A Narrative Inquiry to Understand the Impact of Voice on a Student Conduct Administrator’s Role and Retention in that Role at Community Colleges

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Abstract

This study focuses on understanding the impact of voice on a student conduct administrator’s role and retention in that role at community colleges. By understanding the development of student services from the Colonial era to present day and providing background information about the different types of approaches utilized to address student conduct violations, this study builds the framework to understand the impact of voice on a student conduct administrator’s role and retention in that role at community colleges. The theoretical frameworks-exit, voice, loyalty, (Hirschman, 1970), use of the ProSocial Voice (Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003), and principles of effective retention (Tinto, 1987) provide the foundation for the use of a qualitative narrative approach to answer the research questions (1) what impact does the ability to use voice as a student conduct administrator have on the professional’s remaining in the position? (1a) what, if any, impact does the ability to facilitate change in the institution’s student conduct process influence the professional’s remaining in the position? (1b) what, if any, impact does a student conduct administrator’s ability to advocate for the use of an approach of their choosing to address conduct violations influence his or her remaining in the position? 12 60-90 minute interviews were conducted with current student conduct administrators that work at the community college institution. Chapter 1 informs the reader about the problem, chapter two provides a detailed literature review, chapter 3 outlines the methodology and sample while chapter four provides themes of the study and data analysis. The final chapter, chapter five, discusses the findings, and recommendations for policy, practice and future studies.
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Chapter 1: The Problem

Introduction

Private and public higher education institutions are faced with the ongoing problem of understanding the high attrition rates of student affairs administrators. Lorden (1998) referenced these alarming rates of attrition for student affairs administrators in the field, as did Wood (1985), Holmes, Verrier, and Chisholm (1983), and Marshall, Gardner, Hughes, and Lowery (2016). Holmes et al. found in their study “the year-by-year movement out of student personnel results in a retention level of 39% by the 6th year” (p. 442). The authors mention that it is important “to consider the implications of an attrition rate that takes 60% of master’s graduates out of the profession in a 6-year period” (p. 442). Factors that contribute to these rates of attrition have to do with job satisfaction, inability to obtain higher level positions, lack of mentorship, lack of geographical mobility, and burnout (Lorden, 1998; Holmes et al., 1983; Wood, Winston, & Polkosnik, 1985; Marshall et al. 2016). Stamatakos (1978) mentions the detrimental effects that a disregard for work-life balance can have on the professional: “To fail in this endeavor is to condemn yourself to a life of frenetic activity, displaced priorities, frustrations, and very possibly failure” (p. 329).

Student affairs administrator positions are most often associated with long hours on the job and stressful conditions (Lorden, 1998; Barr, 1990; Carpenter, 1990; Forney, Wallace-Schutzman, & Wiggers, 1982). Stamatakos (1978) also describes the “philosophical conflict” (p. 326) about “what should or ought to be done and what is not being done” (p. 326) as being a point of contention for new professionals in the field:

Saturated with the idealism of student personnel philosophy, the psychology of human growth and learning, and constructs and strategies for operationalizing student
development, you now find yourself in an environment that may appear to be ignorant of, disinterested in, or even hostile to what you have been taught to believe is the essence of the profession.

Wood et al. (1985) mention the fact that new professionals have limited ability to make decisions independently, which “may partially explain the departure of young professionals who desire greater autonomy in their careers” (p. 537). This internal and external battle about what is being done, what one has been taught should be done, and the ability to autonomously make decisions in one’s position may have a substantial impact on attrition rates within the field.

More recent studies also reference burnout as a reason for high attrition rates in the field of student affairs. Burnout is described as working long hours and dealing with stressful situations on a daily basis. Marshall et al. (2016) conducted a mixed methods study, surveying individuals who had left the field of student affairs, to understand the reasons behind their leaving. The results indicated that “excessive hours and burnout, non-competitive salaries leading to alternative career options, attractive career alternatives, work-life conflict, limited opportunities, role of the supervisor and institutional fit, and lack of challenge and loss of passions” (pp. 152-156) were reasons behind individuals exiting the field of student affairs.

When speaking to burnout, the researchers found that “only 52% felt they [student affairs administrators] had enough time to complete their work, 51% felt the hours they worked were excessive” (Marshall et al. 2016, p. 152). These excessive hours lead to burnout and lack of job satisfaction. Additionally, excessive hours impacted the individual’s ability to maintain a work-life balance.

Marshall et al. (2016), Lorden (1998) and others have conducted studies to better understand the high attrition rates of student affairs administrators. However, these authors’
studies focus on better understanding the work environments impact on attrition, the work overload impact on attrition, and the lack of career advancement impact on attrition among other things. There is a lack of research on the intangible issues that may be impacting reasons behind leaving the field of student affairs in general. There is limited research on the departure of professionals within the field of student conduct specifically, and even less on attrition rates within community colleges.

Johnsrud and Rosser (1999) conducted a study to evaluate the morale of midlevel administrators at one university system to understand how morale impacts an individual’s desire to participate actively in the organization. For the purposes of their study, the researchers defined morale as “a state of mind regarding one’s job, including satisfaction, commitment, loyalty, and sense of common purpose with respect to one’s work” (Johnsrud & Rosser, 2004, p. 124). The overall findings of the study indicated that “being an underrepresented minority, perceptions of discrimination, feeling stuck and intending to leave one’s position are significant negative factors that explain administrative morale” (p. 137). But, coincidentally, the researchers also stated that those who worked at the community college within their study were those with the highest levels of morale. The researchers could not explain the reasoning behind the higher levels of morale for those at the community college institution. Indeed, they found that “employment in a community college, perceptions that their competence is recognized, and external relations among the faculty, students, and the public” (p. 137) positively impacted morale.

Due to the limited research on community colleges, as evidenced by the generalizations made by this one study, and the field of student conduct in general, it is hard to determine the reason for higher levels of morale at the community college institution as indicated by Johnsrud and Rosser (1999). Although morale is linked to enhanced job satisfaction, employee loyalty,
and job commitment (Marshall et al. 2016, p. 158) there is limited research on other nontangible constructs, such as voice, that may be related to enhanced morale, job satisfaction, employee loyalty, and job commitment. Current research speaks of the inability to advance in one’s career, excessive work hours, and burnout due to stress and the impact those factors have on job satisfaction and attrition, but research is sparse about the impact of voice on job satisfaction, morale, and retention.

**Significance of the Study**

There is limited research on the impact of voice on a student affairs administrator’s role and retention in that role. Additionally, there is limited research available to help understand the student conduct administrators who work at community college institutions. By conducting a qualitative narrative inquiry of current student conduct administrators at community colleges, I aimed to highlight the impact of voice on one’s role and retention in the position of a student conduct administrator at the community college. Additionally, through participant feedback, by allowing each study participant to review their interview transcription, which Johnson and Christensen (2014) identify as interpretive validity, I sought to develop a better understanding of the unique institutional structure of the community college and the impact that has on the role of a student conduct administrator. The results of this research will enable the reader to gain insight into the role of the student conduct administrator as well as the impact and influence that one’s ability to use voice in the student conduct process has on the administrator remaining in the role at the community college institution.

As found by Stamatakos (1978), unclear job expectations and the reasons why an individual joined the field of student affairs can conflict with what the work actually involves. As practitioners, student affairs administrators are often taught in their graduate school courses that
their most important role is “helping college students grow and develop” (Stamatakos, 1978, p. 327). The student conduct administrator’s role specifically includes, but is not limited to, developing and enforcing the student code of conduct at the institution. The administrator meets with a student who has violated the student code of conduct, determines if the student is in violation, and then assigns the appropriate sanction as per the code. Sanctions are predetermined consequences within the student code of conduct. These consequences are assigned to the student who is found in violation of the code and meant to hold the students accountable for their actions, while educating them for violations. However, since the inception of student conduct administration, the ideologies for practice in addressing student conduct have changed.

This contradiction between what one believes the work to be and what the work actually proves to be rings true within the field of student conduct specifically. Student conduct administration as an educational function versus a punitive function is discussed at greater length within Chapter 2 of this paper. Since the beginnings of the work of student conduct administration there has been back and forth commentary on what the true essence of student conduct work should be. There remains a great emphasis on holding students accountable for their actions; however, the ways in which to hold them accountable have evolved since the start of the profession.

“Early disciplinary systems were created using an adjudicatory model designed to react to, correct, and control student behavior” (Fischer & Giacomini, 2006, p. 50). These formalized adjudication processes with a student conduct hearing board or administrative hearing, based on the severity of the violation, are often punitive and administrative, which can lead to sanctions including probation, suspension, and expulsion (Giacomini & Schrage, 2009). These processes are still widely used but newer emerging approaches such as restorative justice, conflict
coaching, and mediation are seen as more educational approaches while still holding students accountable. Often these newer approaches are not in line with the institutional student code of conduct, based on the formalized adjudication processes outlined and the legalistic language in which the code is written. Student conduct administrators are then left to interpret and utilize the code at their disposal.

These emerging approaches are still not widely utilized to address conduct violations. Higher education institutions across the country are beginning to employ informal resolution approaches to address conduct violations, but the “go to” approach is still the formalized adjudication process (Giacomini & Schrage, 2009). What then if the student conduct administrator voices concern about the use of the formalized process and feels as though his or her concerns are not heard or addressed? What if his or her use of voice to facilitate change to address conduct violations does not lead to actual change at the institution? Just as students feel empowered when they are given a voice in the disciplinary process, do student conduct officers feel empowered when their voices are heard in the decision about what type of disciplinary process to use? Does this empowerment improve the retention of student conduct officers within the field of student affairs?

