on behalf of students, and secured resources.

Risacher (2004) illustrated another conduit between leadership in higher education and in student affairs. She examined the effectiveness of presidents who had experience as the SSAO, comparing them to other effective university presidents as defined by the results from the Fisher/Tack Effective Leadership Inventory (FTELI). Risacher (2004) utilized results of the FTELI by previous researchers to evaluate effective presidents for an appropriate comparison. She found that SSAO presidents differed from other effective presidents in two ways: SSAO presidents viewed themselves as warm and affable and more likely to stir things up on campus. Risacher found a very high correlation between SSAO presidents and other effective presidents’ characteristics. The participants in the study were from a variety of institutional types, leading to the conclusion that the SSAO presidents were effective in different contexts. Risacher’s research will likely strengthen SSAOs as serious candidates for academic presidencies. Frames of reference and locus of control were other perspectives on leadership that are examined next.

Organizational frames of reference and locus of control of student affairs staff were investigated by Tull and Freeman (2011). In their quantitative study, they found most student affairs administrators preferred the human resource frame of reference and the “external chance” locus of control. The human resources frame represented people achieving results regardless of their position in the organization. The “external chance” locus of control indicated most people
believed their professional future was tied to luck; the researchers did not expect this outcome. They theorized this might be related to working with and for others. The authors suggested this knowledge about staff could be applied to who was assigned to specific tasks.

Lovell and Kosten (2000) examined what skills, knowledge bases, and intrinsic traits were essential for a student affairs staff member to be successful. The researchers defined success as “identifying the skills, traits, or knowledge bases necessary to work as a student affairs administrator” (Lovell & Kosten, 2000, p. 554). They conducted a meta-analysis of the research from the last three decades of the twentieth century. They found administration, management, and facilitation skills; knowledge bases in student development theory and higher education; and traits to work cooperatively and exhibit integrity encompassed what was necessary for success. Areas they concluded were shortcomings of the data analyzed were technology, assessment, politics, and public policy related to higher education.

Clayborne and Hamrick (2007) challenged the prevailing viewpoints of leaders whose outlook on leadership in student affairs did not take into account the demographic diversity of constituents. Their study on African American women’s leadership experiences and development broadened the viewpoint on leadership for student affairs. The authors concluded the participants were more relational and had deep engagements with students and staff they supervised. Conversely, they did not experience this level of engagement from their supervisors. There was a misalignment of their own leadership styles with those of senior administrators. This mismatch compounded their sense of isolation and their perceived effectiveness as leaders.

Clay (2014) also studied African American women, but her research was specific to SSAOs. Her findings showed,
Microaggressions and balancing work and family were challenges to career persistence.

Despite these challenges, the participants utilized strategies, including vicarious learning through others, verbal persuasion, and opportunities to build skills as tools to persist in student affairs through obtaining senior level leadership positions. (Clay, 2014, p. 2)

Although there was very little research on SSAOs from varied racial/ethnic backgrounds, it was important to include as much research as possible to understand how SSAOs from differing demographic backgrounds experienced their role.

Sandeen (2001) found a gap in the current literature on student affairs leadership. He felt the stories of successful leaders were missing. He chose and interviewed 15 SSAOs from a broad array of campus types across the country. The author’s work added to the literature by helping frame success for SSAOs. Some themes he found among the group were possessing the courage to move forward with change in the face of opposition or controversy, building bridges with other units across the institution, viewing themselves as change agents, maintaining enthusiasm for their work, and utilizing a team approach to leadership.

Practical wisdom was the vantage point about student affairs leadership brought forward by Dalton (2002). He framed this in the combination of sound knowledge and good judgment. This lens was developed by examining the insights of long-time professionals who were successful as SSAOs. The researcher defined success as “the art of making good judgments in the specific decision-making situations of professional practice” (Dalton, 2002, p. 5). He couched this in habits of the mind for sound knowledge (rational thinking, information processing, and using technology) and habits of the heart for good judgment (using moral qualities and utilizing emotional intelligence). Dalton suggested we use the community of professional colleagues to expand our practical wisdom. Similarly, Dungy (2012) said “to
become an effective leader takes study and practice with the attitude that failures are lessons for reflection and deeper learning” (p. 10).

The crux of student affairs leadership was doing the right thing at the right time according to Thomas (2002). His view was that leadership needed to be purposeful to be respected. He defined purposeful leadership as loyalty to the institution, its leaders, and followers; learning, development, and well-being of students; and a set of guiding doctrines and values. He viewed the biggest tests of adherence to these principles were seeing a supervisor as unethical and making controversial decisions involving conflicts among values. He advised handling these problems with a lot of discussion with colleagues and a team approach.

Cherrey and Allen (2011) argued the setting in which student affairs leaders operated had shifted from a traditional hierarchical model to one that was networked. Their foundation of a networked environment was shared purpose and principles, plus active collaboration. In this new world, people in leadership roles must develop new ways of relating, influencing change, learning, and leading. Leaders must ask staff at all levels of the organization to take leadership roles.

Herdlein, Riefler, and Mrowka (2013) provided another view of how the emphasis in the student affairs environment has changed. The authors discussed the student affairs setting as having shifted from a counseling focus to more administratively-based. The researchers found no mention of counseling and human facilitation skills in their study, as compared to 83% found in the Lovell and Kosten (2000) research. The desired skills for student affairs professionals were now “strategic planning, budgeting/finance, legal/ethical issues, and campus organization and structure . . . technology and continuing concern for writing effectiveness” (Herdlein et al., 2013, p. 264).
The notion of leadership operating in a permanent crisis was adapted by Iwata (2011) from Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009). By applying their three leadership tasks (fostering adaptation, embracing disequilibrium, and generating leadership) to student affairs, Iwata concluded she was able to add value to her institution. Examples of successful application of these constructs included assessing the division of student affairs to determine what changes needed to happen immediately to foster adaptation; creating a new strategic plan to embrace disequilibrium; and developing a crisis management team to generate leadership. College and university settings seem to be in constant flux. This model defined leadership in the context of a permanent crisis. This is a fitting backdrop for the dynamic student affairs’ landscape.

Similar to the literature on leadership in higher education, scholarly work on leadership in student affairs is diverse and voluminous. However, there is a distinct lack of empirical data. Evidence-based research is needed and additional research is necessary to examine the practices and skills of leaders, as well as the process of leadership. Models and adaptations presented all seem plausible and possible to adapt to varied settings; however, there is no coherent, agreed-upon definition to guide the endeavors of student affairs leaders. There are emerging patterns in the overlap of characteristics needed by student affairs professionals, including handling change given the dynamic nature of the environment, working with team leadership, as opposed to the leader making all the big decisions, and continuing to learn and grow.

**Constant Change**

“Rapid and unrelenting change” was the description for the student affairs environment suggested by Locke and Guglielmino (2006, p. 216). The researchers offered a number of reasons including new models of service delivery, more accountability, higher demand for services convenient for students, advances in technology, shifting student demographics,
governmental requirements, shrinking enrollments, and budget shortfalls. Similarly, Kuk, Cobb, and Forrest (2007) discussed “the changing nature of higher education and the diverse needs of students” (p. 668) changing the competencies needed by practitioners. The researchers determined that “issues around changing demographics, shifting economic conditions, increasing accountability, quantifying quality assurance, and demonstrating organizations effectiveness may require very different and more systematic approaches to understanding professional competencies” (p. 668).

Jablonski, Bresciani, Lovell, and Shandley (2006) looked with an even broader perspective on change, globally. The authors described “massive institutional and systems change” as the context for student affairs leadership (p. 187). Tucker and Archer (2014) described “highly dynamic institutional environments,” where “contemporary divisions of student affairs become more complex and fluid” (p. 27). As researchers look to the future of student affairs, the place to begin was with change (Dunn, Cooper, & Barham, 2006). Kruger (2014) discussed how “universities are facing a period of unprecedented change, which threatens the very future of the American higher education system” (p. vii).

Another view of the changes impacting higher education and student affairs was presented by Pascarella and Terenzini (2005). The authors highlighted a number of changes in the literature about how the college experience affected students. The kinds of institutions, the diversity of the student body, an expanded image of how students learn, creative teaching approaches, increasing cost of attendance and other fiscal concerns, technological progress, distance learning, and an increasing gamut of research approaches, all combined and pointed toward an expanded interest in the impact of postsecondary education and the pervasive changes
seen in recent years. Change does indeed seem to come from every direction and is fast and relentless.

**Connection to the Institutional Mission and Culture**

Cole (2002) spoke as then-president of Bennett College about effective leadership in higher education and she noted, “Every leader of an educational institution . . . must clearly and consistently articulate how the mission of their organization will be carried out” (p. 4). In addition to blending leadership strategy with the institutional mission, successful leaders have developed competencies that are exhibited in their behaviors, attitudes, skills, and knowledge.

Boyatzis (2008) examined the link between competencies and successful performance in leadership roles. The researcher noted the lack of published validation studies in the past connecting an individual’s behaviors, skills, and experiences to effective leadership enactment was being updated by current research. Boyatzis (2008) stated the current studies add to the literature, showing us “outstanding leaders . . . appear to require three clusters of competencies as distinguishing outstanding performance” (pp. 7-8). He defined competencies as a behavioral approach to intelligence and named the three competencies necessary for outstanding leadership enactment: cognitive (systems thinking), emotional (self-awareness and control), and social (empathy and teamwork) (p. 7). He posited the need to connect effective leadership with an understanding of the culture of the work environment. Similarly, Kezar and Carducci (2006) discussed leadership being institutionally determined. The authors suggested successful leadership at one university may look very different at another college. The researchers also posited the idea that leadership was a collective process, most often involving groups and teamwork.
Mason (2011) found staff working in student affairs needed to understand the institutional culture in order to function appropriately. He posited flexibility as a way to address culture in the context of student affairs work. Demonstrating this adaptability helped staff to align with the mission and culture. Grund (2014) spoke of the critical nature of comprehending the culture of the institution where you work. Others found it was important to disrupt culture because of being immersed in the context of change.

Shushok (2014) discussed the disruption of culture and suggested that fulfilling the institutional and divisional missions meant breaking free of how things had been done in the past and embracing innovation through big ideas. The author posited, “These ideas may collide with other ideas to reveal new practices, organizational structures, and inventions” (p. 32). Locke and Guglielmino (2006) went deeper into the institutional culture’s impact on the work of student affairs staff. The authors posited subcultures were also important to comprehend and how those formed across functional areas and divisions and whether or not the subcultures aligned with the broader institutional culture.

Another view of institutional culture came from Wheelan and Danganan (2003). The authors believed the organizational culture influenced how effective the senior leadership was for student affairs. They suggested teams within student affairs that were trusting, structured, and work-oriented were perceived by others to be more productive. The performance of staff in student affairs was linked to the performance of the SSAO, so that when student affairs teams were perceived to be trusting, structured, and work-oriented, the SSAO reaped the benefits of this and was viewed as productive as well.

In examining collegiality, another aspect of institutional culture, Bryman (2007) conducted an exhaustive literature review to determine the primary leadership behaviors
connected to effectiveness in higher education leaders. He highlighted the challenges of leading professionals who were often self-motivated and cautioned leaders to enhance the notion of collegiality and participation in decision making to avoid negative effects stemming from holding the reigns too tightly. In synthesizing these notions, the current study will add to the literature base on successful SSAOs and will offer connections to the institutional mission and culture.

The following provides an example of how institutional mission has an impact on student affairs and the role of the SSAO. In her study of career profiles of African American SSAOs, Hammonds (2012) utilized Sporn’s (2001) adaptation theory to support her research. She posited changing student demographics were a foundational reason for an institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion as part of their mission. This enhanced student diversity lent support to increase the diversity of the student affairs staff. Hammonds conjectured increasing the diversity of student affairs staff required use of adaptation theory. The institution was adapting to the changing student demographics by changing the demographics of its staff to support the institutional mission of inclusion. This points to the role of the SSAO as one that embraces this notion of inclusion as evidenced by hiring a diverse staff and providing the support they need to be successful.

The ideas put forth by Hammonds (2012) were supported by Sandeen and Barr (2006). Sandeen and Barr noted nine critical issues facing the student affairs profession and hiring and retaining a diverse staff was on their list, because diversity was (in most cases) a value of the institution due to the changing student demographics. Although Sandeen and Barr did not couch their pronouncement about the need for a diverse staff in adaptation theory, their explanation of why this is important bears a strong resemblance to Hammonds’ argument outlined previously.
Demographic Characteristics

As the demographic characteristics of students, faculty, and staff became more diverse, there has been a continuing focus on issues of diversity in higher education (Butcher, Taylor, & Wallace, 2012). “Institutions of higher education are bellwethers of societal changes such as demographic factors that require attention regarding their inclusion. Institutions of higher education must develop and promote responses to diversity that communicate to society their recognition of changes taking place in society” (Aguirre & Martinez, 2006, p. 18). Because of this continuing focus on diversity, promoting diversity has become (most often) part of the mission and core values of a university. Therefore, it is important to understand the relationship between diversity and the SSAO leadership role, particularly for the three dimensions of diversity (i.e., gender identity, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation) examined by the research questions.

Kezar (2002) concluded that “individuals’ positionalities (by gender, race and ethnicity, role within the institution, discipline or field of study, among other characteristics) appear to be related to distinctive leadership beliefs” (p. 558). Kezar and Lester (2010) defined positionality as:

Individuals have a *position* [emphasis in original] that impacts how they socially construct the world. The position of an individual is informed by multiple identities (such as race, gender, and class) that simultaneously construct and reinforce individual perspectives . . . leadership beliefs are shaped by identity, context, and power; such beliefs affect the way people construct an understanding of leadership, as well as the way they act as leaders. (p. 166)
What was “a bottleneck, particularly for women” (Biddix, 2013, p. 315) in reaching the SSAO position has changed because “women at four-year institutions had advanced into nearly 49% of SSAO positions” (Biddix, 2011, p. 444) by 2008. Has this balance between men and women who have achieved the SSAO role continued, or has there been another shift? The current study obtained baseline data on sexual orientation, since this demographic characteristic has not been collected in other research studies. Clayborne and Hamrick (2007) suggested further research is needed for student affairs professionals “related to intersecting race, ethnicity, class, gender, and other identities and histories” (p. 142). The findings of these researchers lent support to the importance of including demographic characteristics of the SSAOs in the current research.

Looking at demographic characteristics from a different lens, Reskin (2008) discussed the problems inherent in employment when she described ascriptive inequality in work places that reflect the societal inequities for women and people of color. Reskin and Padavic (2006) explained further, “Sex, race, and ethnic inequality persist in the kinds of paid work people do, their advancement opportunities, and their earnings” (p. 343).

**Behaviors, Attitudes, Skills, and Knowledge**

A discussion of a number of studies that highlighted effective behaviors, attitudes, skills, and knowledge (BASK) factors for leaders in higher education and student affairs follows. Once the scope of BASK factors is understood, there will be a synthesis of the literature.

**Leadership Behaviors, Attitudes, Skills, and Knowledge in Higher Education**

Looking broadly at critical success factors, Antony, Krishan, Cullen, and Kumar (2012) found a number of these factors were necessary in higher education institutions for successful implementation of change based on a literature review and their experience in higher education. The necessary factors were commitment and support of leadership; effective communication
throughout the organization; strategic vision for the future; readiness for change and improvement; professional development of staff; and a culture of continuous improvement. 

Jablonski et al. (2006) determined leadership BASK through the lens of global perspective. Three of the BASK success factors the researchers highlighted were entrepreneurship, addressing global issues, and operational accountability and assessment tools. These BASK factors were determined by bringing together SSAsOs from around the globe to address “leadership issues in a global context . . . to allow for deep and reflective exploration of critical issues in student affairs” (Jablonski et al., 2006, p. 187). As Kezar and Carducci (2006) discussed effective leadership, their BASK success factors included cognitive complexity, becoming skilled in acting as a symbolic leader, political savvy, focusing on goals, building strong relationships, learning the culture of the leadership setting, and fostering a learning environment. The researchers also examined successful leadership through multiple lenses, including moral values, teamwork, empowerment, international context, entrepreneurialism, responsibility, and social change.

As a college president, White (2007) described leadership in a metaphor of mammals and reptiles. Good leaders needed the reptilian view to make cold-blooded (rational and decisive) decisions and the mammalian view to make warm-blooded (nurturing and participative) assessments. Great leaders knew the right combination of these and how to choose mammal or reptile. In addition, achieving successful change was the foundation for a great leader. He shared three lessons for leadership development: leadership was a journey involving lifelong learning, good endings were critical regardless of why you leave, and resiliency was necessary, because everyone experiences failures and setbacks.
Leadership Behaviors, Attitudes, Skills, and Knowledge in Student Affairs

Kruger (2014) said, “Strong institutional leadership from chief student affairs officers is critical to the future of higher education” (p. vii). To illustrate what effective leadership was, Schuh (2002) completed a study of leadership practices of SSAOs to illuminate the skills and competencies needed. The SSAOs in the study placed working well with others and helping them to be successful at the top of their list of leadership skills and competencies, closely followed by honesty and integrity in all things.

In examining exceptional student affairs leadership practices, Dungy (2011) formed a list of seven BASK factors for success as an SSAO. These were: “responsibility and accountability, learning from personal and professional experiences, the power of knowledge, listening, and communicating, functioning in a large, networked universe, collaborations, partnerships, and relationships, and innovation and creativity” (p. 270). The author discussed the need to embed these BASK factors in the context of the institution, community, and national and international influences.

Westfall (2011) had her own list of competencies which included appreciating the institution’s mission, excellent relationship skills, a comprehension of the work of the college in its entirety, attending to mundane and high-level responsibilities daily, a need to like and advocate on behalf of students, talent development, understanding the fiscal landscape, and working in an environment with shrinking resources (p. 69). Any list of behaviors, attitudes, skills, and knowledge must include the “official” list from the professional associations that guide student affairs. Dickerson et al. (2011) reported the two major professional organizations for student affairs, the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) jointly endorsed a set of
competencies for the student affairs profession that had begun in each of the associations separately. The document offers 10 competencies with three levels of proficiency (basic, intermediate, and advanced) giving a broad definition and a catalog of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed. The 10 competencies are: advising and helping; assessment, evaluation, and research; equity, diversity, and inclusion; ethical professional practice; history, philosophy, and values; human and organizational resources; law, policy, and governance; leadership; personal foundations; and student learning and development (ACPA & NASPA, 2010).

Hoffman and Bresciani (2012) developed a long list of BASK factors needed by student affairs professionals. The most common constructs were programming, communication, and assessment, evaluation, and research, while fundraising and critical thinking skills were the least mentioned concepts. Jarnot (2012) took a different point of view about fundraising suggesting that it was an essential role of the SSAO. She further stated “a basic understanding of the need for fundraising, knowledge of current fundraising best practices, and a solid comprehension of their role as fundraisers, or relationship-builders, in the fundraising process is essential to move forward in uncertain economic times” (p. 62). Further support for the role of fundraising by the SSAO was found in Crowe (2011). Crowe said “continuing support for training in development and fundraising; and greater coordination of fundraising strategies” (p. iii) were important elements in the role of SSAOs.

One of the BASK factors highlighted by Tull, Hirt, and Saunders (2009) for SSAOs was intentionality of socialization for new professionals into the student affairs organization. The authors suggested accomplishment of this socialization process was facilitated by SSAOs communicating the mission of the institution and division, understanding student culture, and balancing high expectations with support. Biddix (2011) noted three areas needed for career
### Table 1

**Source in Literature for Each BASK Factor Category, Plus Demographic Characteristics (DC)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BASK Category or DC</th>
<th>Citations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Personal Qualities

Planning and Goal Setting

Political Environment

Professional Development

Student Learning

Supervisor Relationship

Note. * denotes evidence-based research and † denotes think pieces/expert opinion.
progression to the SSAO role. He suggested a doctorate, professional development, and the need to change positions or institutions as the key areas necessary for SSAOs. The researcher followed up this first study with a second inquiry. Biddix (2013) discussed his findings for student affairs staff moving into the SSAO role. The most prevalent path to the SSAO role was as director of a student affairs functional unit. A doctorate was necessary, as was teaching experience, but professional involvement proved inconclusive in the journey to the SSAO position (Biddix, 2013). The list of BASK factors needed have likely changed since the Davis study in 2002.

Although for ease of understanding and flow of this document, the constructs of effective leadership, change, and institutional mission and culture are divided into separate categories, they are intertwined. This was evidenced in each categorization as the overlap was apparent. Table 1 lists the citations for each of the BASK categories in addition to demographic characteristics that support use of these items in the survey instrument.

**Summary**

Effective leadership, the context of change, and a connection to the institutional mission and culture were three themes found throughout the literature. The behaviors, attitudes, skills, and knowledge of SSAOs were examined from this perspective. In addition, the demographic characteristics of SSAOs were studied because differences among the participants were sought. Adaptation theory was the lens utilized to provide a framework for understanding how SSAOs perceived success in their role.
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The current study utilized analysis of variance (ANOVA) to examine mean group differences among the variables of interest from the BASK Inventory. In addition, paired-samples $t$-tests were used to determine if there were differences in the ratings from BASK item to BASK item. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine if the order of the BASK items differed across participants’ demographics. The purposes of this chapter are to outline the theoretical framework that undergirds the study, explain the research design, describe the adaptation of the survey instrument, and delineate the data analysis. The source of data, the process for recruiting participants, and the number and demographic characteristics of respondents are detailed and explained. The BASK factors were grouped into a priori groups based on the literature and previous research; factor analysis was performed, followed by ANOVAs, paired-samples $t$-tests, and MANOVA for each BASK category.

Theoretical Framework

Because the theoretical framework provides a structure for and an explanation of the research, it functions as a tool to “make sense of complex phenomena” (Connelly, 2014, p. 187). The idea that change is constant in higher education and student affairs was woven throughout the literature review of the current study. With change as the context in which SSAOs must function, utilization of a theory to undergird the study with a focus on adaptability and change was appropriate because higher education, student affairs, and the BASK factors are in constant flux.

The theory that supports the current study is the work of Sporn (2001) on adaptation theory in the university setting. She posited that for a university to remain competitive in the international marketplace, flexibility was the key to effectiveness. By having the ability to adapt,
institutions and their leaders are poised for success, because change is inevitable. Hammonds (2012) used Sporn’s adaptation theory as she explored the characteristics of African American SSAOs. Her research supported the idea that higher education and student affairs were set in the context of constant change, so the adaptive standpoint was needed for effective leadership.

**Research Design**

As stated in Chapter 1, the research questions asked how current SSAOs rate the importance of the BASK factors relative to one other, examined group differences in the ratings, and the order of the BASK factors. The research design was chosen to test group differences to appropriately answer the research questions (Mayer, 2008). In addition to descriptive statistics, the statistical tests used in this study were analysis of variance (ANOVA), multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), and *t*-tests of paired samples.

ANOVA was selected because it “tests the significance of group differences between two or more means as it analyzes variation between and within each group” (Mertler & Vannatta, 2010, p. 15). Each of the independent variables contained two or more categories (e.g., race/ethnicity, sexual orientation) with one quantitative dependent variable, the BASK Inventory score; therefore, ANOVA was an appropriate test to apply.

MANOVA was chosen to compare the overall ratings by independent variables across groups. For example, the differences among the race/ethnicity groups in the order of importance of the BASK items were examined. The paired sample *t*-tests examined the overall ratings across all participants to determine if there were significant differences between the first and second BASK item, the second and third BASK item, the last and next to last BASK item, and the second to last and third to last BASK item.
Instrument Development

The Chief Student Affairs Officer Critical Skills Inventory (CSI) was adapted for the current study. The CSI was originally created by conducting a thorough search of the literature in a quest for critical skills important to the success of SSAOs (Davis, 2002). An updated search of the literature from 2002 (the original date of the research) to the present was undertaken to inform the adaptation of the CSI to current behaviors, attitudes, skills, and knowledge (BASK) factors of relevance for success as an SSAO.

Once a final draft of the updated BASK Inventory was developed, two individuals with considerable expertise in survey design were utilized for a review and feedback. Young and Janosik (2007) suggested use of experts in instrument development when creating a survey. The researchers stated the use of experts was useful in improving the questionnaire. Examples of edits to the survey after expert review included reducing the number of items to lessen the time burden perceived by respondents and randomizing the order of the items for each respondent to avoid question-order bias. Next, a pilot test was undertaken.

Pilot Test

Three SSAOs with diverse demographic characteristics from varied types of institutions were selected and asked to complete the BASK Inventory and provide feedback. The pilot test determined if “all of the questions on the proposed instrument were applicable to the purpose of the study, easy to understand, and manageable in terms of completion time” (Herdlein, 2004, p. 59). Poock and Love (2001) lent additional support to the idea of a pilot test. The researchers suggested making modifications to the instrument following the pilot test based on the “feedback on the clarity of directions and questions as well as other observations” (p. 210). Once the feedback was received and analyzed, updates to the BASK instrument were completed prior to
its distribution. Examples of changes to the instrument based on the pilot test were having the style of verbs match across items (e.g., leading and advising as opposed to leading and to advise) and giving examples (e.g., staying calm examples were even-keeled and unflappable).

**Grouping BASK Items in Categories**

BASK items were continuous variables and organized into nine subscales. Cronbach’s alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the BASK items in the nine subscales. A value of $\geq .7$ was generally acceptable for internal consistency of a newly developed scale, and between .6 and .69 was considered questionable (George & Mallery, 2003, p. 231). In the current study, subscales with a Cronbach’s alpha of .6 or higher were utilized. This was done since a “high coefficient alpha does not always mean a high degree of internal consistency. This is because alpha is also affected by the length of the test. If the test length is too short, the value of alpha is reduced” (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011, p. 53). With each subscale only having three items forming a single construct, additional items would likely have increased the value of the Cronbach’s alpha. Further support for this decision was provided by Cronbach (1951), “Items with quite low intercorrelations can yield an interpretable scale” (p. 332). Table 3 shows the Cronbach’s alpha for each subscale. When analysis was done using the transformed data, none of the Cronbach’s alpha numbers were changed considerably (e.g., .656 versus .649). The data were examined to determine whether leaving a BASK item out would make a difference in the Cronbach’s alpha for the remaining items in the subscale; however, leaving an item out made virtually no difference. The subscales with an alpha less than .6 were disaggregated and analyzed as separate items.
Table 2

*Cronbach’s Alpha for Categories (Subscales)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BASK categories</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adaptation and change</td>
<td>.440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>.605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership and supervision</td>
<td>.605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating in a politicized environment</td>
<td>.511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal qualities</td>
<td>.472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and goal setting</td>
<td>.656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development</td>
<td>.701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with the president (or supervisor)</td>
<td>.428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student learning</td>
<td>.510</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Factor loadings > .6 are in boldface.*

**Data Source and Participants**

SSAOs whose institutions were members of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators were invited to participate in the study. NASPA members pay a fee to belong. Membership in NASPA affords benefits to representatives of the institution, including one voting delegate on NASPA issues. The voting delegate is the SSAO for the university. Because the SSAOs were identified as the voting delegate in NASPA’s membership database, they were an appropriate group to invite to participate. In addition to the voting delegates from NASPA, surveys were sent to SSAOs who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ) and who were known to the researcher. Not all of the LGBTQ SSAOs invited to participate were NASPA members; some of the LGBTQ SSAOs expressed (to the researcher) a preference for membership in ACPA-College Student Educators International (ACPA), the other major professional association in student affairs, because they believe ACPA has traditionally been more inclusive of LGBTQ professionals and students in their programs and affinity groups. All of the LGBTQ SSAOs were checked against the NASPA list of voting
delegates to avoid duplicates; the email address was the unique identifier of each participant. The LGBTQ population among SSAOs was expected to be small in number, so oversampling this group helped to boost the numbers from this segment of the demographic pool.