With this study, I aimed to gain a better understanding of the impact of voice in a student conduct administrator’s role and retention in that role, if the work being done at their institution is in conflict with what they believe student conduct work to be. My objective was to determine the impact their voice in their work has on their role, and their retention in that role, specifically at the community college institution.
**Conceptual Framework for Voice**

The impact of voice is determined by individuals and how they feel their voice is heard, and whether it is valued by the institution. In his book *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States*, Albert O. Hirschman (1970) stated that leadership or administration within any organization will find out the decline of a product in one of two ways; exit or voice (p.4). Hirschman claimed that his theory was applicable “with the firm producing saleable outputs for customers” (p. 3) but he went on to say that it could be “applicable to organizations (such as voluntary associations, trade unions, or political parties) that provide services to their members without direct monetary counterpart” (p. 3). Hirschman’s theory postulated: “some customers stop buying the firm’s products or some members leave the organization: this is the exit option. As a result, revenues drop, membership declines, and management is impelled to search for ways and means to correct whatever faults have led to exit…the firm’s customers or the organization’s members express their dissatisfaction directly to management or to some other authority to which management is subordinate or through general protest addressed to anyone who cares to listen: this is the voice option. As a result, management once again engages in a search for the causes and possible cures of customers’ members’ dissatisfaction.” (Hirschman, 1970, p. 4)

Hirschman (1970) mentions that voice is not a replacement for exit but an option when exit may not be utilized. Additionally, Hirschman mentions that if a customer feels as though his or her voice is effective in creating change than he or she may “postpone exit” (p. 37). However, Hirschman quickly follows that statement by saying that, “in some situations exit will therefore be a reaction of last resort after voice has failed” (p. 37) and one that Farrell (1983) mentions, while referring to Hirschman, “requires considerable effort by the employee and usually means
that the employee believes the situation is unlikely to improve” (p. 597). The voice option is also defined as “any attempt at all to change rather than to escape from an objectionable state of affairs” (Hirschman, 1970, p. 30). Even though Hirschman focuses on customer service to lay out his theory on exit, voice, and loyalty, he mentions that the concepts behind the theory can be applied to organizations and firms. Also, his definition for voice aligns with the definition of ProSocial voice as laid out by Dyne, Ang, and Botero (2003).

Dyne et al. provide a conceptual framework for silence and voice as it relates to employees where “the focus is on the actor’s motivation to withhold versus express ideas, information and opinions about work related improvements” (p. 1361). Dyne et al. define voice in three different ways. For the purpose of this study, I focused on the ProSocial voice. ProSocial voice is defined as “expressing work-related ideas, information, or opinions based on cooperative motive. Thus, this particular type of voice behavior is intentional, proactive, and other-oriented. Its primary focus is to benefit others, such as the organization” (Dyne et al. 2003, p. 1371).

I used Hirschman’s (1970) theory of exit and voice as the primary conceptual framework for voice but added to Hirschman’s (1970) definition of voice the concept of the ProSocial voice as defined by Dyne et al. (2003). I brought together these two definitions of voice in order to determine the impact of voice on the retention of student conduct administrators at the community college institution. Also, the effectiveness of voice was determined by the ability to create change within student conduct policy and process based on the level of dissatisfaction felt by the student conduct administrator.

Although gender, race, and ethnicity were not the focal points of this study, I made note of the possibility of these mitigating factors being part of each participant’s individual narrative. While Hirschman’s (1970) theory primarily speaks about exit and voice, I was also interested in
understanding retention and what impact voice may have on a student conduct administrator’s remaining in the role.

**Conceptual Framework for Retention**

When attempting to conceptualize attrition, I used Tinto’s model of undergraduate persistence as a starting point, because research on attrition for student affairs professionals has similarities to undergraduate persistence and retention (Tinto, 1987b; Tinto, 2006.) Directly applying this model would not have been appropriate because the variables influencing attrition rates for student affairs professionals differ from those relevant to undergraduate retention and completion. However, empirical support for the attrition rates of student conduct administrators specifically at the community college institution is relatively limited.

Therefore, although Tinto’s theory of student development and principles of student retention were developed with the thought of assessing student departure, student attrition, and student retention, this study utilized his framework to understand student affairs professionals, more specifically student conduct administrators departure, attrition, and retention at the community college institution (Tinto, 1987b). Through the utilization of Tinto’s Principles of Effective Retention, which includes adjustment, integration, and community membership and incongruence, while simultaneously utilizing Tinto’s Model of Student Development, this study examined the impact of those same principles, theory, and model on the retention and attrition of the student conduct administrator at the community college (Tinto, 1987b).

The concept of student retention first came into sight in higher education almost 40 years ago, when student attrition was seen as an issue on the part of the student due to their “individual attributes, skills and motivation” (Tinto, 2006, p. 2). Tinto’s theory of student development first emerged in 1987 with his publication *Leaving College*. Tinto’s theory for student development
has “become accepted as the most useful for explaining the causes of student departure from higher education” (Boyle, 1989, p. 290). Tinto’s model identifies the preentry attributes students bring with them to their college experience; the goals and commitments they have for themselves; the necessity of institutional engagement in academic and social activities; the impact of external factors on the student’s goals and commitments which can include family obligations, work commitments, and so on; ending with the student’s departure decision (Tinto, 1987b).

Figure 1.1 presents a comprehensive picture of the elements of student departure from higher education. It allows for the full personality of the institution—academic affairs, student affairs, and administration—to touch upon the student in both positive and negative ways” (Boyle, 1989, p.291). In Principles of Effective Retention (Tinto, 1987b) Tinto expands on the reasons behind student departure. The areas he highlights are “academic difficulty, adjustment, goals, uncertainty, commitments, integration and community membership, incongruence, and isolation” (pp. 4-8). Adjustment speaks to the student’s “inability to make the adjustment to the academic and social life of the college” (p. 4). Within integration and community membership, Tinto speaks of the impact one’s lack of integration and community membership in the institution can have on persistence. These experiences include both academic and social interactions, which “heighten attachments and therefore strengthen individual commitments both to the goal of education and to the institution” (p. 7).
This lack of integration leads to incongruence which “may result from a significant mismatch between the needs and interest of the individual and those of the institution” (Tinto, 1987b, p. 7). Tinto states that “incongruency is largely the outcome of the quality of interaction between the individual and other members of the institution.” (p. 7). For the purposes of this study, I was interested in understanding any incongruences of the quality of interaction between the individual student conduct administrator and other stakeholders at the institution that collectively work on addressing student conduct violations. I sought to understand the impact of that incongruence, felt specifically by the student conduct administrator, due to disagreement with other stakeholders in how student conduct violations are addressed at the institution vs. how the student conduct administrator believes they should be addressed, and the impact this incongruence has on their retention in the role. Other stakeholders were defined as other administrators (i.e. Board of Trustees members, students, staff, and faculty). Student conduct
issues were defined as policy creation, and policy implementation to address student conduct violations and policy revision.

In applying Tinto’s theory of student development, is the departure of a student conduct administrator related to their perceived view of incongruence with regard to how student conduct is addressed at the institution and what they believe their work to be? Stamatakos (1978) mentions the impact of what he terms the “philosophical conflict” (p.327) between the reasons that motivated entering the field, i.e., “helping college students grow and develop” (p. 327) and the reality of what practitioners actually do have on attrition rates.

Silver and Jakeman (2014) mention the relationship between the expectations of what the perceived work may be and what the work of a student affairs professional ends up being as a reason for graduate students choosing not to enter the field. In their study, “Understanding Intent to Leave the Filed: A Study of Student Affairs Master’s Career Plan,” Silver and Jakeman found that “students who began to consider leaving the field during their graduate studies experienced a shift in their views of student affairs that made a future career in the field seem less desirable” (p. 175).

Similarly, O’Donnell (2011) interviewed 15 ex-nursing students to understand the voluntary withdrawal of these students from a large school nursing program. O’Donnell found “unrealistic expectations of nursing preparation programmes as a significant factor in later decisions to voluntarily withdrawal” (p. 58). The author further noted that “the incongruity between prior expectations and the reality of nursing programmes clearly became a source of distress for many ex-students who participated in the study” (p. 59). The researcher discussed the impact of the students’ preconceived notions of working in the nursing field and how those notions impacted attrition when their expectations were not met and subsequently broken. Silver
and Jakeman (2014) mention that students who had a shift in perspective about what the work of a student affairs professional would be like postgraduation did so after the “acquisition of new knowledge and experiences that negatively impacted their outlook on student affairs” (p. 175). These experiences and new knowledge came from the work they did during the time of their graduate study.

For the purposes of this study, I considered these questions: If the student conduct administrator’s expectations of what the work will be and what the work actually ends up being are not in congruence, what influence does that have on retention? Additionally, if the student conduct administrator’s values of how student conduct should be addressed are not in line with the institution, what affect does that have on retention? Does the ability to use voice in order to showcase dissatisfaction with current process and policy and to create change play a role in their departure from the role or the institution as a whole? Does the ability to use voice in order to create congruence with the values of the student conduct administrator and the institution impact retention? In other words, if the student conduct administrator is able to speak to the incongruence felt in how student conduct is being addressed at the institution, does that impact the administrator remaining in the role? This view into retention, attrition, and departure focuses less on the individual and more on the institution and potential failure on the part of the institution to retain the administrator.

Dyne et al. (2003) provide the framework and definition for ProSocial voice and other types of voice and silence employees may utilize, while Tinto’s (1987b) model of student development and principles of effective retention provide the framework to suggest that voice may have an effect on the retention of the administrator in that particular role. The dynamics between self and institution are critical in determining the impact of voice. If an administrator
has a ProSocial voice (Dyne et al. 2003), what impact does the administrator feel his or her voice has at the institution? Other preentry attributes are also taken into consideration, such as how the administrator approaches addressing student conduct, and how the administrator came to work in the field. Finally, goals are taken into consideration in identifying what the administrator hopes to be doing in the near future. In using Tinto’s (1987b) framework, the responsibility of retention is placed on both the professional and the institution, which is a newer viewpoint for the professional within the field but not the present day higher education student.

**The Community College Institution**

Community colleges, originally called junior colleges, emerged within American higher education originally as a need to address the “overcrowding” (Lucas, 2006, p. 229) that was taking place at the four-year institutions in the 1920s. Additionally, the junior college was meant to provide an alternative to four year institutions to address the needs of lower-class students, students who did not wish to go directly into a four-year institution post-secondary education, or those that were looking for a less expensive option than the four-year institution. There were also those that wished to remain at home and commute to college, which was another reason to attend the junior college. The junior college found its place within American higher education by helping solve the large increase in student enrollment between the years of 1920 and 1940 (Lucas, 2006).

The community college served primarily as “feeder” (Lucas, 2006, p. 229) institutions for students who were not academically prepared for the four-year institution right out of the secondary institution. The junior college prepared students to attend the four-year institution after completing two years; therefore, upon entering the four-year institution the student was deemed a junior based on the academic work already completed at the two-year level.
Community colleges in the present day still serve degrees to students who wish to transition or transfer onto the four institution, but also provide vocational degrees to those that wish to begin their careers immediately postgraduation (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2014).

**Student Services**

Cohen and Brawer (1982) discuss the presence of student services departments within the early junior colleges. Cohen and Brawer reference O’Banion (1971) to describe the growth of the student personnel profession as that which “came into being largely because the president needed help in regulating student behavior” (p. 170). This mindset was behind the need for faculty to serve “in loco parentis” (Waryold & Lancaster, 2008, p. 9) by being both parental and administrative figures in the student’s life as depicted within the Colonial era of higher education.

Cohen and Brawer (1982) describe the earliest emergence of student services as “students need to be controlled for the sake of institutional order, a rationale underlying not only the counseling of students into the proper programs but also the registration, student activities, orientation, student government, and recordkeeping functions.” In this way, the “essential student personnel functions” from the onset of higher education were put into the categories of “orientation, appraisal, consultation, participation, regulation, service and organizational” (Cohen & Brawer, 1982, p. 170). These categories included student activities, counseling, registration, and student conduct.

**Student conduct**

Student conduct practices address violations of the institution’s student code of conduct. These violations can be addressed in various ways; however, the primary approach remains the formalized adjudication approach (Giacomini & Schrage, 2009). This approach has its roots
within the Colonial era of higher education and is still the most widely utilized approach to address student misconduct. This need originally came from the desire to educate students on leading a “moral life” (Waryold & Lancaster, 2008, p. 9). What began as educating one about the moral way of life lead to educating the “whole person” (Waryold & Lancaster, 2008, p. 11) as defined by the *Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education 1949* document. In developing the student holistically, higher education administrators were tasked with holding students accountable for their actions, while helping them grow and develop. This holistic view led to the development of different approaches in which to address student misconduct. However, due to growing legal mandates by the federal government, many institutions continue to follow the formalized adjudication process, which can seem very similar to the criminal process.

Stoner (2008), along with Lowery (2008) outlined a model student code of conduct. This model code outlines the processes students who violate policy go through at most institutions of higher education. Within the formalized adjudication approach, students go through a hearing in order to determine their level of responsibility for the violation and determine appropriate consequences or sanctions for said violation(s). All students, regardless of being the victim or accused, are given the same rights in order to provide due process. However, student conduct administrators question the learning that takes place within the formalized process. Waryold (2006) echoes this sentiment by mentioning the fact that “many student disciplinary systems have lost their educational effectiveness, usefulness and zeal” (p. 39). Waryold also states that “the student disciplinary process has become excessively routine and has fallen prey to adjudicating cases for the sake of adjudication” (p. 39).
Within this formal adjudication process, the victim may not have a strong voice in the process and/or assigned sanctions. The sanctions are assigned to the accused student based on the hearing officer or student conduct board’s decision. Therefore, both parties may not have a say in the process. Rather, the hearing officer or board members oversee the process. Based on these reasons, among others, there are those within the field of student conduct that feel as though the formalized adjudication process does not address the needs of all parties involved. As a means to better understand the “why” behind student conduct process, Waryold (2006, p. 40) poses these questions: “What is the purpose of student conduct resolution processes? Is it only punishment, correction and behavior control?”

**Restorative Justice Practices**

While accountability for behavior remains at the forefront, restorative justice practices also aim to address the needs of all parties involved by repairing relationships and addressing the harm. Within the restorative justice process, the victim and offender are part of the process. Victims have the ability to address offenders directly to inform them of the harm they created, and offenders have a say in the appropriate sanctions. In this process, the offender is seen as an active participant rather than a bystander given a punishment. Advocates of the restorative justice process, such as Howard Zehr (2002), known as the modern-day grandfather of restorative justice, mention that restorative justice processes aim to address the needs of all parties involved by rethinking why crime occurs in the first place. The process empowers both the victim and the offender.

Moreover, restorative justice practices look ahead to determine how best to reintegrate an offender back into the larger community after harm has been created. The process looks to rebuild and repair the community as a whole rather than separate the offender. Restorative
justice, as well as the formalized adjudication process, fall within a spectrum model (Schrage & Thompson, 2008) that outlines the various ways in which student conduct violations can be addressed. Other approaches include conflict resolution, mediation, conflict coaching, and dialogue. These approaches are now being incorporated by student conduct administrators as a means to resolve conduct violations less formally. The use of the spectrum model (Schrage & Thompson, 2008) allows for administrators to utilize a toolkit with the formal adjudication approach at one end of the spectrum.

As a way to address the needs of the involved parties while still adhering to the formal hearing process, Karp (2013) outlines the use of a restorative justice board, under the larger umbrella of restorative justice practice, which has “the structure of a ‘model code’ conduct board with standing board members who may be drawn from faculty, staff, and students” (Karp, 2013, p.30). The restorative justice board functions more like a restorative justice conference in that the focus is on “repairing harm and rebuilding trust.” (p. 30). The restorative justice board is one of the “three models of campus practice” outlined by Karp. The other two are restorative justice conferences and circles (Karp, 2013). In this way student conduct administrators can utilize a board to render a decision of “responsible” or “not responsible” for the violation while incorporating elements of restorative justice into their work. This approach outlines the use of a restorative hybrid pathway, in which offices of student conduct can address conduct violations. Within the spectrum model (Schrage & Thompson, 2008) no conflict management falls on the far left of the spectrum, restorative justice pathways fall in the middle, and adjudication falls at the far right.

The formalized adjudication process can implement consequences or sanctions such as suspension and/or expulsion from the institution. These sanctions are decided by the hearing
officer or student conduct board. These sanctions remove an offender from the community and isolate that individual, whereas restorative justice processes develop a plan with all parties involved in order to ensure that the offender is not isolated from the community, if possible, but rather reintegrated. Reintegration holds the offender to a higher level of accountability to repair the harm done, restore community, and rebuild trust with or without the punitive approach of suspension or expulsion.

Although four-year public and private institutions have begun to incorporate approaches off the spectrum model (Schrage & Thompson, 2008), such as conflict coaching, mediation, and restorative justice, community colleges struggle to do the same due to unique budgetary and staffing constraints. Other challenges include but are not limited to the transient nature of the student population, the nontraditional age of students, and the lack of residential spaces on campus. Mediation first emerged on college campuses toward the end of the 1970s and early 1980s (Warters, 2004, p. 79). In the present day, mediation practices are utilized to resolve student and faculty conflicts as well as student-to-student conflicts (Warters, 2004, p. 83). Institutions such as Michigan State University, Skidmore College, University of Michigan, Swarthmore, and Denison University utilize restorative justice in their work as well as other approaches that are deemed to be conflict resolution approaches. Their office titles reflect the use of the spectrum model (Schrage & Thompson, 2008). For example, Michigan State University’s office is titled Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. On the far end of the spectrum is the use of the formalized adjudication approach, which represents a third-party intervention. This approach is still included on the list of available options to address conduct violations, but is utilized primarily for more serious violations of the student code of conduct.
The spectrum model (Schrage & Thompson, 2008) pathways are being utilized due to the versatility offered by the various approaches as well as the continued hope to be as educational as possible while allowing for student accountability and responsibility. Additionally, the spectrum model foundation is uniquely based in restorative justice, social justice, diversity, access, and inclusion. These approaches evolved based off the needs that were not being addressed by adjudication. Within the formalized adjudication process, the voices of the involved parties, both the victim and the accused, are not heard with regard to the sanction that would be assigned for the violation. Within the spectrum model (Schrage & Thompson, 2008) all parties are welcomed into the process, where they are encouraged to use their voice to address their concerns.

Student conduct administrators, within their roles, interpret and enforce process and policy. The policy they enforce is often one that they inherited when they began their work. The conduct administrator is charged with being the voice of the process and policy no matter what his or her personal viewpoint may be about the approaches being utilized at the institution to address misconduct. On the other hand, even student conduct administrators that develop institutional policy often feel overwhelmed due to the workload, conflicted due to the nature of work, and burned out because of the legalistic or judicial nature of the work.

**Statement of Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to understand the impact of voice on the student conduct administrator’s role and its impact on retention in that role at the community college institution. Additionally, I hoped to gain a better understanding of the influence of voice on the student conduct administrator’s ability to advocate for the approach of their choosing to address conduct violations at the community college institution. The following questions guided this research:
1. What impact does the ability to use voice as a student conduct administrator have on the professional remaining in the position?
   a. What, if any, impact does the ability to facilitate change in the institution’s student conduct process influence the professional remaining in the position?
   b. What, if any, impact does a student conduct administrator’s ability to advocate for the use of an approach of their choosing to address conduct violations influence his or her remaining in the position?

Research Approach

A qualitative narrative inquiry was utilized in this study. Patton (2002) states that narrative inquiry aims to help participants make meaning of their experiences. Additionally, I hoped to shed light on the lived experiences of student conduct administrators at the community college institution. Each participant’s narrative served as their individual lived experience as a student conduct administrator at a community college and outlined the key factors that led to their working at a community college.

Definitions

- Community college: Any institution accredited to award the Associate in Arts or Science as its highest degree (Cohen & Brawer, 1982).
- Student affairs professional: Any administrator working within the departments of registration, financial aid, student life/activities, student conduct, career/transfer counseling, academic advising, special services, educational opportunity fund (EOF) programs, and international education at a higher education institution.
- In loco parentis: “In place of a parent” (Waryold & Lancaster, 2008, p.9).
• *Spectrum Model:* A variety of pathways for conflict management as part of a continuum (Schrage & Thompson, 2008).

• *Restorative justice:* A “set of principles and practices used in criminal justice systems around the world since the mid-1970s as a method of reforming the way societies deal with crime and other violations” (Goldblum, 2009, p. 141.)

• *Student code of conduct:* An institutional policy that outlines the campus disciplinary processes for student misconduct (Stoner & Lowery, 2008).

• *Student conduct board:* “Any person or persons authorized by the student conduct administrator to determine whether a student has violated the student code and to recommend sanctions that may be imposed when a rules violation has been committed” (Stoner & Lowery, 2008, p. 58).

• *Student conduct administrator:* A “college or university official authorized on a case-by-case basis to impose sanctions upon any student(s) found to have violated the Student Code. The title of administrator may authorize a student conduct administrator to serve simultaneously as a student conduct administrator and sole member or one of the members of the student conduct board. The title of administrator may authorize the same student conduct administrator to impose sanctions in all cases” (Stoner & Lowery, 2008, p. 58).

• *Student discipline:* The external control of behavior, or punishment (Appleton et al. 1978).

• *Student misconduct:* Student’s violation of a rule within an institution’s code of conduct (Dannells, 1997).

• *Victim/Complainant:* “The term ‘complainant’ means any person who submits a charge alleging that a student violated this Student Code. When a student believes that s/he has been a victim of another student’s misconduct, the student who believes s/he has been a victim
will have the same rights under this Student Code as are provided to the Complainant, even if another member of the [College] [University] community submitted the charge itself” (Stoner & Lowery, 2008, p. 59).

- **Accused/Offender**: “Any student accused of violating this student code” (Stoner & Lowery, 2008, p. 59).