Wesaw and Sponsler (2014) from NASPA’s Research and Policy Institute conducted a quantitative research study of SSAOs that offered a demographic profile of SSAOs in addition to the types of institutions where they were employed. The researchers for the NASPA study used the Higher Education Directory (HED) listing of SSAOs and matched those individuals with data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System to determine the demographic and institutional characteristics of the population as a whole of SSAOs in the United States. The 2,844 SSAOs in the HED were distributed across institutional type with 29% from public, two-year colleges; 42% from private, four-year colleges; 22% from public, four-year colleges; and the remaining 7% from a combination of private, for-profit, two and four-year institutions and private, not-for-profit two-year institutions. This stratification of institutional types of the SSAOs across the U.S. was mirrored in the NASPA membership. Therefore, the sample of NASPA-member SSAOs closely represented the survey population of HED SSAOs (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009).

In the current study, the institutional classifications for SSAOs employing colleges were 12% for two-year public, 43% for four-year public, less than 2% for two-year private, and 42% for four-year private. In comparing the population of SSAOs from the HED and the respondent SSAOs in the current study, two-year public was 29% versus 12% in the current study, four-year public was 22% versus 43%, two-year private was less than 1% versus less than 2%, and four-year private was the same at 42%.
Participant Response

After obtaining Human Subjects Review Board approval (see Appendix C), surveys were sent to 1,095 targeted participants. The survey was opened by 496 participants; of those who opened the survey, two indicated they did not give informed consent, 51 completed only the consent question; and 443 completed the survey. Of the 443 who completed the survey, two were deleted from further consideration using listwise deletion because more than 15% of the items were unanswered (Mertler & Vannatta, 2010); therefore, 441 cases were analyzed. Available case analysis using pairwise deletion was used for the 441 surveys when there was missing data (Allison, 2001). Hence, not all questions had 441 responses; the number of responses varied by item. The 441 usable surveys analyzed represented a 40% response rate.

Item Order for the BASK Inventory

In addition, each participant received the 27 BASK factors in a randomized order. “The potential biasing effect of the positioning of questions in a questionnaire has long been recognized as a problem in survey . . . research” (Bradburn, Sudman, & Wansink, 2004, p. 145). The researchers further clarified, “The order of questions provides a context within which questions are answered. Questions that are quite closely related tend to increase the saliency of particular aspects of the object” (Bradburn et al., 2004, p. 146). Dillman et al. (2009) lent support to this idea stating to avoid question order effects, separate questions “both in terms of topic and in terms of physical proximity on the page or screen” (p. 160). The BASK items were in random order to prevent bias related to the context and meaning of other nearby questions. The BASK items appeared in part one on the survey, followed in part two with demographic questions. Demographic questions came in part two to have the more compelling questions first to get people to continue the survey (Dillman et al., 2009).
Data Collection

As an introduction to the actual survey instrument, an email that had four parts was sent to potential participants. The first part was an introduction of the study and the researcher, and the second was a note from the SSAO from the researcher’s home institution, Bowling Green State University, to SSAO colleagues encouraging their involvement. Part three of the email invitation was an embedded informed consent document, followed by the fourth part, a web link to the survey instrument (see Appendix D). This original email was sent to SSAOs in NASPA, plus LGBTQ SSAOs who were known to the researcher. The email invitation to participate was distributed on September 23, 2014, to 1,095 invited participants, only four of whom were added as LGBTQ SSAOs who were not members of NASPA. Two reminder emails spaced four days apart were sent to nonrespondents. “In self-administered questionnaires . . . it has been repeatedly found that the larger the number of sequential attempts to deliver the survey request to the sample person, the higher the likelihood of successfully contacting them” (Groves, Fowler, Couper, Lepkowski, Singer, & Tourangeau, 2009, p. 204). The three contacts, plus changing the timing (i.e., time of day, day of week) of those contacts, were planned to reduce the nonresponse rate (Groves et al., 2009). Because “perceived length of time or complexity of self-administered instruments reduces cooperation” (Groves et al., 2009, p. 206), the subject line of the email invitation indicated only 10 minutes was needed to complete the questionnaire with the intention of reducing the perceived burden for respondents and gaining a higher response rate.

Measures

The dependent variables were the scores on the BASK Inventory items. The independent variables were gender identity, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation. The scores on the BASK Inventory were compared for group differences among the three independent variables.
Dependent Variables

The dependent variables were an SSAO’s score on each item in the BASK Inventory. A ten-point Likert scale was utilized with a range from 1 = Not at all important to 10 = Essential for every item. There were 27 BASK items for the SSAO to mark. Each BASK item on the survey displayed the scale and the written description for the first and last response options. This visual aid provided “anchoring points for the ends of the scales” (Bradburn, Sudman, & Wansink, 2004, p. 162) as recommended by survey design experts.

Independent Variables

Gender identity, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation of SSAOs were the independent variables. Gender identity had four answer options: man, trans* (used with this definition: an inclusive umbrella term to describe nonconforming gender identity and/or expression) (Matheis & Rankin, 2009), woman, and prefer not to answer. Race/ethnicity had nine answer options: American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic/Latino(a), multiracial, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, White, other (with a text box to specify), and prefer not to answer. Although Hispanic/Latino(a) was used on the survey, from this point forward in the current study, these terms were replaced with Latin@ as a more inclusive, gender neutral term based on its use by “a growing number of activists, academics, and bloggers” (Demby, 2013, para. 3). Sexual orientation had six answer options: asexual, bisexual, gay, heterosexual, lesbian, and prefer not to answer. Sexual orientation as a demographic factor was included because no literature on SSAOs was found that included this information. Additionally, sexual orientation was added for the current study based on a broader perspective on leadership enactment that was inclusive of “diverse groups of people who make up our workforces” (Collins, 2012, p. 350). Additional support for adding sexual orientation came from Watson and
Johnson (2013), “Scholarship on and investigations by leaders who are ‘openly’ LGBTQ are virtually nonexistent” (p. viii).

**Data Quality through Pre-Screening**

Screening data prior to analysis was necessary for quality assurance. Frequency distributions and descriptive statistics were utilized to verify “that no cases have values outside the range of possible values” (Mertler & Vannatta, 2010, p. 25). Wilkinson (1999) stressed the importance of explicating missing data, so it was vital to detail what was done to include cases with incomplete data. Mertler and Vannatta (2010) stated missing data should not be replaced when more than 15% of the values are absent. Therefore, in the current study, if over 15% of the values were missing on the BASK items for a given participant, the cases were deleted from further consideration using listwise deletion. For cases with fewer than 15% of missing values, these were analyzed using listwise deletion within each analysis. Therefore, different survey questions had different numbers of responses analyzed (Allison, 2001).

The 27 BASK factors were categorized into nine groups with three BASK items each. A factor analysis was completed with the nine indexes to verify the three BASK items per index were inter-correlated statistically. Appendix E shows the BASK items in the nine categories. In determining the reliability of combining the different BASK items into the nine indexes, an a priori analysis of the literature and previous research was utilized. As mentioned previously, the Cronbach’s alpha test was employed to test the reliability statistically.

The data were also screened for outliers, or cases with unusual values at one or both ends of a distribution. For example, if a participant responded with all ones and twos for the BASK items, but no other SSAOs had the same perceptions, this participant would have been dropped. Outliers could have reflected a data entry error, a participant who was not actually a member of
the envisioned group, or a participant who was very different from the other group members. Because outliers can distort results, the researcher decided if the case was legitimate. In the current study, none of the responses were deemed as outliers, because the answer choices were examined using frequency tables and descriptive statistics. No cases fell outside the boundaries of possible answers. In other words, all answer choices were between one and ten, the answer scale given, and none of the respondents had radically different answers from other respondents across several questions. The variables determined to be legitimate were transformed to reduce their influence (Mertler & Vannatta, 2010).

**Statistical Tests and Data Transformations**

The assumptions for ANOVA were tested. When not all of the assumptions were met, the data were transformed to reduce the skew. A non-parametric test, Kruskal-Wallis, was performed. Results of the ANOVA and the Kruskal-Wallis tests were compared and a decision was made about which test to use in the current study.

**Parametric Test**

Before conducting the ANOVA test, its five assumptions were checked. The first assumption was that observations within the sample were independent of each other. Since only one participant was invited to participate from a campus, the respondents were independent of one another as part of the logic of the research design, so this assumption was met. The next assumption was that the model contained all sources of variance. All the variables thought to have an impact were included in the research design; therefore, this assumption was met. The assumption of including all treatment levels of interest means “our research only allows us to draw conclusions about the treatment levels in our experiment” (S. Abercrombie, personal communication, January 7, 2013). This assumption was met because the researcher planned to
report only on what was measured in the current study. For example, data were collected on gender identity, but not age, so conclusions about age would be inappropriate.

The remaining two ANOVA assumptions were homogeneity of variance and a normal distribution of the population where the sample was drawn. In testing for normality, histograms were used to graphically examine the data. All of the BASK factors were negatively skewed; thus, the assumption was not met. Levene’s test of homogeneity of variance was used to test the final assumption; the data failed to meet this assumption as the tests showed significance.

Data Transformations

Because the normality and homogeneity of variance assumptions were not met, the data were transformed. The transformation involved reverse coding, followed by taking the square root, and then re-reverse coding “so that higher values reflect greater importance” (N. Bowman, personal communication, November 15, 2014). The transformation was performed to reduce the skew of the data. “Data transformations involve the application of mathematical procedures to data in order to make them appear more normal. Once data have been transformed . . . the statistical analyses will be more accurate. The order and relative position of observations are not affected” (Mertler & Vannatta, 2010, p. 31). The ANOVA assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance were retested using the transformed data. In testing for normality, the histograms still showed a negative skew, although it was not as extreme as with the untransformed data. The data were tested using Levene’s statistic to examine the homogeneity of variance. Each BASK item was tested separately using all SSAOs’ responses to determine if the assumption was met. For 24 of the BASK items, the data met this assumption as the test showed a value of ≥ 0.05; the variances were not significantly different for these items. For three BASK items (i.e., demonstrating respect for others, supporting the president in public,
advising the president concerning student issues and concerns), the data failed to meet this assumption as the test showed significance (< 0.05). Mertler and Vannatta (2010) spoke of the homogeneity of variance and noted, “A violation of this assumption . . . is not fatal to the analysis” (p. 34). Although there was some support in the literature to proceed with ANOVA, a non-parametric test was investigated to further understand the options for interpretation of the data.

Non-Parametric Test

The Kruskal-Wallis test was the non-parametric alternative for ANOVA. It was chosen because “the distributions do not have to be normal and the variances do not have to be equal” (Gaten, 2000, para. 1). The Kruskal-Wallis test compared medians and was used in place of ANOVA to test for group differences. Kruskal-Wallis was the non-parametric test selected because, “Violations of assumptions necessary for parametric tests necessitated nonparametric testing” (Obedin-Maliver et al., 2011, p. 973). When the data were tested utilizing the Kruskal-Wallis test, the results were virtually identical to the ANOVA results; therefore, for ease of interpretation, the current study used ANOVA.

Analyses

Based on the literature and previous research, the BASK items were categorized into nine a priori groups (adaptation and change, communication, leadership and supervision, personal qualities, planning and goal setting, political environment, professional development, student learning, and supervisor relationship). Each group associated three survey items; the three items combined together to represent the same construct. The group names were not listed in the instrument.
Table 3

Data Analysis for Each Research Question (RQ)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Tests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ1</td>
<td>Gender Identity, Race/Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation</td>
<td>Descriptives/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Paired-samples t-tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ2</td>
<td>Gender Identity, Race/Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation</td>
<td>Descriptives/ANOVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ3</td>
<td>Gender Identity, Race/Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation</td>
<td>Descriptives/MANOVA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 indicates the statistical tests utilized in the current study for each research question. After the ANOVAs were performed, if one of the sample means was significantly different from the others, post hoc tests were performed when more than two levels of the independent variable were present. A post hoc comparison determined which of the means were significantly different by testing all of the pairwise comparisons at one time. Tukey’s Honest Significance Difference (HSD) post hoc test was utilized to avoid the buildup of the hazard of a Type I error, denoting a null hypothesis was thought to be false when it was really true (Mertler & Vannatta, 2010). Tukey’s HSD was the post hoc test chosen because it was suggested as the best technique by an expert in quantitative statistics (S. Abercrombie, personal communication, January 14, 2013).

Other considerations when conducting hypothesis testing were examined. “Null hypothesis significance testing is useful in determining statistical significance; effect sizes are useful in determining practical importance” (Wainer & Robinson, 2003, p. 24). The level of significance for the statistical tests was .05. This a priori probability level determined how large the difference among means needed to be in order to say the result was significant, thus enabling
a decision to reject the null hypothesis. Effect size “is a measure of the amount of difference between the two groups reported in standard deviation units” (Mertler & Vannatta, 2010, p. 11). Cohen (1988) established a baseline for reporting effect sizes: .2 was small, .5 was medium, and .8 was large. It was important to report effect size so the magnitude of the effect was known (Pyrczak, 2010). Effect sizes are reported in the results section for the current study.

**Limitations**

It is important to acknowledge limitations of the study. Some of the sample sizes were small (e.g., the other racial/ethnic category \( N = 14 \)); therefore, the statistical power for analyses performed were not as robust as for categories with a larger number of participants. With only three items per category on the BASK Inventory, the internal reliability was reduced. Because the BASK factors were generally valued, a ceiling effect may have been present which reduced differences among factors.

The Cronbach’s alpha for the categories communication, leadership and supervision, and planning and goal setting was below .7 which is the typical standard. Therefore, the categories may not be as robust as if they were disaggregated and analyzed as separate items. It appears the current study is overrepresented in four-year public institutions and underrepresented in two-year public institutions given the HED data reported in the NASPA study (Wesaw & Sponsler, 2014).