- **Voice**: In this study, voice for a student conduct administrator equates to his or her ability to be empowered in his or her role in order to make decisions for the institution and the students; whether an administrator feels as though he or she has a say in how student conduct process and policy are implemented at the institution; and whether he or she feels heard as a student conduct administrator while implementing institutional policy and facilitating change. This proactive use of voice is further defined as the ability to use what Dyne et al. (2003) term the ProSocial voice.

- **ProSocial Voice**: “Expressing work-related ideas, information, or opinions based on cooperative motives. This particular type of voice behavior is intentional, proactive, and other-oriented. Its primary focus is to benefit others, such as the organization” (Dyne et al., p.1371).

- **Incongruency**: “Mismatch and/or irrelevancy” (Tinto, 1987b, p. 5) which is “largely the outcome of the quality of interaction between the individual and other members of the institution” (Tinto, 1987b, p. 5) but also when ones “needs and interests” (Tinto, 1987b, p. 5) are not being met at one’s institution.

**Summary**

This chapter provided the background and context for this research study examining the impact of voice on a student conduct administrator’s role and retention in that role at the
community college institution. I laid out the significance of the study to help the reader better understand the need for the data provided by this study. I provided the research questions, conceptual framework, and definition of key terms of the study in order to clarify the components of this research study.
Student conduct administrators have been tasked for many years with implementing institutional policies and processes, often those that were in place at the institution when they first arrived. Additionally, they are tasked with putting forward the values and mission of the institution as well as the value and mission of the department to the students, staff, and faculty. But what if the values and mission of the institution and department are not in line with the conduct administrator’s personal vision, values, current best practices, and/or trending conflict and restorative justice initiatives? Moreover, does the conduct administrator’s ability to voice his or her thoughts, opinions, and concerns, with regards to process and policy, impact his or her staying in the role of a student conduct administrator at the institution? This narrative is unique to each administrator but also unique to the type of institution—in this case, the community college. For the purposes of this study, I focused on student conduct administrators at two-year institutions.

Theoretical Framework

Tinto’s Framework for Student Retention and Attrition

When Tinto’s original framework for student retention and attrition emerged via an article and later a book titled Leaving College (Tinto, 1987a), the research was focused on students at four-year institutions. Much of the research that currently exists on Tinto’s original framework for retention and attrition focuses on tangible factors that affect retention, such as family obligations or financial concerns. Lee, Donlan, and Brown (2010) speak to these factors in their study titled “American Indian/Alaskan Native Undergraduate Retention at Predominantly White Institutions: An Elaboration of Tinto’s Theory of College Student Departure.” Ishitani (2006) mentions similar issues affecting attrition within his study, “Studying Attrition and
Ishitani notes academic preparedness as another impacting factor for attrition based on the student population within the study. Pascarella (1986), as referenced and interpreted by Metz (2004), remarks on the fact that there is also “apparent limited research on two-year colleges as well as the limited reporting on the effects of attending, persisting, and graduating from two year colleges…. the apparent lack of research and investigation tends to perpetuate stereotypical beliefs and attitudes of this particular segment of the postsecondary realm” (Metz, 2004, p. 201).

The limited research that does exist about student retention and attrition at community colleges focuses on the lack of a social integration for students. This view of limited social integration stems primarily from the fact that the average community college student is seen as one that does not have time to participate in campus activities or be involved in student clubs due to other obligations such as family and/or work. This application of lack of social integration is the primary tie of Tinto’s model for student retention and attrition that has been applied to the community college institution.

Karp, Hughes, and O’Gara (2010) found that a lack of social interaction for the community college student is not the problem, but rather that social integration has to occur in connection with academic integration. Townsend and Wilson (2009) mention the fact that “community college students become socially integrated through classroom or academically focused activities” (p. 418) due to their limited time to engage in extracurricular activities on campus. Moreover, Strauss and Volkwein (2004) found in their study “a stronger relationship between social integration and institutional commitment for students at four-year institutions” (p. 220). The strength of this relationship was based on the fact that students at the four-year institution had more time outside of class to engage in extracurricular activities due to their
residing on campus, while two-year students had less time outside of class due to their commuter status.

The average community college student commutes to campus to attend class and leaves once class is over. It is for this reason that much of what is considered social integration occurs within the classroom setting along with academic integration. Karp et al. (2010) found that students often learned about campus resources and social activities on campus via classmates. The conversations that peers had with one another about resources on campus fostered the feeling of belongingness. Karp et al. mention that “when other students in our study learned about their campus through social relationships, rather than through printed materials or other forms of information, they reported feeling more comfortable actually using the resources” (p. 77). Students who participated in “information networks and campus connections reported that these networks provided a social connection that made time on campus more enjoyable” (p. 77). While Karp et al. inform practice for retention purposes, O’Donnell’s (2011) study speaks to the incongruence students may feel, which impacts retention negatively.

**Other applications of Tinto’s theory.** O’Donnell’s (2011) study, as cited earlier, speaks to the incongruence between expectations of the field of nursing prior to entry into a large school nursing program and the subsequent attrition once students began the program. O’Donnell’s study focused on incongruence due to unrealistic expectations of a nursing program and the perceived notion of what the work would be prior to entry. The researcher mentioned that “in the study population life events and family influences appeared to play an important function in shaping individual expectations of nursing” (p. 59). Silver and Jakeman (2014) similarly mentioned in their study that “participants often said that their perceptions of student affairs work formed during their undergraduate studies” (p. 175), but perceptions began to shift once
these students actually began their graduate studies and began doing the work of a student affairs professional.

Although Tinto’s model for student retention and departure has also been applied at the community college institution, Liu and Liu (1999) found in their study that race, by impact of “income and family educational attainment” (p. 540) and student-faculty interaction, had an effect on retention. However, the authors went on to state that “future studies must be completed to determine whether the effect of race on retention rate is an isolated incident or part of a larger phenomenon” (p. 541) in order to understand the variables that affect retention at a primarily commuter campus.

Similar studies are needed to determine the variables that impact the attrition rate of student conduct administrators working at two-year institutions of higher learning. Variables such as burnout, emotional burden, and time have all been mentioned as reasons for attrition within the field of student affairs but limited research exists on understanding the attrition rates for student conduct professionals within higher education (Lorden, 1998; Burns 1982; Wood et. al, 1985; Holmes et., al, 1983). Moreover, an even greater gap exists for understanding the specifics of attrition rates for student conduct administrators, specifically at the community college institution.

**Voice**

Variables such as the ability to use voice are also not taken into consideration when understanding attrition rates within student affairs, and even more specifically, student conduct. For this study, I used Hirschman’s (1970) theory on exit and voice and built upon it by using Dyne et al.’s (2003) concept of the ProSocial voice. Dyne et al. provide definitions for different types of voice and silence but the definition of the ProSocial voice aligns the most with
Hirschman’s (1970) definition of voice. Table 2.1 outlines the different types of employee voice and silence that can exist within any given work place as outlined by Dyne et al.

Table 2.1

*Examples of specific types of silence and specific types of voice*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee motive</th>
<th>Employee responses to motive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disengaged behavior:</strong></td>
<td>Acquiescent silence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Based on resignation</td>
<td>• Withholding ideas based on resignation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feeling unable to make a difference</td>
<td>• Keeping opinions to self due to low self-efficacy to make a difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Expressing supportive ideas based on resignation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Agreeing with the group due to low self-efficacy to make a difference</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Self-protective behavior:</strong></th>
<th>Defensive silence</th>
<th>Defensive voice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Based on fear</td>
<td>• Withholding information on problems based on fear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feeling afraid and personally at risk</td>
<td>• Omitting facts to protect the self</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Expressing ideas that shift attention elsewhere based on fear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Proposing ideas that focus on others to protect the self</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Other-oriented behavior</strong></th>
<th>Prosocial silence</th>
<th>Prosocial voice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Based on cooperation</td>
<td>• Withholding confidential information based on cooperation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feeling cooperative and altruistic</td>
<td>• Protecting proprietary knowledge to benefit the organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Expressing solutions to problems based on cooperation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Suggesting constructive ideas for change to benefit the organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ProSocial voice.** Within this schema ProSocial Voice (Dyne et al. 2003) is seen as the active voice for an employee to have while employee silence is when an employee is “intentionally withholding work-related ideas, information and opinions” (p. 1363) Wang and
Jiang (2015) state that abusive supervisors also have an impact on an employee’s use of ProSocial voice and silence (Dyne et al. 2003). The findings of this study demonstrate that “abusive supervision significantly decreased the employees’ ProSocial voice and silence” (Wang & Jiang, 2015, p. 215). Aquino, Tripp, & Bies (2006) found in their study that “when victims have a power advantage over their offenders or when victims believe the organization will not punish the offenders, then victims will ‘take the law into their hands’ by punishing their offenders themselves” (p. 666). However, if the “victims are disadvantaged with regards to their offenders…. They will be more likely to forgive or reconcile.” (p. 666). It is for this reason that reducing the use of one’s ProSocial voice or silence are seen as the more optimal choice when dealing with an abusive supervisor if a “fair procedural justice climate” (p. 666) does not exist. These findings are similar to those from the authors 2001 study which speak to when a victim is more or less likely to enact “revenge and/or blame” (Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2001, p. 57) with an offender within the workplace (Aquino et al. 2001).

Unfortunately, limited research also exists on the use of ProSocial voice and silence (Dyne et al. 2003). Additionally, the research that currently exists on the use of ProSocial voice is in the context of general employee, supervisor, and organization relationships. For instance, Spencer (1986) conducted a study, similar to O’Donnell (2011), to better understand the attrition rates within the field of nursing. In this study, Spencer utilized Hirchman’s (1970) theory for exit and voice.

Spencer (1986) found that the “greater the number of employee voice mechanisms that a hospital employed, the lower the turnover” (p. 498). Mechanisms for this study were defined as “formal grievance procedures, suggestion system, employee-management meetings, counseling service, ombudsman, nonmanagement task forces, question and answer program and survey
feedback” (p. 496). The results of this study indicate that when employees feel as though they can use their voices to showcase “dissatisfaction” (p. 498) with regards to their work in order to “change dissatisfying work situations” (Spencer, 1986, p. 498) it is more likely that the employees will remain in their positions at the organization.

This study also found that “employees of hospitals with large numbers of employee voice mechanisms will have high expectancies for problem resolution and will perceive a high level of effectiveness in their organizations’ responses to employee voice” (Spencer, 1986, p. 498). Although the results of the second study are listed only as suggestive by Spencer they indicate that the more mechanisms employees have to voice dissatisfaction, the higher the likelihood that they believe the organization is effectively resolving issues of concern at the organization. As a result of that, the employee expects the organization to do more to resolve issues at the workplace.

Unfortunately, there is limited research on the use of ProSocial voice (Dyne et al., 2003) in other work environments, such as student affairs in higher education. The gap in research extends to the understanding of ProSocial voice within the work of a student conduct administrator at the community college institution. Moreover, there is little to no research on the impact of the student conduct administrator’s ability to utilize the ProSocial voice on retention and attrition within the community college setting.

**Shifts in Role of Student Affairs**

**College for the Elite**

At the beginning of the Colonial era (circa 1636) there were nine colleges that were created, modeled closely after the European system (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). These nine colleges were Harvard, William and Mary, Yale, King’s Philadelphia, Rhode Island, Queen’s, and
Dartmouth (Rudolph, 1990, p. 3). These colleges today are known as Harvard, William and Mary, Yale, Princeton, Columbia, Brown, Dartmouth, Rutgers and Pennsylvania (Thelin, 2011). College during this era was about educating young white men specifically as a means to assist them in taking positions within public office or ministry (Cohen & Kisker, 2010); others were in line to inherit a family business that was prominently in the business of shipping and/or selling during this era (Thelin, 2011).

Women did not attend college during the Colonial era because it was determined that their education took place at home with their mothers and then with their husbands once they married (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). Thelin (2011) recounts that the young men who attended college during the Colonial era were “sons of privilege” (p. 24). These young white men attended college under the expectation that they would become leaders within their society and be seen as “Christian gentlemen” (p. 24).

The collegiate curriculum focused on classical texts and the foundations of Christian doctrine (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). Based on the expectation of men being “Christian gentlemen” (p. 24), the curriculum focused largely on religious texts and one’s ability to analyze classical text and be articulate in speech and writing (Thelin, 2011). Those that attended were primarily the sons of clergymen (Lucas, 2006). College during this era was not seen as a necessity for career preparation, as most occupations during this era were based on apprenticeships. Most families also needed their sons to be home to help with farming or the family business.

Additionally, funding in the form of scholarships did not exist for the less fortunate and therefore only the privileged white youth could afford to attend college during most of the 17th and early 18th century (Thelin, 2011). Higher education during this time was meant only for the elite white male. Along those same lines, some families who were well off financially chose to
send their sons to Europe to obtain their education. It was largely based on this reason that enrollment numbers were low even near the end of the Colonial era (Cohen & Kisker, 2010).

College during this era was seen as a means to educate “privileged sons with a sense of responsibility and public service” (Thelin, 2011, p. 26). Colonial colleges educated young men with the mental framework of producing a product that inherit positions of power within their community upon completion. Stated best by Thelin, “the colonial college was an insurance policy guaranteeing that these favored young men would acquire not only literacy but also a sense of leadership and service by about their twentieth birthday” (p. 26). The Colonial era had produced and maintained nine colleges (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). However, by 1860 that number would increase to 240 (Thelin, 2011, p. 41).

**College for the Masses**

In 1800, 25 degree granting institutions existed, but by 1820 the number had already gone up to 52 and by 1860, the number was up to 240 (Thelin, 2011, p. 26). The post-Revolutionary war era saw the creation of different types of institutions as well. Institutions began to offer what Thelin termed “formal programs” (p. 27). These programs included “universities, academies, seminaries, scientific schools, normal schools and institutes” (p. 27). Along with the creation of new institutions also came changes to the curriculum that was being taught post-Colonial era. Curricula now offered instruction in “medicine, law, engineering, military science, commerce, theology, and agriculture” (p. 27). Additionally, those that could not previously attend college (i.e., women and blacks) were permitted to attend by 1950 (Thelin, 2011).

During the post-Revolutionary era, more colleges were being built in the south—colleges such as Transylvania University, South Carolina College, The University of Nashville, and The University of Virginia. However, in addition to new creations there were also institutions with a
specific focus of instruction in mind by 1950 (Thelin, 2011). Medical and law schools were resurfacing as well as higher education for women. Thelin recounts that there was no historical proof of a woman receiving a degree during the Colonial era but from 1800-1860 “at least fourteen institutions enrolled women for advanced students in what is thought to have been college-level work” (p. 55). The earliest women’s colleges are recorded as Knox University in Illinois, Wesleyan Female Seminary in Macon, Georgia, and Masonic University in Selma, Alabama, between 1840 and 1850. Others that followed included those in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Ohio. By 1860 there were at least 45 institutions serving women, with institutional names ranging from “college, academy, female seminary and literary institute.” The curricula included “vocational training, finishing-school programs, professional education to liberal arts” (Thelin, 2011, p. 83-84)

During this same time frame of 1840-1860 came the emergence of normal schools which provided teacher education. Some of these schools were for only women while others were coeducational. However, coeducation of men and women would not truly take a foothold in higher education until after the Civil War. Cornell and Oberlin are seen as the leaders in coeducation while the South continued to separate men and women even after the Civil War (Thelin, 2011).

Along those same lines, colleges for blacks struggled well into the 1900s. Although institutions were offering courses for students of color the instruction was not seen as college level (Thelin, 2011, p. 186). Most institutions, such as Hampton Institute and Tuskegee, offered agricultural and industrial coursework for black students. However, what are now known as historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), such as Howard University and Fisk University, offered a liberal arts based curriculum (p. 187). Even with the emergence of so many
institutions of higher education, accessibility in the form of affordability was still an issue well into the first half of the 19th century for all but white privileged youth.

**Emergence of Community Colleges**

Community colleges formerly known as junior colleges provided accessibility and affordability to all those who wished to attend college. Junior colleges, seen now as an “American invention” (Thelin, 2011, p. 250), aimed to provide an educational opportunity to all people in the state. These institutions were public or private in nature and allowed students to complete two years of their educational work toward their bachelor’s degree. As these institutions began to flourish, many began to offer vocational programs. Indeed, by 1940 there were 456 junior colleges with a total enrollment of 149,584 students. Many graduates transferred to the four-year institution to complete their bachelors with their two-year degree, more commonly known as their associate’s degree. California is seen as the leading example for junior colleges, in that the state had approximately 49 institutions in the 1930s (Thelin, 2011, p. 250).

By the 1950s, known as the Mass Higher Education era, more than 600 public institutions of higher education were created and more than 500 of them were junior colleges (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). In 1950 alone, the enrollment for junior college was approximately 168,043, which only doubled to 393,553 within the following 10 years (Thelin, 2011, p. 299).

After World War II it became clear that the role of the junior college had to be clarified. As more veterans began to attend college with assistance from the GI Bill and four year institutions became more selective in their acceptance of students, the two-year college attracted both the veteran student and those seeking postsecondary education who were seen as less qualified than their peers. The junior college then became the avenue to accommodate both these types of students (Cohen & Kisker, 2010).
The junior college then served two distinct types of students; those hoping to transfer and those looking to obtain a “terminal” degree (Thelin, 2011, p. 300). It was based on this role that the junior college was transformed and more commonly referred to as the community college. With the development of community colleges after World War II, college became more affordable and accessible, but as Thelin notes that the effectiveness of these two-year institutions was still unknown. However, that would change by the 1970s.

Cohen and Kisker (2010) note that by 1976 the community colleges were admitting 34 percent of all students attending institutions of higher education (p. 328). By the early 1990s community colleges had become a permanent part of higher education. At the end of what is referred to as the Era of Consolidation, 1976-1993, by Cohen and Kisker (2010) community colleges “enrolled around 45 percent of all first-time freshmen, and more than 25 percent of those who completed at least four courses transferred to in-state, public universities within four years of matriculation” (p. 329). Moreover, due to the open admission policy that all community colleges held to provide accessibility to all, four year public institutions were able to remain selective in their admission policies.

Based on these open admission policies and affordability, community colleges were highly attended by older students who were either changing career paths or returning to learn new skills (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). Back in 1993 the cost of attending community college was about “48 percent” (p. 329) of attending an in-state public four-year college. These practices remain true in the present day with community colleges awarding vocational and transfer degrees to the masses. The characteristics of the present day community college student as described by Achieving the Dream (2006) and Community College Survey of Student Engagement (2005) within Burns (2010) portray a student who is “caring for children at home, single parenting, struggling with
financial independence, delaying enrollment after high school graduation, being a first-generation college student, commuting, lacking a high school diploma, attending college part-time, working full-time and working off campus” (p. 35).

As stated by Burns (2010) much of the present-day literature on community colleges focuses on retention and persistence toward graduating. Further student characteristics included in the literature, as mentioned by Burns, included low income, academic readiness, social wealth and student’s timeframe of registering for courses (i.e., early or late).

McCullough (2010) discussed factors that impact two-year college attendance in his dissertation, “Factors that Impact Two-Year College Attendance and Program Enrollment.” Similar student characteristics as mentioned by Burns (2010) were referenced by the author. McCullough mentioned family background or individual characteristics that influence the two-year choice, such as being a first-generation student and low income. Additionally, McCullough referenced social wealth when discussing family history of attending college. However, no matter the type of institution, the student services offered remained primarily the same. Within the larger umbrella of student affairs exist the functional areas of financial aid, enrollment, student life/student activities, and admissions, just to name a few. Depending on the type of institution or scope of oversight of the division of student affairs, additional or fewer functional areas, as mentioned previously, may be included under the label of student affairs.

**Student Services Approaches to Misconduct**

Leonard (1956) traces the roots of student affairs back to the Colonial period. Leonard stated that within American college life the institution personally took responsibility for a student’s successful adjustment to collegiate life. This adjustment was based not only on academic success but also on the student’s social involvement at the institution.
Moreover, if the student took part in any conduct or behavior that was unbecoming then that behavior negatively reflected on not only the student but also the institution. Leonard described this as one of the key differences between European college life and American college life, in that within the European system the institution did not believe student conduct was of a matter of concern for the institution. Leonard attributes this difference to the beginnings of student personnel services within the American college system. During the Colonial era, children, once matriculated into the institution, became the responsibility of the institution based off the inability to communicate daily with parents if problems or issues arose. In this capacity, the institution had to undertake supervisory roles as parent and administrator for the students (Leonard, 1956).

Student conduct practices emerged out of this student services approach to misconduct. Student misconduct or misbehavior has always been an issue within higher education. As stated by Cohen and Kisker (2010), forms of student conduct practices existed within the collegiate institutions formed within the Colonial era dated 1636-1789. As noted by Dannells (1997), the young and affluent white males attending college during this era were the equivalent of present day high school students, while some were even younger than that. Dannells described the type of governance as “authoritarian” (p. 3). Parents sent their male children to college hoping to instill in them “discipline, morals and character” (Cohen & Kisker, 2010, p. 27). This moral character was molded primarily through the implementation of lengthy and thorough codes of conduct and by-the-minute scheduling (Dannells, 1997).