The sample used was obtained from a database maintained by one of the major professional associations for student affairs, NASPA. All of the senior student affairs officers from NASPA were asked to participate in the survey. Although this produced a broad range of SSAOs to survey, it only included members of NASPA, which excluded SSAOs who were not members. Colleges, especially small private institutions with fewer resources, may not be members. Some SSAOs may have stronger affiliations to other professional organizations, and
may not be NASPA members. Therefore, the results of the current study may not be
generalizable beyond SSAO members of NASPA.
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

This chapter outlines the survey results from the BASK Inventory. A description of the respondents reveals how many and what percentage of the overall sample submitted the survey. The perceptions of SSAOs about the factors they viewed as critical to success in their role are delineated using descriptive statistics; the descriptive statistics show the demographic characteristics of the respondents. A rank order of the BASK items based on an unstandardized mean from most to least important is offered. The BASK Inventory was grouped into nine categories. If the three items in each of the categories are inter-correlated statistically is addressed and how these were analyzed (in groups or independently) is described. The ANOVA results show group differences among the three independent variables: gender identity, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation, based on the scores of the dependent variables, the BASK Inventory items. For significant differences found for race/ethnicity, post hoc tests were analyzed to determine which groups differed. Because gender identity and sexual orientation were categorized into two groups each due to the small number of responses in specific answer options, neither of these variables utilized post hoc tests. Effect sizes are listed and explained. Results from the paired-samples \( t \)-tests and the MANOVA are described.

**Research Questions**

As stated in Chapter 1, there were three research questions (RQs) for this study.

RQ1: How do current SSAOs rate the importance of the BASK factors relative to one another?

RQ2: To what extent are there group differences in how SSAOs rate the BASK factors?

RQ3: To what extent are there group differences in how SSAOs rate the order of BASK factors relative to one another?

The research questions were measured by the score on the items on the BASK Inventory and responses were examined in relation to each of the independent variables (i.e., gender
identity, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation). To answer the research questions, descriptive statistics were presented for each of the survey questions. A data table was developed showing the value of the mean and standard deviation for each question in descending order. Another table with demographic characteristics of the sample was created showing the number and the percentage of participants listed by variable (e.g., gender identity, highest degree earned). An ANOVA was conducted to determine the significance of mean group differences. The paired-samples t-tests determined whether the mean of the BASK items was the same in different groups. The MANOVA was performed to decide whether there were any differences between groups on more than one BASK item.

Data Analysis

In the current study, survey data were analyzed using IBM SPSS (2013), a statistical software package. Descriptive statistics and the inferential statistical tests ANOVA, MANOVA, and paired-samples t-tests were used to analyze and compare group differences. The categorical independent variables were analyzed using descriptive statistics to measure the distribution of the variables and the frequencies, both number and percentage, to understand the absolute and relative dispersion as suggested by Gillespie, Chaboyer, Wallis, and Werder (2011).

Demographic Variables

For the three independent variables (i.e., gender identity, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation), changes were necessary in each group to analyze the data statistically. For the gender identity group, there were four answer categories (i.e., 1 = man, 2 = trans*, 3 = woman, and 4 = prefer not to answer). There were no trans* respondents, so that group was removed. The prefer-not-to-answer respondents for gender identity (n = 7) were also removed from further
consideration for this analysis. For data analysis purposes for gender identity, two categories were used, 1 = man and 2 = woman.

For race/ethnicity, there were nine answer options (i.e., 1 = American Indian or Alaskan Native, 2 = Asian, 3 = Black or African American, 4 = Hispanic/Latino/a, 5 = Multiracial, 6 = Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, 7 = White, 8 = other, and 9 = prefer not to answer). There were no respondents in the American Indian/Alaskan Native group, so it was removed. There were very few respondents in the Asian, Multiracial, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and other groups (n = 14); these groups were combined. The prefer-not-to-answer respondents for race/ethnicity (n = 7) were also removed from further consideration for this analysis. For data analysis purposes for race/ethnicity, four categories were used, 1 = White, 2 = Black/African American, 3 = Latin@, and 4 = Other.

For sexual orientation, there were six answer options (i.e., 1 = asexual, 2 = bisexual, 3 = gay, 4 = heterosexual, 5 = lesbian, and 6 = prefer not to answer). Asexual had very few respondents (n = 4), so it was removed from further consideration, because no literature could be found to support combining this group with either the bisexual, gay, and lesbian group or the heterosexual group. There were very few respondents in the bisexual, gay, and lesbian groups (n = 50), so these groups were combined. The prefer-not-to-answer respondents for sexual orientation (n = 21) were also removed from further consideration for this analysis. For data analysis purposes for sexual orientation, two categories were used, 1 = lesbian/gay/bisexual and 2 = heterosexual.

Table 4 offers an overview of the SSAO responses by demographic characteristic showing the frequency and percentage for each response. The gender identity category has slightly more men than women (51% versus 47%) and no trans* respondents even though this
### Table 4

**Participant Demographics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender Identity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>51.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual Orientation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asexual</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>82.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race/Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaskan Native</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin@</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>77.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean of students</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice president/chancellor for student affairs</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>51.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice president and dean of students</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Years of Experience as an SSAO</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-9</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 or more</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Higher Education Experience Before SSAO
\[
\begin{array}{cc}
0-5 & 30 & 6.9 \\
6-14 & 160 & 36.3 \\
15-25 & 197 & 44.6 \\
26 or more & 51 & 11.6 \\
\end{array}
\]

Highest Degree Earned
\[
\begin{array}{cc}
Bachelor’s degree & 4 & 0.9 \\
Master’s degree & 118 & 26.8 \\
Doctorate & 294 & 66.7 \\
Professional (e.g., J.D.) & 12 & 2.7 \\
Specialist & 2 & 0.5 \\
Other & 6 & 1.4 \\
\end{array}
\]

Field of Study of Highest Degree
\[
\begin{array}{cc}
Higher education/student affairs & 270 & 61.2 \\
Other & 162 & 32.7 \\
\end{array}
\]

Title of Position to Whom SSAO Reports
\[
\begin{array}{cc}
President/chancellor & 314 & 71.2 \\
Provost & 73 & 16.6 \\
Other & 46 & 10.4 \\
\end{array}
\]

Number of Students (Headcount)
\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
1-999 & 26 & 5.9 \\
1000-4999 & 183 & 41.5 \\
5000-9999 & 71 & 16.1 \\
10,000-29,999 & 121 & 27.4 \\
30,000+ & 33 & 7.5 \\
\end{array}
\]

Students Living On-Campus
\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
1-499 & 50 & 11.3 \\
500-999 & 66 & 15.0 \\
1000-4999 & 200 & 45.4 \\
5000-9999 & 44 & 10.0 \\
10,000+ & 17 & 3.9 \\
\end{array}
\]

Institutional Classification
\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
Public, 2 year & 52 & 11.8 \\
Public, 4 year & 190 & 43.1 \\
Private, 2 year & 6 & 1.4 \\
Private, 4 year & 185 & 42.0 \\
\end{array}
\]

*Note.* Total participants 441; number of responses and percentages vary because of missing data.
was an option on the survey. SSAOs were primarily heterosexual (82%) versus lesbian, gay, and bisexual combined at just over 11%. The race/ethnicity breakdown was about 13% Black/African American, 2% Asian, 6% Latin@, and 78% White; other categories were less than 1%.

The title of most SSAOs was vice president/vice chancellor for student affairs (52%), followed by vice president and dean of students (18%), then dean of students (11%). Fewer than 20% had a title that was not an answer option; Table 5 has a breakdown of all the titles reported. The total years of experience as a SSAO varied extensively with fewer than 1% with less than a year, 15% had one to two years, 19% had three to five years, 20% had six to nine years, 19% had ten to fourteen years, 10% had fifteen to nineteen years, and 15% had twenty or more years of experience as an SSAO. About 1% had no higher education experience prior to becoming a SSAO. Six percent had one to five years of experience, 36% had six to fourteen years, 45% had fifteen to twenty-five years, and 12% had twenty-six or more years of experience before becoming a SSAO.

Regarding the highest degree earned, only about 1% had a bachelor’s degree, 27% had a master’s degree, 67% had a doctorate, about 3% had a professional degree, and other degrees comprised less than 2%. The highest degree earned was in higher education/student affairs for 62% of the SSAOs, with 38% in a different field of study; Table 6 shows those fields. The majority (71%) of SSAOs reported to the president/chancellor, 17% reported to the provost, and 10% of the SSAOs reported to someone else at the institution; Table 7 details the title of the person to whom the SSAO reported.

About 6% of the SSAOs were at institutions with fewer than 1,000 students, 42% were at colleges with 1,000 to 4,999 students, 16% were at schools with 5,000 to 9,999 students, 27%
were at colleges with 10,000 to 29,999 students, and about 8% were at institutions with 30,000 or more students. About 11% of SSAOs were at campuses with fewer than 500 students living on campus, 15% with 500-999, 45% with 1,000 to 4,999, 10% with 5,000 to 9,999, and about 4% with 10,000 or more students living on campus.

**Importance of BASK Factors**

SSAOs rated maintaining integrity in decision making \((M = 9.82)\) as the most important BASK factor, followed by demonstrating respect for others \((M = 9.71)\) and briefing the president on significant incidents \((M = 9.61)\). SSAOs rated attending conferences, workshops, and/or webinars \((M = 7.69)\), assisting the president in developing relationships and/or fundraising \((M = 7.62)\), and presenting at professional conferences and/or publishing \((M = 6.79)\) as the least important factors in their role; however, these BASK factors were still rated as important (see Table 8).

There were similar (although not identical) results when examining the means and standard deviations broken down by each of the independent variables. When comparing gender

---

**Table 5**

*Titles of Senior Student Affairs Officers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title category</th>
<th>(N)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vice President for Student Affairs</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President and Dean of Students</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean of Students</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Vice President for Student Affairs</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Student Affairs</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>&lt; 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Vice President for Student Affairs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>&lt; 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Vice President for Community Engagement and Diversity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt; 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President for Advancement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt; 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree level and field of study</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate/Professional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling/Psychology/Social Work</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization Leadership/Administration/Human Resources/Business</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English/French/Hispanic Literature</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing/Science</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theology/Religion</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling/Social Work/Psychology</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Administration/Organization Development/Human Resources</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Science/Criminal Justice/Public Administration</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletic/Recreation Administration</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divinity/Theology/Religion</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology/Cultural or International Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science/Engineering</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Literature</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Communications</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple master's degrees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and Counseling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Leadership and Student Affairs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Leadership</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Literature</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Arts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7

Title of Position to Whom SSAO Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President/Chancellor</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President (Senior, Executive)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President for Student Affairs/Student Success</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President/Director for Operations</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President and Provost</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant/Vice Provost</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Dean</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice Dean of Academic Affairs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Provost/Dean of the Regional Campuses</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Provost/Dean of Students</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Vice President for Administration</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President for Enrollment Management</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

identity, men and women had a different order for the importance of the BASK factors (see Table 8). Men and women had the highest means for the same two BASK items; men had maintaining integrity in decision making with $M = 9.73$ and women had 9.91 as the highest mean. These were followed by demonstrating respect for others with $M = 9.64$ for men and 9.78 for women. These were also the two highest means for all SSAOs. Men and women had the lowest mean for the same item, presenting sessions at professional conferences and/or publishing (men $M = 6.52$, women $M = 6.96$). Presenting sessions at professional conferences and/or publishing had the lowest mean for all SSAOs as well.

For race/ethnicity, the order of the BASK factors is highlighted in Table 9. Three of the four categories for race/ethnicity have the same BASK factor with the highest mean, maintaining integrity in decision making (Black is $M = 9.83$, other is $M = 9.92$, and White is $M = 9.82$). All SSAOs also had this BASK item with the highest mean. Latin@s had briefing the president
about significant incidents with the highest mean, $M = 9.76$. Three of the four categories for race/ethnicity have the same BASK factor with the lowest mean, presenting sessions at professional conferences and/or publishing (Black $M = 7.35$, Latin@ $M = 7.04$, White $M = 6.59$). All SSAOs also had this BASK item with the lowest mean. The other race/ethnicity category had attending conferences, workshops, and/or webinars with the lowest mean, $M = 7.33$.

For sexual orientation, Table 8 shows the differences in the importance of the BASK factors between lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) SSAOs and those who identify as straight. The three BASK factors with the highest means are the same for LGB SSAOs as for those who identify as straight (i.e., maintaining integrity in decision making, $M = 9.72$ for LGB and $M = 9.83$ for straight SSAOs; demonstrating respect for others, $M = 9.70$ for LGB and $M = 9.70$ for straight SSAOs; and briefing the president on significant incidents, $M = 9.62$ for LGB and $M = 9.62$ for straight SSAOs). The three BASK factors with the lowest means for LGB SSAOs are the same items for those who identify as straight (i.e., attending conferences, workshops, and/or seminars, $M = 7.51$ for LGB and $M = 7.70$ for straight SSAOs; assisting the president in developing relationships and/or fundraising, $M = 7.47$ for LGB and $M = 7.67$ for straight SSAOs; and presenting sessions at professional conferences and/or publishing, $M = 6.52$ for LGB and $M = 6.79$ for straight SSAOs). These six BASK items with the highest and lowest means for sexual orientation also match the highest and lowest means for all SSAOs.