Leonard (1956) and Dannells (1997) agree that much of what was known as student affairs remained the same during the early Federal period, 1790-1860. During that period, college presidents were seen as the chief administrators of the institution, handling all student
behavioral issues with the assistance of faculty. This period brought with it the need for what would now be known as residence halls.

After the Colonial era, as the creation of more colleges and universities developed, especially after the land grant movement as a direct result of the original Morrill Act of 1862, there became a greater need to develop student affairs practices as a whole (Waryold & Lancaster, 2008, p. 10). With the student population of higher education institutions diversifying by opening their doors to the working class, a greater need emerged for student conduct administration and practices.

The additional component of residence and dining halls were needed to provide lodging to those traveling from afar, especially as colleges continued to expand. However, with this residential component came a greater need to address student behavior. As mentioned by Dannells during the early 1800s the faculty were the ones who lived on campus with the students within the residential facilities. Faculty took on the role of not only educating the students but also disciplining the students. This dual role placed “additional burdens of supervision on the faculty” (Dannells, 1997, p. 5). The need to clarify the roles of faculty, students, and administration began to emerge and a greater need for specific responsibilities for each role showcased itself in the late 1800s.

Dannells (1997) states that from the late 18th century to the early 19th century, due to recurrent student conduct issues, the administrators stepped back in their role as disciplinarians and appointed faculty specialists to serve as discipline officers. It was during this period that student groups began to emerge such as Greek societies and student activities. Dannells credits the post-Civil war years as the era that brought student services its first Deans of Men and Deans of Women. During the late 19th century, as disciplinary procedures began to fall back on higher-
level administrators, the president appointed faculty specialists to serve as the discipline officers. These specialists were first called Deans of Men and Women. These titles later would come to be known as Deans of Students.

Dannells (1997) cites the 1960s as the decade when hearing boards began to be utilized at greater volume to address student discipline issues. This statement is supported further by the case Dixon v. Alabama (1961) which is referenced as the case that forced college campuses to create due process for student conduct issues within higher education. Dixon v. Alabama (1961) forced institutions of higher education to examine the way in which they handled any and all conduct matters, which created the need for higher education’s initial formal practices to address student conduct. The 1960s are seen as the impetus for the creation of formalized adjudication processes to address student conduct (Lake, 2013). It should be noted that the growth in conduct practices during this time was meant to control and limit freedom of expression. Student activism was seen as a disruptive and often violent response to censorship or oppression. In addition, student activism was on the rise due to unrest on many campuses based on the impact of the Civil Rights Movement.

**Formal practices**

In reviewing the literature, it is clear that the case that sparked the due process procedures at institutions of higher education was Dixon vs. Alabama State Board of Education in 1961 (Lowery, 2006). The case involved the expulsion of nine students and probation of 20 who engaged in protests at Alabama State University, formerly known as Alabama State College for Negroes. The 1960s were a time of protest on college campuses across the country due to equal rights issues. As sit-ins began throughout the South, student activists joined the cause by staging their own sit-ins at their respective institutions. Six out of the nine expelled students
pushed their case to the federal level by bringing a suit against the Alabama State Board of Education, claiming that “their constitutional rights had been violated. “The district court ruled in favor of the state, but when brought to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, the ruling was in favor of the students” (p.20). This landmark case stipulated that “due process requires notice and some opportunity for [a] hearing before students at a tax-supported college are expelled for misconduct” (Dixon, 1961, p. 151).

Lowery (2008) notes that since Dixon v. Alabama in 1961 the courts have expected that institutions of higher education give notice to students regarding their alleged misconduct and advise them of which policies have been violated. The years that followed Dixon v. Alabama were focused on public and private universities reformatting their student disciplinary systems to detail the due process procedures to be followed in all cases. Lowery (2006) stated that most colleges began to create a process that very closely emulated the criminal system based off the Dixon decision. Lowery quotes Gehring (2001), a founding member for the Association of Student Conduct Administrators (ASCA), the leading professional organization in the development of student conduct professionals, as saying, “that many institutions have unnecessarily formalized their procedures” (Lowery, 2006, p. 21).

Lowery (2006) quotes Stoner (2000), stating that “this unfortunate situation [of emulating the legal system] is often compounded by misunderstanding about criminal law and why criminal principles are the wrong perspective from which to understand a college’s efforts to deal with misconduct” (pp. 21-22). Lowery (2006) reflects on this issue by referencing Dannells (1997) in calling it “creeping legalism” (p. 22). Lowery (2006) also quotes Dannells as saying “this trend undermined the informal and uniquely educational element of college student discipline” (p. 22). However, since 1961, many other decisions have been made via the courts
that continue to build on this trend of “creeping legalism” (p. 22) as mentioned by Dannells and referenced by Lowery. This legal proceeding within the student conduct process mirrored the increasing litigious practices in the rest of society in America at the time.

Cooper and Lancaster (1998) note that since the 1960s, “student affairs professionals have grown increasingly concerned about the legal dimensions of their work, a problem that has directly affected the development of student judicial systems and other policies governing student life” (p. 17). Warters (2009) refers to the 1970s as the decade in which there was a “due process explosion” (p. 127). During this decade courts began to hear more and more cases of on-campus incidents, and the federal government continued to create guidelines about internal processes at the higher education level.

Warters (2009) mentions how universities began to create in-house legal counsel offices and procedures to address this “due process explosion” (p. 127) and how Stetson University began hosting, its now annual conference on law and policy. Moreover, the Association for Student Judicial Affairs (ASJA) was created shortly after the first ever law and policy conference as a means to support the professional development of conduct administrators. The organization legally changed its name to the Association for Student Conduct Administrators in 2008. The association name change was in large part due to the fact that the field began to move away from an emphasis on judicial models and towards less legalistic language. Dannells (1997), on the other hand, mentions that the court systems only created general guidelines for colleges but that institutions have chosen to create stricter measures.

However, Cooper and Lancaster (1998) state that since 1989, Congress has also created legislation that directly impacts processes at college campuses nationwide. Cooper and Lancaster (1998) note that “congressional micromanagement of student affairs” (p. 17) all began with the
Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and “continued with the passage of the Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act the following year and its substantive amendment in 1992 by the Campus Sexual Assault Victim’s Bill of Rights Act” (p. 17). The Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act is better known today as the Jeanne Clery Act, passed in 1990. Cooper and Lancaster (1998) mention that although the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 indirectly impacted student affairs, the Clery Act directly impacted the field; “this new trend was different in that the legislation directly targeted areas traditionally associated with student affairs, such as judicial matters and residence life” (p. 17).

Additionally, after the Dixon case in 1961, students began to raise concerns with regard to bias by hearing board members, right to consult counsel, and right to question witnesses (Lowery, 2008). Lowery mentions how cases such as Osteen v. Henley (1993) and Holmes v. Poskanzer (2007) stipulated how involving an attorney in a conduct proceeding at the higher education level would be counterintuitive to the process (p. 77). However, those practices are changing from state to state in the present day. Current conduct proceedings allow for attorneys to be present in the process, at the very least, while some states such as North Carolina allow for attorneys to take active part in the student conduct process. North Carolina House Bill 74 was passed in August 2013 (North Carolina House Bill 74). This bill allows for an attorney to represent accused students within the university or college student conduct process, same as the criminal process. Along with the introduction of the Dear Colleague Letter of 2011, higher education institutions were placed under additional scrutiny with regards to Title IX process and policy. Over the course of the last few years, colleges and universities have further adapted their institutional policies and processes as the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) and state legislature have delivered more guidance and law with regard to Title IX.
Colleges and universities have responded to this continued legislation by creating codes of student conduct and policies reflecting “a level of proceduralism and legalism” (Cooper & Lancaster, 1998, p. 17). The formalized adjudication process, a traditional conduct practice, follows the administrative or conduct hearing board approach to student discipline (Zdziarski & Wood, 2008). This process utilizes a formal script. This script is created by the conduct administrator but is precisely followed and does not allow for much deviation. In this model, it must be determined whether the accused student actually violated an institutional policy. Proof of violating the policy must be based on information presented at the student’s hearing and must rise to the preponderance of evidence standard (Lowery, 2008). The preponderance of evidence standard employed at most institutions of higher education reads as “a more likely than not standard” (p. 78). In other words, institutions of higher education must prove that a student more likely than not violated the policy. The conduct board hearings as stipulated by Lowery must inform accused students of the charges against them, the opportunity to present their side of the facts, the opportunity to present witnesses, the right to have an advisor, which until 2008 could not be an attorney, and the right to present any and all relevant written statements.

The hearing results in a decision being made with regard to the student being held either responsible or not responsible for violating the institutional policy (Lowery, 2008). If the student is found responsible to have violated the policy, appropriate sanctions are determined by the hearing board. As stated by Zdziarski and Wood (2008), hearing boards can be comprised of faculty, staff/administrators, and students. Hearing boards are primarily used when the student could be suspended or expelled from the institution. As stated previously, as legislation has continued to develop in the United States, institutions of higher education have changed policies since the 2008 release of The Complete Guide for Student Affairs Professionals: Student Conduct
The sanctions as described by Stoner and Lowery (2008) still remain the baseline of standard sanctions imposed on a student who may go through a formal adjudication process.

The following are standard sanctions listed by Stoner and Lowery in the Model Code (2008, pp. 66-67):

I. The following sanctions may be imposed upon any student found to have violated the Student Code:
   a. Warning: a notice in writing to the student that the student is violating or has violated institutional regulations;
   b. Probation: a written reprimand for violation of specified regulations. Probation is for a designated period of time and includes the probability of more severe disciplinary sanctions if the student is found to violate any institutional regulation (s) during the probationary period;
   c. Loss of Privileges: denial of specified privileges for a designated period of time;
   d. Fines: previously established and published fines may be imposed;
   e. Restitution: compensation for loss, damage, or injury. This may take the form of appropriate service and/or monetary or material replacement;
   f. Discretionary Sanctions: work assignments, essays, service to the [College] [University], or other related discretionary assignments;
   g. Residence Hall Suspension: permanent separation of the student from the residence halls;
   h. Residence Hall Expulsion: Permanent separation of the student from the residence halls;
i. [College] [University] Suspension: Separation of the student from the [College] [University] for a definite period of time, after which the student is eligible to return. Conditions for readmission may be specified;

j. [College] [University] Expulsion: Permanent separation of the student from the [College] [University];

k. Revocation of Admission and/or Degree: Admission to or a degree awarded from the [College] [University] may be revoked for fraud, misrepresentation, or other violation of [College] [University] standards in obtaining the degree, or for other serious violations committed by a student prior to graduation;

l. Withholding Degree: The [College] [University] may withhold awarding a degree otherwise earned until the completion of the process set forth in this Student Conduct Code, including the completion of all sanctions imposed, if any.