**BASK Items Tested Using ANOVA**

Of the nine BASK categories, four categories were inter-correlated statistically (Cronbach’s alpha ≥ .6) leading to the conclusion that they measured the same construct (see Table 3). These categories were communication, leadership and supervision, planning and goal setting, and professional development. Because the other BASK categories were not inter-correlated statistically in the same way (Cronbach’s alpha ≤ .5), those (continued on page 73)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BASK item</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>LGB</th>
<th>Straight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining integrity in decision making</td>
<td>9.82</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>9.73</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td><strong>9.91</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrating respect for others</td>
<td>9.71</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>9.64</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td><strong>9.78</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briefing the president about significant incidents</td>
<td>9.61</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>9.48</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td><strong>9.75</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advising the president concerning student issues</td>
<td>9.60</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>9.52</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td><strong>9.69</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting the president in public</td>
<td>9.59</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>9.51</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td><strong>9.66</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting the division mission, vision, and values to the institution’s</td>
<td>9.51</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>9.40</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td><strong>9.62</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving as an expert on and advocate for students</td>
<td>9.43</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>9.27</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td><strong>9.60</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing credibility with board/faculty</td>
<td>9.39</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>9.22</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td><strong>9.57</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying calm</td>
<td>9.32</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>9.23</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td><strong>9.44</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having clearly stated goals</td>
<td>9.19</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>9.07</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td><strong>9.31</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing talent</td>
<td>9.11</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td><strong>9.21</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Value1</td>
<td>Value2</td>
<td>Value3</td>
<td>Value4</td>
<td>Value5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing competence with multicultural/equity/inclusion issues</td>
<td>9.08</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>8.82</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td><strong>9.36</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking student opinions</td>
<td>9.08</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>8.92</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td><strong>9.23</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading change</td>
<td>9.03</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>8.79</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td><strong>9.26</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivating student affairs as a learning organization</td>
<td>8.91</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>8.73</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td><strong>9.09</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting student learning in the academic experience</td>
<td>8.87</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>8.71</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td><strong>9.02</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting staff in assessment plan implementation</td>
<td>8.78</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>8.58</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td><strong>8.99</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tying a planning model to the budgeting process</td>
<td>8.63</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>8.50</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td><strong>8.75</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a “public presence”</td>
<td>8.52</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>8.37</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td><strong>8.70</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing direction under the leadership of a new president</td>
<td>8.45</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>8.30</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td><strong>8.59</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping stakeholders informed</td>
<td>8.39</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>8.13</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td><strong>8.67</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapting to a wide array of learners and learning contexts</td>
<td>8.36</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>8.09</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td><strong>8.63</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting with colleagues</td>
<td>8.15</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>7.86</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td><strong>8.47</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting a social justice focus</td>
<td>8.07</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>7.79</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td><strong>8.42</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending conferences, workshops, and/or webinars</td>
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<td>1.53</td>
<td>7.55</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td><strong>7.84</strong></td>
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<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting the president in developing relationships and/or fundraising</td>
<td>7.62</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>7.59</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>7.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting sessions and/or publishing</td>
<td>6.74</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td><strong>6.96</strong></td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td><strong>6.96</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. 1 = Not at all important; 10 = Essential. LGB = Lesbian Gay Bisexual. Boldface = group with the highest mean for BASK item.*
Table 9

*BASK Items by Mean for Race/Ethnicity*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BASK item</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Latin@</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining integrity in decision making</td>
<td>9.82 0.70</td>
<td>9.82 0.47</td>
<td>9.83 0.54</td>
<td>9.68 0.63</td>
<td><strong>9.92 0.29</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrating respect for others</td>
<td>9.71 0.64</td>
<td>9.70 0.65</td>
<td>9.74 0.59</td>
<td>9.60 0.71</td>
<td><strong>9.92 0.41</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briefing the president about significant incidents</td>
<td>9.61 0.79</td>
<td>9.58 0.81</td>
<td>9.72 0.60</td>
<td><strong>9.76 0.52</strong></td>
<td>9.58 1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advising the president concerning student issues</td>
<td>9.60 0.70</td>
<td>9.60 0.70</td>
<td><strong>9.70 0.57</strong></td>
<td>9.48 0.71</td>
<td>9.42 1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting the president in public</td>
<td>9.59 0.76</td>
<td>9.57 0.79</td>
<td><strong>9.67 0.64</strong></td>
<td>9.56 0.71</td>
<td><strong>9.67 0.89</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting the division mission, vision, and values to the institution’s</td>
<td>9.51 0.86</td>
<td>9.49 0.87</td>
<td><strong>9.67 0.85</strong></td>
<td>9.48 0.82</td>
<td><strong>9.67 0.89</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving as an expert on and advocate for students</td>
<td>9.43 0.89</td>
<td>9.40 0.91</td>
<td><strong>9.61 0.76</strong></td>
<td>9.36 0.70</td>
<td>9.58 0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing credibility with board/faculty</td>
<td>9.39 0.94</td>
<td>9.37 0.98</td>
<td>9.35 0.94</td>
<td>9.56 0.58</td>
<td><strong>9.67 0.89</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying calm</td>
<td>9.32 0.93</td>
<td>9.34 0.87</td>
<td>9.23 1.02</td>
<td>9.32 0.90</td>
<td><strong>9.50 0.67</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having clearly stated goals</td>
<td>9.19 1.02</td>
<td>9.09 1.05</td>
<td>9.53 0.75</td>
<td>9.52 1.05</td>
<td><strong>9.67 0.49</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing talent</td>
<td>9.11 1.03</td>
<td>9.05 1.03</td>
<td>9.28 1.12</td>
<td>9.08 1.00</td>
<td><strong>9.75 0.45</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std Dev</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std Dev</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing competence with multicultural/equity/inclusion issues</td>
<td>9.08</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>8.99</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>9.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking student opinions</td>
<td>9.08</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>9.04</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>9.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading change</td>
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<td>8.95</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>9.34</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultivating student affairs as a learning organization</td>
<td>8.91</td>
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<td>9.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting student learning in the academic experience</td>
<td>8.87</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>8.82</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>8.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting staff in assessment plan implementation</td>
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<td>1.07</td>
<td>8.70</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>9.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.28</td>
<td>8.49</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>9.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a “public presence”</td>
<td>8.52</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>8.48</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>8.80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Changing direction under the leadership of a new president</td>
<td>8.45</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>8.38</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>8.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping stakeholders informed</td>
<td>8.39</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>8.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapting to a wide array of learners and learning contexts</td>
<td>8.36</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>8.27</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>8.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting with colleagues</td>
<td>8.15</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>8.11</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>8.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting a social justice focus</td>
<td>8.07</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>7.96</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>8.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending conferences, workshops, and/or webinars</td>
<td>7.69</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>7.61</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>8.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting the president in developing</td>
<td>7.62</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>7.51</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationships and/or fundraising</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting sessions and/or publishing</td>
<td>6.74</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>6.59</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>7.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* 1 = Not at all important; 10 = Essential. Latin@ = Latino/Latina. Other = other race/ethnicity group. Boldface = group with the highest mean for BASK item.
Table 10

ANOVA Analysis by Categories or Individually

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BASK item</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Individual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication (briefing the president, keeping stakeholders informed, creating a public presence)</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership and supervision (cultivating a learning organization, social justice focus, developing talent)</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and goal setting (clearly stated goals, tying a planning model to the budget, supporting staff in assessment)</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development (consulting with colleagues, presenting and/or submitting articles, attending conferences)</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advising the president concerning student issues</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapting to a wide array of learners and learning contexts</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting the president developing relationships/fundraising</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing direction under the leadership of a new president</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting the division mission/vision to the institution's</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrating respect for others</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing competence multicultural/equity/inclusion issues</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing credibility with the board/senior staff/faculty</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading change processes based on new criteria</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining integrity in decision making</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting student learning in the academic experience</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking student opinions on important issues</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving as an expert on and an advocate for students</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying calm (e.g., even-keeled, unflappable)</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting the president (or supervisor) in public</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.  X = Yes.*
items were tested separately instead of in the categories. Table 10 shows how the BASK items were tested, either as a category or individually, resulting in the analysis of 19 BASK items.

**ANOVA Results**

A series of one way ANOVAs was conducted to examine the group differences on BASK scores for the independent variables. Because it is important to understand the magnitude of the differences, effect sizes were calculated. Cohen’s $d$ was chosen for gender identity and sexual orientation effect sizes, because these had two groups; partial eta-squared was used for effect size for race/ethnicity, because there were more than two groups to compare. As stated previously, Cohen (1988) established a baseline for reporting effect sizes: .2 was small, .5 was medium, and .8 was large. “Partial eta-squared is the proportion of the total variability attributable to a given factor” (Nandy, 2012, p. 21) and is interpreted as “.01 small, .06 medium, .14 large” (Schuckit, Kalmijn, Smith, Saunders, & Fromme, 2012, p. 1247).

The ANOVAs showed that the difference in BASK scores between men and women were statistically significant for 17 of the 19 BASK items. There were no statistically significant differences between men and women on changing direction under the leadership of a new president or provost or assisting the president in developing relationships and/or fundraising. Table 11 shows the results of all the ANOVA tests for gender identity by BASK item. The ANOVA indicated that SSAO ratings on the BASK item seeking student opinions on important issues were significantly higher for women ($M = 2.40$, $SD = .643$) than for men ($M = 2.20$, $SD = .663$), $F(1, 428) = 9.901$, $p = .002$, $d = -0.304$. Cohen’s $d$ indicates a relatively small effect size for the difference between men and women and is negative because the mean for women was higher than the mean for men; all the Cohen’s $d$ calculations for effect size were negative for
gender identity. The ANOVA showed that SSAO ratings on the BASK item demonstrating respect for others were significantly higher for women ($M = 2.81$, $SD = .435$) than for men ($M = 2.71$, $SD = .522$), $F(1, 428) = 5.075$, $p = .025$, $d = -0.183$. Cohen’s $d$ indicates a small effect size.

The ANOVA revealed that SSAO ratings on the BASK item developing competence with multicultural, equity, and inclusion issues were significantly higher for women ($M = 2.50$, $SD = .621$) than for men ($M = 2.15$, $SD = .685$), $F(1, 427) = 29.025$, $p = < .001$, $d = -0.501$. Cohen’s $d$ indicates a medium effect size. The ANOVA indicated that SSAO ratings on the BASK item adapting to a wide array of learners and learning contexts were significantly higher for women ($M = 2.04$, $SD = .672$) than for men ($M = 1.79$, $SD = .673$), $F(1, 428) = 14.439$, $p = < .001$, $d = -0.367$. Cohen’s $d$ indicates between a small and medium effect size. The ANOVA indicated that SSAO ratings on the BASK item leading change processes based on new criteria were significantly higher for women ($M = 2.41$, $SD = .624$) than for men ($M = 2.11$, $SD = .645$), $F(1, 428) = 24.402$, $p = < .001$, $d = -0.477$. Cohen’s $d$ indicates between a small and medium effect size. The ANOVA showed that SSAO ratings on the BASK item serving as an expert on and advocate for students were significantly higher for women ($M = 2.67$, $SD = .537$) than for men ($M = 2.43$, $SD = .639$), $F(1, 426) = 16.881$, $p = < .001$, $d = -0.399$. Cohen’s $d$ indicates between a small and medium effect size. The ANOVA revealed that SSAO ratings on the BASK item developing credibility with the board members, other senior staff, and faculty were significantly higher for women ($M = 2.64$, $SD = .551$) than for men ($M = 2.40$, $SD = .649$), $F(1, 428) = 16.655$, $p = < .001$, $d = -0.394$. Cohen’s $d$ indicates between a small and medium effect size. The ANOVA indicated that SSAO ratings on the BASK item staying calm were significantly higher for women ($M = 2.54$, $SD = .591$) than for men ($M = 2.40$, $SD = .640$), $F(1, 428) = 5.441$, $p = .020$, $d = -0.226$. Cohen’s $d$ indicates a small effect size. The ANOVA showed that SSAO
Table 11

**Significant BASK Items for Gender Identity by Effect Size: Largest to Smallest Difference by Cohen's d**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BASK item</th>
<th>Women M</th>
<th>Women SD</th>
<th>Men M</th>
<th>Men SD</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Cohen's d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing competence with multicultural/equity/inclusion issues</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>29.03***</td>
<td>-0.501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading change processes based on new criteria</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>24.40***</td>
<td>-0.477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>22.51***</td>
<td>-0.458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership and supervision</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>21.14***</td>
<td>-0.443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>19.58***</td>
<td>-0.425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving as an expert on and advocate for students</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>16.88***</td>
<td>-0.399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing credibility with board/faculty</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>16.66***</td>
<td>-0.394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and goal setting</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>16.11***</td>
<td>-0.386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining integrity in decision making</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>15.69***</td>
<td>-0.386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapting to a wide array of learners and learning contexts</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>14.44***</td>
<td>-0.367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Median</td>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>Significance</td>
<td>Effect Size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting the division mission, vision, and values to the institution’s</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>11.48**</td>
<td>-0.328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking student opinions</td>
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<td>2.2</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>9.90**</td>
<td>-0.304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advising the president concerning student issues</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>9.72**</td>
<td>-0.301</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promoting student learning in the academic experience</td>
<td>2.25</td>
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<td>2.06</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>8.90**</td>
<td>-0.289</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supporting the president in public</td>
<td>2.74</td>
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<td>2.59</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>8.07**</td>
<td>-0.274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying calm</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>5.44*</td>
<td>-0.226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrating respect for others</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>5.08*</td>
<td>-0.183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.
ratings on the BASK item supporting the president (or supervisor) in public were significantly higher for women ($M = 2.74, SD = .519$) than for men ($M = 2.59, SD = .569$), $F(1, 430) = 8.069$, $p = .005$, $d = -0.274$. Cohen’s $d$ indicates a small effect size. The ANOVA revealed that SSAO ratings on the BASK item promoting student learning in the academic experience were significantly higher for women ($M = 2.25, SD = .644$) than for men ($M = 2.06, SD = .646$), $F(1, 426) = 8.903$, $p = .003$, $d = -0.289$. Cohen’s $d$ indicates a small effect size. The ANOVA indicated that SSAO ratings on the BASK item connecting the division mission, vision, and values to the institution’s mission, vision, and values were significantly higher for women ($M = 2.71, SD = .546$) than for men ($M = 2.52, SD = .609$), $F(1, 427) = 11.476$, $p = .001$, $d = -0.328$. Cohen’s $d$ indicates a small effect size. The ANOVA showed that SSAO ratings on the BASK item maintaining integrity in decision making were significantly higher for women ($M = 2.92, SD = .293$) than for men ($M = 2.77, SD = .466$), $F(1, 429) = 15.688$, $p = < .001$, $d = -0.386$. Cohen’s $d$ indicates between a small and medium effect size. The ANOVA revealed that SSAO ratings on the BASK item advising the president concerning student issues were significantly higher for women ($M = 2.74, SD = .494$) than for men ($M = 2.58, SD = .559$), $F(1, 430) = 9.723$, $p = .002$, $d = -0.301$. Cohen’s $d$ indicates a small effect size. The ANOVA indicated that SSAO ratings on the BASK item communication were significantly higher for women ($M = 2.31, SD = .444$) than for men ($M = 2.10, SD = .462$), $F(1, 430) = 22.512$, $p = < .001$, $d = -0.458$. Cohen’s $d$ indicates a medium effect size. The ANOVA showed that SSAO ratings on the BASK item leadership and supervision were significantly higher for women ($M = 2.22, SD = .519$) than for men ($M = 2.00, SD = .493$), $F(1, 430) = 21.142$, $p = < .001$, $d = -0.443$. Cohen’s $d$ indicates between a small and medium effect size. The ANOVA revealed that SSAO ratings on the BASK item planning and goal setting were significantly higher for women ($M = 2.28, SD = .503$) than
for men \( (M = 2.08, SD = .497) \), \( F(1, 430) = 16.107, p = < .001, d = -0.386 \). Cohen’s \( d \) indicates between a small and medium effect size. The ANOVA indicated that SSAO ratings on the BASK item professional development were significantly higher for women \( (M = 1.67, SD = .501) \) than for men \( (M = 1.47, SD = .434) \), \( F(1, 430) = 19.575, p = < .001, d = -0.425 \). Cohen’s \( d \) indicates between a small and medium effect size. Thus, there are differences in the importance of the BASK items based on gender identity.