Lake (2013) mentions that “the rise of law and a judicial culture on campus has created a scary Kafkaesque spectre for the future—the compliance university” (p. 275). With legislation such as the Dear Colleague Letter of 2011 created by the Office of Civil Rights, which was one of the first written documents stipulating Title IX processes for all college campuses, institutions are becoming more and more worried about not being in compliance and facing litigation issues from the state or federal level (Lake, 2013). Additional legislation, such as the Violence Against Women Authorization act, first passed in 1994, came out with additional guidelines in 2013. These additional legislative bills have caused colleges and universities to respond with more legalistic procedures as a means to remain in compliance with federal guidelines.

Leonard (1956) mentions how from even the beginnings of the Colonial era the purpose of conduct processes on campuses have always been about educational and ethical development
through the process. However, Fischer and Giacomini (2006) mention that early disciplinary processes “were expressively designed to control student behavior, limit speech seen as hostile or inflammatory, protect the safety of students and the student community, and respond to escalating and often violent political and racial conflict on and around campus” (p. 50). Fischer and Giacomini also state that early models of disciplinary systems utilized legalistic language as a means to create systems that mirrored the legal system as a response to federal legislation. In turn, formalized adjudication processes have always been viewed as strictly punitive resulting in various forms of punishment (Fischer & Giacomini, 2006). Lake (2009) states in his article, “Student discipline: the case against legalistic approaches,” that many higher education institutions utilize student codes of conducts that are legalistic in nature. Lipka (2009) states that the legalistic model is due in part to college systems’ desire to utilize a conduct system that implements fixtures of the current judicial court system for their student population. Krapfl (2009) mentions that the formal procedures that accompany the legalistic model allow conduct officers to make informed decisions that would be held up in court.

Waryold (2006) describes traditional or formal student disciplinary systems as “customary, monotonous, structured, legalistic and lifeless machines…. often perceived by students and other stakeholders as bureaucratic, legalistic, menu-driven, inconsistent, impersonal, archaic, and unfair” (p. 39). Waryold also states that the reasoning behind sticking to what is tried and true is due to lack of appropriate staffing, campus climate, culture and customs as well as legislative mandates. With this type of crisis oriented response, conduct practices, as per Waryold, have forgotten the true purpose behind student conduct processes; education and building community should be at the forefront. Moreover, Fischer and Giacomini (2006) note that “where early disciplinary models succeeded in expedience and due process, they failed in
teaching students how to deal effectively with situations involving confrontation, conflict and community standards” (p. 50).

Informal practices

Due to this strict punitive viewpoint which comes across as one created to only punish the student, over the years, student conduct processes have begun to reframe issues dealing with student conduct by viewing the practice through a spectrum model (Schrage & Thompson 2008). Pathways within the spectrum model began to surface as early as the 1960s, with mediation being at the forefront.

The spectrum model includes processes that range from informal to formal based on the incident, the needs of the involved parties, and their individual stories. The spectrum begins at the informal level with no conflict management whatsoever, to the formalized adjudication hearing process. The approaches between these two ends of the spectrum include “dialogue/debate/discussion, conflict coaching, facilitated dialogue, mediation, restorative justice processes, shuttle diplomacy, adjudication (informal) and adjudication formal hearing” (Schrage & Thompson, 2008, p. 67).

The need for spectrum model pathways developed as means to address the viewpoint that educational objectives were not at the forefront of the strictly punitive or legalistic measures being utilized in the majority of student conduct practices (Lake, 2009). These processes aim to “allow students to resolve their own conflict, before, during and after a disciplinary process is set in motion” (Fischer & Giacomini, 2006, p. 51). Restorative justice practices fall within the spectrum model (Schrage & Thompson, 2008) to reframe campus conflict issues by allowing all parties, victim and offender, to participate in the resolution process, as shown in Figure 2.1
(Schrage & Giacomini, 2009).

Figure 2.1. Spectrum resolution options.

The techniques within the spectrum model (Schrage & Thompson, 2008) are on a continuum based on the level of accountability that the offender is willing to accept. Schrage and Thompson (2009) mention that many incidents can be addressed through an alternate dispute solution process at the higher education level. This approach allows for student learning and development through the process as the student has a say in the resolution process. A student who violates the policy does not face the same punishment or sanctions as another student because “fairness does not imply sameness” (Taylor & Varner, 2009, p.34). However, Schrage and Thompson note a formalized adjudication process must always remain in the toolkit of options to address student conduct issues as it will always be needed for certain types of cases. But a formal process does not always have to be the first response to address disciplinary issues. Rather, these processes remain in effect for incidents that are of the most severe nature or those in which students do not take accountability for their behavior (Schrage & Thompson, 2009).
One of the underlying tenets supporting the use of techniques from the spectrum model is based on the assumption that students can learn valuable lessons from conflict. It does not matter if the conflict is one in which they take part or one that they merely observe in their own environment. Any form of conflict can lead to an opportunity for the institution to address the incident with “fair and consistent community standards” (Fischer & Giacomini, 2006, p. 52) while also figuring out ways to “model, teach, and reinforce conflict resolution skills” (Fischer & Giacomini, 2006, p. 52). The goal is to educate students on how to address conflict in the future while creating a positive campus culture and community. The spectrum model aims to “model, teach and transform” (Fischer & Giacomini, 2006, p. 53) while the formalized processes are said to “react and correct” (Fischer & Giacomini, 2006, p. 53).

Taylor and Varner (2009) state that “we are legally compelled through constitutional requirements or contractual obligations to provide students with fundamental fairness before imposing sanctions affecting their continued enrollment” (p. 33) but does this mean that all practices must be the same for all students who allegedly violate the same policy? Taylor and Varner argue that although institutions must adhere to federal mandates, that does not mean the conduct process must look the same for all. Institutions of higher education, as a means to remain compliant, have implemented standard behavioral expectations and standards sanctions for all based upon the violation. However, does that take into account the student’s individual growth and development? Can a one-fits-all mindset apply to each and every case? Taylor and Varner argue that applying a spectrum model (Schrage & Thompson, 2008) to student conduct can allow practitioners to use a variety of tools from a toolkit of sorts, which allows for student learning and growth by meeting the student where they are in their development. When practitioners are
able to “invest in a spectrum of conflict resolution methods that are able to meet the variety of student conflict and conduct issues that arise, we are then able to be truly fair” (p. 34).

The spectrum model (Schrage & Thompson, 2008) allows for the student to take an active role in the process. The student must first accept responsibility or accountability for their actions in order to be allowed to go through the informal process. By accepting responsibility, the student understands the role he or she has played in the incident, which leads back to student development and growth through the process. These processes are seen often as a “party-driven approach” (Schrage and Thompson, 2009) based on the fact that the involved parties guide the resolution process rather than the conduct practitioners.

Additionally, by utilizing a spectrum model, practitioners are able to implement a variety of practices to address conduct issues rather than just the formalized adjudication approach. Often, incidents do not reach a formal process level but need to be addressed in some form as a means to educate. However, if practitioners do not have a variety of options to utilize to provide the necessary educational conversation needed to move forward, then they are forced to follow the formalized adjudication process. The lack of options to address behavior can create a sense of sameness for all incidents while forgetting the involved parties’ needs and individual stories (Schrage & Thompson, 2009).

These approaches have been utilized to address behavior within student organizations, as well as disagreements between roommates. Institutions of higher education utilize techniques such as conflict coaching to address disagreements between students at college campuses. These processes resolve incidents at this level without leading to a formal disciplinary record for all parties involved.
The restorative justice process is being implemented to address all conduct issues at many four-year public and private institutions. This process serves as the primary informal process at institutions such as Skidmore College, University of Michigan, and Denison University, when students are able to take responsibility for their actions and choose to take part in this process. However, the formal process also remains in effect at these institutions, as that option is still necessary for certain cases and involved parties. By providing a variety of options, students are able to take part in the process and facilitate their own learning and development as involved parties. The spectrum model (Schrage & Thompson, 2008) is founded on both social and restorative justice, which is what makes it unique. Formal adjudication often discounts the stories and experiences of minority students in a way that takes away from meaning-making through the process. The spectrum model offers practices and processes that are more inclusive and tailored to individuals’ needs while still satisfying institutional requirements.

**Restorative justice.** Restorative justice practices are being utilized as a means to begin a teaching process in comparison to the more formal or adjudicatory model (Fischer & Giacomini, 2006) in place. Additionally, restorative justice is seen as one that is easier to navigate for the students going through the conduct process. The restorative justice process is one that is collaborative between victim and offender. Additionally, there is a greater consideration for the commitment to the community in restorative justice practices, whereas legalistic approaches separate the alleged offender from the community. Restorative justice focuses on the reintegration of the offender into the community. Suspension and/or dismissal are not the primary sanctions that these types of practices utilize; instead, all parties work collaboratively to issue sanctions that focus on repairing the harm done to the victim and the community.

Restorative justice is a collaborative campus wide conduct response that includes students in the
process by allowing them to create the sanctions together for the wrong they committed. (Krapfl, 2009).

Karp (2013) mentions that when punitive sanctions such as suspension are utilized, the reintegration of the offender into the community is often forgotten. Moreover, involved parties are often not able to share their story with the offender prior to this separation occurring. The restorative justice process facilitates necessary conversations between victims and offenders as a means to educate through the process. The offender hears from the victim what harm was created by his or her actions. This discussion leads to greater understanding by all parties involved and a plan is created together that can include the offender’s reintegration into the community post suspension (Karp, 2013).

This concept of reintegration is often compared to the disciplinary process that takes place within the family. Karp and Breslin (2001) refer to Baumrind (1989) to mention that when a child is disciplined for doing something in the home, the child is not then banished from the home. It is without question that the child will be brought back into the family circle. Restorative justice practices aim for the same type of reintegration into the community. Karp and Breslin also reference Wachtel (2001) to mention that “showing disapproval of [the] wrongdoing, while [simultaneously] supporting and valuing the intrinsic worth of the student who has committed the wrong” (p. 265) still promote accountability. Restorative justice practices seek to repair harm by both challenging and supporting the offender, which are the hallmarks of early student theory education and discipline.