For sexual orientation, the ANOVA tests showed scores on the BASK items were not statistically significantly different between LGB and straight SSAOs. The \( p \) values ranged from .10 to .98 (see Appendix F). There are no differences in the importance of the BASK items based on sexual orientation.

For race/ethnicity, six of the nineteen BASK items had statistically significant differences across groups (see Table 12). Each of the six BASK items with significance are listed here. The ANOVA indicated a main effect for SSAO ratings on the BASK item seeking student opinions on important issues, \( F(3, 425) = 3.067, p = .028, \eta_p^2 = .021 \). Partial eta-squared indicates a small effect size. Post-hoc analyses using Tukey’s HSD revealed that the mean difference was significant between SSAOs from the other race/ethnicity group and both White and Black/African American SSAOs. BASK scores were higher for participants from the other race/ethnicity group \( (M = 2.82, SD = .405) \) than for White participants \( (M = 2.27, SD = .655) \) or Black/African American participants \( (M = 2.38, SD = .678) \), but there was not a statistically significant difference between the other race/ethnicity group and Latin@ SSAOs \( (M = 2.40, SD = .673) \). There were no statistically significant differences between White SSAOs and Black/African American SSAOs, White SSAOs and Latin@ SSAOs, or Black/African American SSAOs and Latin@ SSAOs.
The ANOVA showed a main effect for SSAO ratings on the BASK item developing competence with multicultural, equity, and inclusion issues, $F(3,424) = 5.026, p = .002, \eta^2_p = .034$. Partial eta-squared revealed a small effect size. Post-hoc analyses using Tukey’s HSD showed that the mean difference was significant between Black/African American SSAOs and White SSAOs, but there was not a statistically significant difference among any of the other groups. BASK scores were higher for Black/African American SSAOs ($M = 2.59, SD = .649$) than for White SSAOs ($M = 2.26, SD = .677$).

The ANOVA indicated a main effect for SSAO ratings on the BASK item leading change processes based on new criteria, $F(3,425) = 3.735, p = .011, \eta^2_p = .026$. Partial eta-squared showed a small effect size. Post-hoc analyses using Tukey’s HSD revealed that the mean difference was significant between Black/African American SSAOs and White SSAOs, but there was not a statistically significant difference among any of the other groups. BASK scores were higher for Black/African American SSAOs ($M = 2.49, SD = .641$) than for White SSAOs ($M = 2.21, SD = .647$).

The ANOVA indicated a main effect for SSAO ratings on the BASK item leadership and supervision, $F(3,427) = 5.464, p = .001, \eta^2_p = .037$. Partial eta-squared showed between a small and medium effect size. Post-hoc analyses using Tukey’s HSD revealed that the mean difference was significant between Black/African American SSAOs and White SSAOs and between SSAOs from the other race/ethnicity group and White SSAOs, but there was not a statistically significant difference among any of the other groups. BASK scores were higher for both Black/African American SSAOs ($M = 2.29, SD = .523$) and SSAOs from the other race/ethnicity group ($M = 2.43, SD = .425$) than for White SSAOs ($M = 2.06, SD = .509$). The ANOVA revealed a main effect for SSAO ratings on the BASK item planning and goal setting, $F(3, 427) = 10.039, p =$
Table 12

*Significant BASK Items for Race/Ethnicity by Effect Size: Largest to Smallest Difference by Partial Eta Squared*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BASK item</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$\eta_p^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning and goal setting</td>
<td>10.04***</td>
<td>0.066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership and supervision</td>
<td>5.46**</td>
<td>0.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing competence with multicultural, equity, and inclusion issues</td>
<td>5.03**</td>
<td>0.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading change processes based on new criteria (e.g., accreditation, legislation)</td>
<td>3.74*</td>
<td>0.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking student opinions on important issues</td>
<td>3.07*</td>
<td>0.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development</td>
<td>2.96*</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.**
Table 13

*Summary of Significant Results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BASK Factors</th>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Areas of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seeking student opinions on important issues</td>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>Women &gt; Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Race/ethnicity</td>
<td>Other &gt; Whites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other &gt; Blacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing direction under the leadership of a new</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>president or provost</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrating respect for others</td>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>Women &gt; Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing competence--multicultural issues</td>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>Women &gt; Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Race/ethnicity</td>
<td>Blacks &gt; Whites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapting to a wide array of learners and contexts</td>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>Women &gt; Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting the president in fundraising</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading change processes based on new criteria</td>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>Women &gt; Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Race/ethnicity</td>
<td>Blacks &gt; Whites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving as an expert on and advocate for students</td>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>Women &gt; Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing credibility with the board/faculty</td>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>Women &gt; Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying calm</td>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>Women &gt; Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting the president in public</td>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>Women &gt; Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting student learning in the academic</td>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>Women &gt; Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting the division’s mission, vision, and</td>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>Women &gt; Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>values to the institution’s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>Race/ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining integrity in decision making</td>
<td>Women &gt; Men</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advising the president concerning student</td>
<td>Women &gt; Men</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>issues</td>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Women &gt; Men</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership and supervision</td>
<td>Women &gt; Men</td>
<td>Blacks &gt; Whites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>Other &gt; Whites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and goal setting</td>
<td>Women &gt; Men</td>
<td>Blacks &gt; Whites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>Other &gt; Whites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development</td>
<td>Women &gt; Men</td>
<td>Blacks &gt; Whites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>Other &gt; Whites</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \eta_p^2 = .066 \] Partial eta-squared showed a medium effect size. Post-hoc analyses using Tukey’s HSD indicated that the mean difference was significant between Black/African American SSAOs and White SSAOs and between SSAOs from the other race/ethnicity group and White SSAOs, but there was not a statistically significant difference among any of the other groups. BASK scores were higher for both Black/African American SSAOs \((M = 2.45, SD = .457)\) and SSAOs from the other race/ethnicity group \((M = 2.56, SD = .402)\) than for White SSAOs \((M = 2.11, SD = .502)\). The ANOVA showed a main effect for SSAO ratings on the BASK item professional development, \(F(3,427) = 2.962, p = .032, \eta_p^2 = .020\). Partial eta-squared revealed a small effect size. Post-hoc analyses using Tukey’s HSD indicated that the mean difference was significant between Black/African American SSAOs and White SSAOs, but there was not a statistically significant difference among any of the other groups. BASK scores
were higher for Black/African American SSAOs ($M = 1.74, SD = .464$) than for White SSAOs ($M = 1.54, SD = .473$). Therefore, there are differences in the importance of the BASK items based on race/ethnicity.

**Paired-Samples $t$-Tests Results**

The paired-samples $t$-tests were performed on the BASK items rated as the highest three and the lowest three to determine if there were differences in the overall ranking of items across all participants. The results of the paired-samples $t$-tests showed a statistically significant difference between the highest-rated BASK item (integrity in decision making) and the next highest-rated BASK item (demonstrating respect for others), $t(437) = 3.227, p = .001$. There was also a statistically significant difference between the second highest-rated BASK item (demonstrating respect for others) and the third highest-rated BASK item (briefing the president about significant incidents), $t(438) = -2.014, p = .045$.

There was a statistically significant difference between the lowest-rated BASK item (presenting and/or publishing) and the next-to-lowest rated BASK item (attending conferences, workshops, and/or webinars), $t(435) = -11.907, p < .001$. However, there was no statistically significant difference between the second-to-lowest rated BASK item (attending conferences, workshops, and/or webinars) and the third-to-lowest rated BASK item (assisting the president in developing relationships/fundraising), $t(432) = .314, p = .754$.

**MANOVA Results**

The MANOVA test compared the BASK ratings overall by the independent variables (i.e., gender identity, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation) to determine if there was an order difference. For gender identity, there was not a statistically significant difference in the order of
the BASK items between women and men. The same result occurred between LGB and straight SSAOs; there was no statistically significant difference in the order of the BASK items.

For race/ethnicity, there was borderline statistical significance, $F(3, 396) = 3.969, p = .008$, Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.051$. Results of other tests similar to Wilks' $\Lambda$ were a little above or a little below significance, depending on the test; Pillai’s Trace was .054 and Hotelling’s Trace was .047. Post-hoc analyses using Tukey’s HSD revealed that the mean difference was significant between Black/African American SSAOs and White SSAOs. There is not strong statistical evidence of a change in the order of the BASK items based on race/ethnicity.

Summary

Several significant findings were determined based on SSAOs’ ratings of the BASK factors. Most of these differences were between men and women, and there were also some differences among the race/ethnicity groups. No statistically significant findings were found between LGB and straight SSAOs. Table 13 provides a summary of the significant findings. A discussion of the results follows in the next chapter.
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

This chapter examines the purpose of the study and reviews significant findings. Implications for practice, policy, and future research are discussed. An overall summary is presented.

The purpose of this study was to assess current SSAOs’ perceptions of the importance of the BASK factors relative to their view of success in their positions. As previously noted, there were three research questions (RQs) for this study.

RQ1: How do current SSAOs rate the importance of the BASK factors relative to one another?
RQ2: To what extent are there group differences in how SSAOs rate the BASK factors?
RQ3: To what extent are there group differences in how SSAOs rate the order of BASK factors relative to one another?

 Significant Findings

Descriptive statistics, paired-samples $t$-tests, MANOVA, and ANOVA tests were performed on the data. Post-hoc tests were conducted with the race/ethnicity group because more than two categories were present. Initially, 27 BASK factors were organized into nine categories based on the literature and previous research. In assessing the reliability of the categories, only four of them were inter-correlated statistically with a Cronbach’s alpha of .60 or higher. Therefore, 19 BASK items were analyzed (four categories plus fifteen individual factors). In examining the mean scores and standard deviations for each BASK item, integrity in decision making was the item with the highest mean across all groups with the exception of Latin@ SSAOs. For Latin@ SSAOs, the item with the highest mean was briefing the president on significant incidents; however, integrity in decision making had the second highest mean ($M = 9.76$ versus 9.68) for this group. Integrity in decision making was also the item with the
highest mean from the Davis (2002) study. Given the ongoing news stories involving leaders in higher education (and other fields) involved in scandal or unethical behavior (de Vise, 2011), having integrity in decision making rise to the top for SSAOs attested to the importance of principled practice in student affairs.

A number of the studies highlighted in the literature review for the current study couched integrity in decision making as a critical success factor for effective leadership. For example, Bryman and Lilley (2009) and Lovell and Kosten (2000) described integrity as integral to the success of leaders. Smith and Hughey (2006) also spoke of integrity as one of the characteristics valued in leaders. These research studies lend support to the finding of integrity in decision making as the most important BASK factor for SSAOs.

Professional development (consisting of presenting sessions or papers at professional conferences and/or submitting articles, book chapters, etc. for publication; consulting with colleagues at other institutions on difficult issues; and attending conferences, workshops, and/or webinars) had the lowest mean across all groups. This may have been for a multitude of reasons including difficult economic times that inhibit financial support for participation in conferences. SSAOs have already reached the pinnacle of their profession, so perhaps professional development is less important. Given the demands of the SSAO position, it may be difficult to carve out time to be away from campus or to spend the time away from day-to-day duties to work on scholarly endeavors. Professional development also had the lowest mean in the Davis (2002) study, so this trend did not appear to change in the last 13 years.

Sexual Orientation

No group differences were found on the BASK items by sexual orientation. This finding did not come as a surprise as people who identify as LGB would likely strive not to have their
own sexual orientation as an influence for professional practice. There was no prior research looking at the influence of sexual orientation on the enactment of the SSAO role, so this study serves as the first benchmark available.

I believe part of the reason for no statistically significant findings is because the view of diversity, multiculturalism, and inclusion is still far from all-encompassing in higher education. In my opinion, most presidents are not looking at members of their cabinet lamenting the lack of LGBTQ vice presidents in the same way they would if there were not very many (or any) women or people of color at the executive table. “Institutions still operate under heteronormative environments. Higher education institutions must challenge themselves to expanding their thinking to be more inclusive of nonheterosexual people” (Johnson, 2013, p. 12). Until universities truly value diversity and inclusion beyond gender and race/ethnicity, it seems unlikely that LGBTQ SSAOs will bring this piece of their identity into their leadership enactment and professional practice.

Gender Identity

Women had higher mean scores than men in all but two of the BASK items (i.e., changing direction under the leadership of a new president and assisting the president in developing relationships and/or fundraising). One interpretation of this result was that women perceived the need to put more time and effort into the BASK factors than did men. A similar finding was reported in the Davis (2002) study where, “In every [emphasis in original] case of significance, the mean for women was always higher than the mean for men” (p. 59).

Because there continues to be evidence of gender discrimination in the workplace, women are put in the position of having to contribute more and work harder to achieve status and position in their jobs, as compared to men. Misra and Murray-Close (2014) spoke of the gender
wage gap as ongoing evidence of gender discrimination, “Rather than choosing occupations that pay less, once women move in certain occupations, those occupations pay less well, even in occupations dominated by women, men in those same occupations earn more – reinforcing a gender wage gap” (p. 1283). The researchers further explain,

Many organizations are based on underlying assumptions of the ideal worker as unencumbered by any care responsibilities. While these norms may be difficult to attain for both men and women, they may particularly disadvantage women, affecting wages. Gender wage gaps may remain salient, even as women move into management, if gendered assumptions underlying organizations are not remarkably changed as women enter into positions of power.” (Misra & Murray-Close, 2014, p. 1283)

Kazmi and Sharma (2013) lent additional support to the concept of gender discrimination. The researchers stated, “Women, as managers in organizations are generally accepted, but they face myriad obstacles and challenges in the form of gender discrimination” (p. 43).

Race/Ethnicity

Six BASK items showed significant results for race/ethnicity. Seeking student opinions on important issues had the SSAOs from the other race/ethnicity group with a higher mean than either Black/African American SSAOs or White SSAOs. Developing competence with multicultural, equity, and inclusion issues; leading change processes based on new criteria; and professional development had Black/African American SSAOs with a higher mean than White SSAOs. Leadership and supervision and planning and goal setting had both SSAOs from the other race/ethnicity group with a higher mean than White SSAOs and Black/African American SSAOs with a higher mean than White SSAOs. A similar finding was reported in the Davis (2002) study where, “In every [emphasis in original] case where significance was found, the
mean for CSAOs of Color was always higher than the mean for Caucasian/White CSAOs” (p. 71).

As a further explication of the findings, Reskin’s (2008) research on ascriptive inequality offers a reason for women and people of color to try harder, therefore scoring higher on many BASK factors. The researcher describes ascriptive inequality as characteristics (e.g., ethnicity, gender, race) held by some societal members that were cause for discrimination, not based on ability to perform a job, but by membership in different identity groups. Because employment discrimination based on race/ethnicity and gender continue to be problematic, people from marginalized groups may strive even harder to be successful in the workplace (Reskin & Padavic, 2006). Reskin (2012) stated “widespread racial disparities are part of a fully developed discrimination system (p. 26). This research lends support to the higher scores for women and people of color on many BASK factors; these participants may be doing more to achieve parity with their White and male SSAO colleagues.

Kezar and Lester (2010) also explored identity in their research. The researchers postulated leadership as a social construction informed by multiple identities (e.g., race/ethnicity, plus gender, plus position). They suggested the way someone acts as a leader is related to their multiple identities. That people from traditionally marginalized groups construct leadership differently is another lens to interpret the current study’s findings. Fassinger, Shullman, and Stevenson (2010) offer a similar viewpoint about the leadership of people from marginalized backgrounds;

The leader, as a learner and learning facilitator, creates both opportunities and challenges to be explored by others and leverages resources to help others achieve goals. We posit that it is no coincidence that these evolutions in conceptualizations of leadership have
occurred alongside the movement of women, people of color, openly LGBT individuals, people with disabilities, and others from marginalized groups into formal positions of leadership. (p. 203)

Thus, as more scholars and practitioners from marginalized groups conduct research and assume leadership positions, the notions of successful leadership practices change to be more inclusive of the many identities people bring to their roles.

The research by Clayborne and Hamrick (2007) on African American women leaders in student affairs highlighted the misalignment of leadership styles between participants and their supervisors, leading the African American women leaders to feel isolated and doubt their effectiveness. Feeling ineffective may be a plausible explanation for why women and people of color scored higher on BASK factors than their male and White SSAO counterparts; they may have felt the need to try harder.

**Lens of Adaptation Theory**

Sporn’s (2001) adaptation theory encompassed effective leadership and institutional mission and culture set in the context of change in a university setting. These three constructs (change, effective leadership, institutional mission and culture) were found throughout the literature and previous research, and therefore undergird the current study.

Hammonds’ (2012) research offers a specific example of support for the use of adaptation theory for examining the careers of African American SSAOs. Hammonds posited the reason so many universities had included a commitment to diversity and inclusion as part of their mission was to adapt to the changing student demographics by hiring and supporting a more diverse staff. Her research pointed to the role of the SSAO in hiring a diverse staff as key to adaptation to the new demographic realities on campuses. Similarly, Sandeen and Barr (2006)
spoke of institutions of higher education embracing a (relatively) new mission of valuing diversity because of the changing student demographics. Because of this adaptation, it was important to hire and retain a diverse staff. In looking at the findings for the current study through the adaptation theory lens, it makes sense that women and people of color would have higher scores on many of the BASK factors, because they were adapting to their circumstances and environment. That is, women and people of color perceived the need for utilization of adaptive strategies to be successful.

**Comparison to the Davis Study**

Although the current study was not a replication of Davis (2002), there were many similarities and some differences found. Both research projects involved a thorough search of the literature to inform the instrument. The current study used 27 individual BASK items versus 69 items in Davis. While the categories in Davis were all highly inter-correlated, only four of the categories in the current study were; this was likely because there were more items in each of the categories for Davis as compared to only three items in each category in the current study. The categories were the same for both studies, but the current study added adaptation and change as a ninth grouping of BASK items, because change was repeated throughout the current literature as a factor to handle. Both studies found integrity in decision making as the highest-rated item, with presenting and publishing as the lowest-rated item (although still an important factor). Both studies also showed higher ratings for women and people of color for all statistically significant items.

**Implications for Practice and Policy**

The findings in the current study can be used in practice to support aspiring SSAOs and those new to the job by showing a pathway to the most important BASK factors from those who
are currently in the position. Both of the major professional associations for student affairs, ACPA and NASPA, hold conferences for aspiring SSAOs; the current study could be used to inform the curriculum generally and for different constituencies. For instance, part of the conference could be focused on working in affinity groups by gender identity for a half day and by race/ethnicity for a half day. These working times could focus on the BASK items where women and people of color respectively scored higher than their male and White counterparts (e.g., Black/African American SSAOs placed more emphasis on planning and goal setting than their White SSAO counterparts). One benefit of this division of working times would be that people would not be forced to choose among their own identities; participants could be in the gender group during one meeting and in the people of color group the next time. This both/and philosophy allows aspiring SSAOs to bring more of the identities they represent into the experience. People from predominantly privileged backgrounds (e.g., White, straight, able-bodied, men) can examine ways to be an ally, mentor, and sponsor for people from marginalized backgrounds. Kezar’s (2002) positionality theory would provide a good framework for this change in curriculum.

The differences found between men and women and among the race/ethnicity groups could be used to guide the assistance SSAOs provide to aspiring staff members. For example, looking at how higher BASK scores for women and people of color influence leadership enactment could be a campus-based professional development program. Another way for current SSAOs to assist staff is to offer professional development opportunities about how to infuse an ethical framework into everyday practice that could help to frame issues for new and seasoned professionals related to integrity in decision making.
Another implication for practice is for doctoral programs in higher education/student affairs to use case studies on ethical professional practice throughout the curriculum to emphasize integrity as a core value and provide ways for students to think critically about how to handle difficult problems, especially at the intersection of competing values. Another idea for doctoral programs is to develop an elective course for aspiring SSAOs that encompasses the constructs of effective leadership, constant change, and the connection to the institutional mission and culture as themes throughout the class and utilizes the BASK factors to build the course materials. Another course idea for doctoral programs is one on leadership with a focus on positionality (e.g., race/ethnicity, role) and the impact this has on how people enact leadership (Kezar, 2002).

The findings from the current study including the themes found in the literature and previous research (i.e., effective leadership, constant change, connection to institutional mission and culture), the differences in BASK scores between men and women and the different race/ethnicity groups, and the overall ranking of the BASK factors are good topics for student affairs professional association conference programs and journal and magazine articles. For example, the researcher is moderating a panel of LGBTQ SSAOs at the ACPA conference in 2015 where the panelists will discuss how their identity intersects with their career path.

Another compelling aspect of the study was the large number of LGB SSAOs. About 11% of participants in the current study identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual, compared to 2.3% of the U.S. population as reported by Ward, Dahlhamer, Galinsky, and Joestl (2014) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A reason for the large number of LGB SSAOs may be that;
Higher education recognizes the need for developing cultural proficiency by incorporating multiculturalism in the curriculum and by diversifying the ranks of faculty and administrators. In other words, one goal is for higher education institutions to align themselves with an environment that is becoming increasingly diverse.” (Aguirre & Martinez, 2006, p. 87)

A policy implication from the current study is to broaden demographic questions to inquire about gender identity and sexual orientation, as we do about race/ethnicity, on research surveys. With 50 LBG SSAOs responding to this survey (that was confidential, but not anonymous), it is clear that many senior leaders are ready to disclose their sexual orientation for research purposes. By not asking these questions, LGBTQ professionals are invisible in research studies. Similarly, questions about gender identity and sexual orientation should be added to applications for college admission and employment. Until we collect this baseline data, we will not know the role gender identity and sexual orientation play on campus.

**Implications for Future Research**

A replication of the study in 10 years would enable a comparison of results using this instrument to determine if the same or similar results would be the outcome. “If the results were replicated, it would greatly enhance the generalizability of the findings” (Welch, 2013, p. 2). Since the landscape of higher education and student affairs is in constant flux, an update of the literature review and BASK factors would ensure the instrument is useful in contemporary times, as was done with the Critical Skills Inventory for the current study (Davis, 2002).

In framing what the big picture of effective student affairs leadership looks like, there are many questions that need more empirical study. There was very little evidence-based data on the inclusion of demographic diversity in leadership studies. This is beginning to change as the
demographics of the workforce and of scholars diversifies, but this seems an area where more research would benefit the scholarship by including race, ethnicity, gender identity/expression, ability, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status as important factors in how leadership is perceived and pursued. Kezar (2002) and Kezar and Lester’s (2010) positionality theory is a good framework in which to further explore these issues. Replication of Clayborne and Hamrick’s (2007) and Clay’s (2014) studies on African American women for other identity groups, and looking at the intersection of identities, is a way to gather additional information on different populations’ leadership experiences and development. In the current study, all of the significant statistical findings revealed women and people of color had higher BASK scores than men and White people; therefore, a qualitative study exploring these differences would be informative.

Student affairs leadership is particularly lacking in evidence-based research. There are many “conversations” with successful SSAOs in the field, and although this is useful, it is very different from empirical studies informing leaders about successful leadership practices and processes. Building on the research of Kezar (2002), in particular, would greatly expand knowledge about leadership in student affairs. By duplicating the Risacher (2004) study for mid- and entry-level staff, comparisons with the data gathered on SSAOs could be made. For example, Risacher studied university presidents who were former SSAOs; a new study could examine directors who were former mid-level staff to assess the BASK factors necessary for successful role execution in their former position. Additional studies of interest include asking student affairs staff, students, direct reports of SSAOs, presidents, and other cabinet-level senior leaders what makes an effective SSAO. These studies would be helpful in understanding how success in the SSAO role is perceived by different stakeholders.
A completely new way of understanding the leadership construct is another direction to take. Rosch and Kusel (2010) engaged a team of people from their campus who represented the primary stakeholders (faculty, staff, and students) to come to consensus on a definition of leadership and what practices needed to be utilized by leaders for effectiveness. They then used this information to form a leadership development curriculum. They proposed a next step of working with this model across multiple campuses. This framework could be reproduced and evaluated to add to the body of work on leadership.

Another gap in the literature is the absence of longitudinal studies. Higher education and student affairs’ leaders would greatly benefit from the long view of shifts in leadership practices over time. It would be a fascinating study to work with students completing a college student personnel master’s degree (what the majority of entry-level staff have in student affairs) at five, ten, twenty, and thirty years post-master’s to determine how their perceived leadership development has shaped their careers.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to assess current SSAOs’ perceptions of the importance of the BASK factors relative to their viewpoint about success in their positions. The research questions that guided this research were:

RQ1: How do current SSAOs rate the importance of the BASK factors relative to one another?
RQ2: To what extent are there group differences in how SSAOs rate the BASK factors?
RQ3: To what extent are there group differences in how SSAOs rate the order of BASK factors relative to one another?

In answering these questions, the findings were examined relative to gender identity, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation.
Implications for practice include creating a pathway for aspiring SSAOs and those new to the position, ways for SSAOs to mentor and sponsor student affairs professionals, support for the general curriculum and for specific constituencies for ACPA and NASPA’s aspiring SSAO conferences, and ways to foster integrity and ethical professional practice. A policy implication is to be more inclusive when asking demographic questions to include gender identity and sexual orientation relative to research, college admission and employment.

Implications for future research include a replication of the current study, a call for more demographic diversity in leadership studies, a replication of other studies done on specific demographic populations for different groups, including an examination of the intersectionality of multiple identities, studying different groups on their view of SSAO effectiveness, and the addition of longitudinal studies.

Although great advances have been made in terms of the demographic make-up of SSAOs, people of color and women still have to do more to reach parity with those historically in positions of power within universities, men and White people. “White [and male] representation in government and the ruling circles of . . . universities is disproportionately high” (Johnson, 2006, p. 26). In addition, this is the first study focusing on SSAOs where sexual orientation was included. With over 11% of the participants identifying as LGB, this is an important group that is no longer invisible.
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APPENDIX A:

INSTRUMENT

SENIOR STUDENT AFFAIRS OFFICER (SSAO) CRITICAL BEHAVIORS, ATTITUDES, SKILLS, AND KNOWLEDGE INVENTORY

by Jo Campbell, adapted with permission from S. Davis Little

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to assess current SSAOs perceptions of the importance of critical behaviors, attitudes, skills, and knowledge (BASK) to success in their positions. Examples include the types of behaviors (e.g., keeping staff informed), attitudes (e.g., compassion for students), skills (e.g., talent development), and knowledge (e.g., Title IX compliance) used in practice to enact effective leadership.

Directions: Please complete the following questionnaire. The questionnaire has two sections: Part I is critical behaviors, attitudes, skills, and knowledge factors and Part II is demographic questions. On average, it should take you 10 minutes to complete the survey. The responses will be kept confidential and no individual or institution will be named in the research results; data will be reported in the aggregate. Thank you for your participation.

Question 1: Consent: By taking the survey, you are indicating your consent to participate in this research and that you have been informed of the purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits of this study, that you had the opportunity to have all your questions answered, that you are at least 18 years of age, and that you have been informed that participation is completely voluntary.

Part I: Please mark one response for each item: 1 = Not at all important to 10 = Essential

2. Seeking student opinions on important issues.
3. Changing direction under the leadership of a new president or provost.
4. Demonstrating respect for others.
5. Developing talent (e.g., selecting a diverse staff, creating a succession plan).
6. Cultivating student affairs as a learning organization.
7. Developing competence with multicultural, equity, and inclusion issues.
8. Having clearly stated goals and objectives.
9. Creating a “public presence” (e.g., giving effective welcomes and keynotes).
10. Briefing the president (or supervisor) about significant incidents and decisions that may affect student affairs and/or the institution.
11. Attending conferences, workshops, and/or webinars.
12. Promoting a social justice focus in the delivery of services and programs.
13. Tying a planning model to the budgeting process.
14. Adapting to a wide array of learners and learning contexts.
15. Assisting the president (or supervisor) in developing relationships with external stakeholders and/or fundraising activities.
16. Leading change processes based on new criteria (e.g., accreditation, legislation).
17. Serving as an expert on and an advocate for students.
18. Developing credibility with the board (e.g., trustees, regents, visitors) members, other senior staff, and faculty.
19. Keeping stakeholders informed (e.g., using social media, websites).
20. Presenting sessions or papers at professional conferences and/or submitting articles, book chapters, etc. for publication.
21. Staying calm (e.g., even-keeled, unflappable).
22. Supporting the president (or supervisor) in public.
23. Consulting with colleagues at other institutions on difficult issues.
24. Supporting staff in assessment plan implementation.
25. Promoting student learning by intentionally incorporating student affairs into the academic experience.
26. Connecting the student affairs mission, vision, and values to the institution’s mission, vision, and values.
27. Maintaining integrity in decision making.
28. Advising the president (or supervisor) concerning student issues and concerns.

Part II: Demographics. Please note the most appropriate response for each item.

29. What is your gender identity? Choose one.
   ___ Man
   ___ Trans* (an inclusive umbrella term to describe nonconforming gender identity and/or expression)
   ___ Woman
   ___ Prefer not to answer

30. What is your race/ethnicity? Mark as many as apply.
   ___ American Indian or Alaskan Native
   ___ Asian
   ___ Black or African American
   ___ Hispanic/Latino(a)
   ___ Multiracial
   ___ Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
   ___ White
   ___ Other (please specify: __________)  
   ___ Prefer not to answer

31. What is your sexual orientation?
   ___ Asexual
   ___ Bisexual
   ___ Gay
   ___ Heterosexual
   ___ Lesbian
   ___ Prefer not to answer

32. What is your title?
   ___ Dean of students
   ___ Vice president/chancellor for student affairs
Vice president/chancellor for student affairs and dean of students
Other, please specify _____________________________________

33. How many total years of experience do you have as a SSAO? (including current position and prior position(s) if applicable): __years

34. How many years of professional experience in higher education did you have upon attainment of your first SSAO position? __years

35. What is your highest degree earned?
   ___ Bachelor’s degree
   ___ Master’s degree
   ___ Doctorate
   ___ Professional (e.g., J. D.)
   ___ Specialist
   ___ Other (please specify: ____________________________________)

36. What is the field of study of your highest degree earned?
   ___ Higher Education and/or Student Affairs (College Student Personnel)
   ___ Other (please specify:_______________________________________)

37. What is the title of the position to which you report?
   ___ President/Chancellor
   ___ Provost
   ___ Other (please specify:_______________________________________)

38. How many students attend your institution (headcount)?
   ___ 1-999
   ___ 1000-4999
   ___ 5000-9999
   ___ 10,000-29,999
   ___ 30,000+

39. If your institution has on-campus housing, how many students live on campus?
   ___ 1-499
   ___ 500-999
   ___ 1000-4999
   ___ 5000-9999
   ___ 10,000+

40. How would you classify your current institution? Choose the one that best describes your institution.
   ___ Public, 2 year
   ___ Public, 4 year
   ___ Private, 2 year
   ___ Private, 4 year

Thank you for completing this survey!
APPENDIX B:

CONSENT LETTER

From: Little, Shay<sdlittle@kent.edu>  Sent: Thu 4/10/2014 4:56 PM
To: Jo Campbell
Cc:
Subject: RE: Dissertation

Jo—

Good luck in your program! As a follow-up to this email and our discussion last fall, you have my permission to use the instrument from my 2002 dissertation under the name of Janie Shay Davis, for your dissertation research. I will be interested to hear about your results when you have those. If there is anything else I can do to support you in this process, please let me know.

Shay

Shay Davis Little, Ph.D.
Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students
Division of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs
250 Kent Student Center
P.O. Box 5190
Kent, OH 44242-0001
330.672.4050
http://www.kent.edu/EMSA/index.cfm
APPENDIX C:

HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

DATE: September 11, 2014

TO: Jo Campbell

FROM: Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board

PROJECT TITLE: [633176-2] Senior student affairs officers critical behaviors, attitudes, skills, and knowledge inventory

SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision

ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: September 10, 2014

EXPIRATION DATE: September 8, 2015

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 7

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is available as a published Board Document in the Review Details page. You must use the approved version of the consent document when obtaining consent from participants. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.
Please add the text equivalent of the HSRB IRBNet approval/expiration date stamp to the "footer" area of the electronic consent document.

Please note that you are responsible to conduct the study as approved by the HSRB. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures, those modifications must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the modification request form for this procedure.

You have been approved to enroll 1,100 participants. If you wish to enroll additional participants you must seek approval from the HSRB.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must also be reported promptly to this office.

This approval expires on September 8, 2015. You will receive a continuing review notice before your project expires. If you wish to continue your work after the expiration date, your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date.

Good luck with your work. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Research Compliance at 419-372-7716 or hsr@bgsu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence regarding this project.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board's records.
APPENDIX D:
EMAIL INVITATION

September 23, 2014

Dear (Title Last Name),

My name is Jo Campbell and I am a doctoral student in higher education administration at Bowling Green State University. I am asking for your participation in my dissertation research study about your perceptions of the critical factors necessary for success in your role. The purpose of the research project is to determine your opinions about how important specific behaviors, attitudes, skills, and knowledge are to being successful in the senior student affairs officer (SSAO) role on a college or university campus. It is estimated that the survey will only take about ten minutes of your time. I hope to have a diverse set of participants to inform my study. The SSAO at my home institution addresses her invitation to you next.

Dear Colleagues:

As a Senior Student Affairs Officer (SSAO), I am writing to encourage your participation in the research study entitled, Senior Student Affairs Officers’ Perceptions of Essential Behaviors, Attitudes, Skills, and Knowledge. The aim of this study is to assess our perceptions of the importance of the critical behaviors, attitudes, skills, and knowledge to success in our positions. This research may have important implications for current student affairs practice and new and aspiring SSAOs.

Information about informed consent and a link to the survey are included below (after the informed consent document) and it should only take approximately 10 minutes to complete. I recognize how busy and challenging our days are, but I urge you to consider taking a few minutes of your time to respond to the questionnaire. Thank you, in advance, for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jill Carr
Vice President for Student Affairs
Bowling Green State University
Informed Consent Form for Senior Student Affairs Officers Critical Behaviors, Attitudes, Skills, and Knowledge Inventory

Bowling Green State University

Introduction: My name is Jo Campbell and I am a doctoral candidate in the higher education administration program at Bowling Green State University. My advisor for my dissertation is Maureen E. Wilson, Ph.D., associate professor and chair of the Department of Higher Education and Student Affairs. The research topic concerns the perceptions of senior student affairs officers (SSAO) about what critical behaviors, attitudes, skills, and knowledge are necessary for success in the SSAO role. You have been identified for participation in the study as a self-identified SSAO in the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators’ (NASPA) database. All SSAOs in the NASPA database have been targeted for the current study.

Purpose: Because the landscape of student affairs and higher education keeps changing, the critical success factors of behaviors, attitudes, skills, and knowledge for SSAOs are in constant flux. There has been no recent research delineating the critical behaviors, attitudes, skills, and knowledge needed for SSAOs to be effective leaders, therefore, the current study fills this gap. Bridging this gap in the body of knowledge is the benefit of the research in general. There are no direct benefits of the study for participants (e.g., raffle prizes).

Procedure: If you agree to take part in this research project, you will be asked to fill out an online survey that should take about 10 minutes to complete.

Voluntary nature: Your participation is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time. You may decide to skip questions or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Deciding to participate or not will not affect you, your position, or your relationship with Bowling Green State University, your institution, or NASPA.

Confidentiality Protection: Please note that all of your responses will be kept completely confidential. All data will be stored on a secure server. All resulting data will only be reported in the aggregate; no names or institutions will be listed.

Because this survey will be administered electronically, please note that some employers may use tracking software, so you may want to complete your survey on a personal computer. Please do not leave the survey open if you are using a public computer or a computer others may have access to and clear your browser cache and page history after completing the survey.

Risks: The risk of participating is no greater than experienced in everyday life. Please note the precautions taken in the previous confidentiality protection section.

Contact information: If you have any questions or concerns about the research or participation in the research, please feel to contact me at (419) 372-2345 or joc@bgsu.edu. My advisor for this research project is Maureen E. Wilson, Ph.D. and she can be reached at (419) 372-7321 or mewilso@bgsu.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Review Board at (419)
372-7716 or hsrb@bgsu.edu, if you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research.

Consent: By taking the survey, you are indicating your consent to participate in this research and that you have been informed of the purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits of this study, that you had the opportunity to have all your questions answered, that you are at least 18 years of age, and that you have been informed that participation is completely voluntary.

Thank you for participating in my dissertation research study.

Survey Link:
To access the survey please click here. If the survey does not open automatically, please copy and paste the following link to your internet browser's address bar:

http://studentvoice.com/p/?uuid=502143f95d254d70a6e072d581cab2fc
APPENDIX E:
BASK ITEMS IN CATEGORIES

Adaptation and Change

- Leading change processes based on new criteria (e.g., accreditation, legislation).
- Changing direction under the leadership of a new president or provost.
- Adapting to a wide array of learners and learning contexts.

Communication (analyzed as a category)

- Briefing the president (or supervisor) about significant incidents and decisions that may affect student affairs and/or the institution.
- Keeping stakeholders informed (e.g., using social media, websites).
- Creating a “public presence” (e.g., giving effective welcomes and keynotes).

Leadership and Supervision (analyzed as a category)

- Cultivating student affairs as a learning organization.
- Promoting a social justice focus in the delivery of services and programs.
- Developing talent (e.g., selecting a diverse staff, creating a succession plan).

Operating in a Politicized Environment

- Developing credibility with the board (e.g., trustees, regents, visitors) members, other senior staff, and faculty.
- Connecting the student affairs mission, vision, and values to the institution’s mission, vision, and values.
- Demonstrating respect for others.

Personal Qualities

- Developing competence with multicultural, equity, and inclusion issues.
• Maintaining integrity in decision making.

• Staying calm (e.g., even-keeled, unflappable).

Planning and Goal Setting (analyzed as a category)

• Having clearly stated goals and objectives.

• Tying a planning model to the budgeting process.

• Supporting staff in assessment plan implementation.

Professional Development (analyzed as a category)

• Presenting sessions or papers at professional conferences and/or submitting articles, book chapters, etc. for publication.

• Consulting with colleagues at other institutions on difficult issues.

• Attending conferences, workshops, and/or webinars.

Relationship with the President (or Supervisor)

• Advising the president (or supervisor) concerning student issues and concerns.

• Assisting the president (or supervisor) in developing relationships with external stakeholders and/or fundraising activities.

• Supporting the president (or supervisor) in public.

Student Learning

• Serving as an expert on and an advocate for students.

• Promoting student learning by intentionally incorporating student affairs into the academic experience.

• Seeking student opinions on important issues.
## APPENDIX F:

### ANOVA ANALYSIS FOR SEXUAL ORIENTATION

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<th>BASK Item (DV)</th>
<th>Not Significant</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seeking student opinions on important issues</td>
<td>$p = .49$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing direction under the leadership of a new president</td>
<td>$p = .53$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrating respect for others</td>
<td>$p = .92$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing competence multicultural/equity/inclusion issues</td>
<td>$p = .41$</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adapting to a wide array of learners and learning contexts</td>
<td>$p = .83$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting the president in developing relationships/ fundraising</td>
<td>$p = .23$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading change processes based on new criteria</td>
<td>$p = .61$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving as an expert on and advocate for students</td>
<td>$p = .72$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing credibility with the board/faculty</td>
<td>$p = .29$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying calm</td>
<td>$p = .10$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting the president in public</td>
<td>$p = .22$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting student learning in the academic experience</td>
<td>$p = .45$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting the division’s mission/vision to the institution’s</td>
<td>$p = .39$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining integrity in decision making</td>
<td>$p = .10$</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advising the president concerning student issues</td>
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<td>Professional development</td>
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