Karp (2013) states similar core concepts within The Little Book of Restorative Justice for Colleges and Universities, where he addresses the specific application of restorative justice practices into student conduct models of practice. Karp showcases that by using restorative
justice practices in student conduct models, students take accountability for their actions, repair harm done, and rebuild trust, because all parties involved are part of the process. Whereas within formal conduct processes a conduct hearing board makes a sanction recommendation, within restorative justice the offender is a part of the sanctioning process. The involved parties create a restorative agreement that promotes offender responsibility. This involvement creates active accountability by the offender.

Zehr (2002) states in his book, The Little Book of Restorative Justice, that restorative justice allows for programs to utilize restorative justice practices in part or in full as long as the “three pillars of restorative justice” (p. 22) are followed. The three pillars are “harms and needs, obligations, and engagement.” (p.22). Zehr mentions that “restorative justice requires, at minimum, that we address victims’ harms and needs, hold offenders accountable to put right those harms, and involve victims, offenders, and communities in this process” (p.25).

Zehr states in his text Changing Lenses that crime encompasses four elements of harm—harm “to the victim, to interpersonal relationships, to the offender, and to the community” (p. 184). In this regard, “crime is a violation of people and of relationships” rather than a “violation of rules” (Zehr, 1990, p. 184). The primary purpose behind restorative justice is then deemed to address these various levels of harm that have occurred to the victim, but also to allow the offender into the process by having him or her accept responsibility and be a part of determining what should be done to right the wrong.

Pavelka (2013) mentions the need for a collaborative approach between the school, involved parties, and outside community in order to address the harm and wrongdoing. With restorative justice practices, “students are empowered as active participants in the resolution process” (Pavelka, 2013, p. 13). Whereas formalized adjudication processes inform the offender
about the sanction or punishments assigned as a result of their behavior, the restorative justice process includes the offender in the decision-making process itself. In this process, the offender is included in the conversation about the best way to repair the harm.

In order to provide justice in the form of “restoration” rather than “retribution” (Zehr, 1990, p. 186), Pavelka (2013) echoes Zehr (2002) and Karp (2009) in saying that the three essential elements for a successful restorative justice process include the need to “repair harm, reduce risk, and empower community” (p. 15). Pavelka notes that restorative justice practices “provide schools with the opportunity to improve school culture by addressing disciplinary standards and creating a forum for peaceful resolution of conflict and misbehavior” (p. 15). In this model, all parties involved create a joint contract about how to address the wrongdoing that has occurred. All parties involved are held accountable for their part of the process and all parties are given resources and/or support to be successful in holding up their end of the contract. In this process, if one fails, then in a sense all parties fail, because all were a part of the decision-making and all hold each other accountable to follow through.

Pavelka (2013) describes the four most popular restorative justice practices. These practices include peer mediation, peer/accountability boards, conferencing, and circles (p. 15). The peer mediation process is the most widely used. This process is usually between two parties who are in conflict with one another. At the end of the mediation, a common agreement is formed as a means to repair the harm and put together successful measures for improvement within the relationship in the future (Pavelka, 2013).

Peer or accountability boards are most similar to student conduct hearing boards. In this technique, a peer board, usually made up of student volunteers, sits down with the offender and victim to come up with a plan for the offender. “The case plan is tailored to incorporate
consequences and accountability, while also addressing the needs of the wrongdoer” (Pavelka, 2013, p. 15). This process utilizes a hearing script similar to the formal adjudication process, but the language and framework are still quite different. Conferencing, unlike a peer board, includes the offender, victim, and other parties that may have been harmed by the incident, such as family or friends. This process is led by a trained restorative justice facilitator. “The goal of the conference is to seek reparation and resolution of the wrongdoing” (Pavelka, 2013, p. 15).

Restorative justice circles, like conferencing, include the victim, the offender, and other harmed parties such as family, friends, or other community members. In this process, a trained facilitator also takes the lead. “The circle keeper, or facilitator of the process, uses a talking piece which is passed around the circle to individual speakers” (Pavelka, 2013, p. 15). Each participant in the circle states how they were personally harmed by the incident and decide together the best way to repair the harm. The victim and accused both have a voice in the sanctioning process. No party is isolated from the decision-making process. The ability of all parties to voice their concerns, thoughts, opinions for sanctioning, and harm suffered creates a space where all are heard; their voice brings value to the process. By allowing offenders a voice in the process, restorative justice practitioners mention a decrease in recidivism. When looking at student affairs as a profession, and attrition rates, numerous researchers speak to an administrator’s inability or apprehension in voicing his or her opinions, thoughts, and ideas about institutional policy and/or process.

**Student Affairs and Attrition**

In this context, student conduct administrators face “conflicts between the values that motivated entering the field (i.e., contributing to the development of students) and the reality of what practitioners actually do” (Stamatakos, 1978, p. 210). Student conduct administrators aim
to be educational and developmental in their work, but sometimes students have to be separated from the institution for their violations and behaviors. This separation is immediate and limited in student development, causing conduct administrators dissonance between why they do the work they do and how that actually is done in the field. Arnold (1982) explains this dissonance best as she relates it back to the core of why student affairs professionals do this work; “yet the most obvious solution, quitting the job, is unacceptable because it is in opposition to the individual’s commitment to his/her profession” (p. 7).

Indeed, the commitment to student development and student education is at the forefront of the student affairs professional’s work. As a conduct administrator, you serve within the larger umbrella of student affairs and aim to be educational and developmental in the work that you do. Forney, Wallace-Schutzman, and Wiggers (1982) found this to be what they termed “an emerging fundamental issue” centered on control; “what can or can’t I control and what are my related reactions” (p. 437).

Jones (1980), mentioned by Lorden (1998), mentions in her original text that “dissatisfaction may be a national trait” (p. 9). Jones (1980) makes this observation based on the fact that “they symbolize a new group of career changes who switch careers because they want to, not because they are forced to. They were not fired. Their jobs were not eliminated by their employers. They changed careers simply because they discovered something they would prefer to do” (p. 8).

Due to these reasons, changing careers could simply be based on one’s desire to explore something new. In the case of student affairs, the following issues have been mentioned as reasons for leaving the field: “job security, salary, fringe benefits, the correlations of responsibility with organizational authority, working conditions, and the nature of performance
reviews are just some of the factors that may impact the level of satisfaction of those working in student affairs” (Bender, 1980, p. 3). Lorden (1998) adds another factor, stating that inability to advance in the field is yet another reason that professionals leave the field. Lorden adds from the Richmond and Sherman (1991) study that only 39% of new professionals were satisfied by their perceived ability to advance in their role. It is important to note that this statistic is based on their perceiving what advancement may be available to them in their role.

Relocation is an option for many professionals in order to advance, but as Lorden (1998) notes, many are unable to relocate due to personal choice or personal hindrance. Relocation may also be the primary reason behind newer professionals filling entry level conduct positions versus seasoned practitioners who are geographically bound due to personal and/or family reasons. Arnold (1982) states that many may not be able to afford relocation for a position even if the position is one they’d like to attain. Moreover, often relocation is not an option when considering one’s partner and their position and career goals. Lorden (1998), Barr (1990), Carpenter (1990), and Forney, Wallace-Schutzman, & Wiggers, (1982), among others, note that burnout is often the main reason professionals leave the field. Arnold (1982) defines burnout as “the inability to function effectively. In our case, it is the inability to facilitate the students’ growth” (pp. 6-7). Forney et al. (1982) mention that “loss of enjoyment in relation to job, guilt, defensiveness, detachment, paranoia, lack of creativity, mechanical behavior, alienation, rigidity, callousness, pessimism, physical and emotional exhaustion, the inability to cope with stress, muscle tension, absenteeism, and alcohol drug abuse” (p. 436) are just some of the symptoms of burnout.

Forney et al. (1982) echoed many of the same causes of burnout as Lorden (1998). The authors mention that “repetition, lack of advancement opportunities, overextension in terms of
amounts of work, money issues, feedback issues, lack of challenges, politics, supervision issues, boredom, and insufficient time for personal and professional development” (p. 437) can be causes of burnout. Working in student affairs often comes with “long hours and stressful conditions” (Lorden, 1998, p. 209), which can impact burnout.

The student conduct administrator is often in the most stressful conditions with students, as the role involves addressing violations of the student code of conduct. Violations can include students who have been charged with theft, physical assault, sexual violence, cheating, and plagiarism, just to name a few. These students can be separated from the institution indefinitely if they are found responsible for the violation. In this respect, conduct administrators are tasked with the burden of overseeing a process that often ends the student’s relationship with the institution. Additionally, there is a constant state of urgency to the work and continuous oversight from higher level administration due to concerns of impending lawsuits from students who have been removed from the institution or victims who felt that the process was unfair or biased.

Moreover, conduct administrators today serve as members of a college’s behavioral intervention team (BIT). Institutional BITs serve as the threat assessment practitioners for the institution to determine best next steps for students who are exhibiting threatening behavior toward themselves or the campus community. As members of this team, conduct administrators are faced with making difficult decisions about a student’s true intentions of harm toward themselves or the campus community based on their language and behaviors. Again, students can face indefinite separation from the institution due to their behaviors. Moreover, a wrong assessment can lead to serious consequences for the campus community or the individual.
student. This type of decision-making under stressful conditions can create further stress for the administrator.

Other factors have been found for attrition related to professional development opportunities. Lorden (1998) quotes a respondent from Nestor’s (1988) study in saying “we always talk as if [professional development] is important, but it never happens” (p. 210). Burns (1982) recommends the need for “transitional educational modules” (p. 12) in order to assist in decreasing attrition rates as a means for continued professional development. Additionally, Burns recommends a “goodness of fit between individuals’ work-related values, student affairs division staff needs, and graduate preparation programs” (p. 11) as being necessary in order to have a staff member stay long term at their institution.

**Morale and Voice**

The ideals behind goodness of fit, particularly work-related values, resonate back to the idea that the departmental and division mission, vision, and values should align with the administrator’s own personal values. Additionally, the emerging issue of control relates back to what one believes he or she can control in the policy and process at the institution within his or her role as a student conduct administrator. As a student conduct administrator, one’s ability to voice his or her concerns, thoughts, and opinions into the institutional process and procedure may be vital in decreasing attrition rates within the field.

Rosser and Javinar (2003) looked into the specifics of what affects morale and satisfaction of midlevel student affairs professionals. Within their study they focused on satisfaction, morale and intent to leave the field. Rosser and Javinar utilize Johnsrud’s (1996) definition of administrative morale, “level of well-being that an individual or group experiences in their work life” (p. 4) in their study. Johnsrud states that morale is determined by dimensions
such as satisfaction, commitment, enthusiasm, and sense of common purpose” (p. 4). These components define morale as a “multidimensional construct” (Johnsrud, 1996, p. 5). Johnsrud, Heck and Rosser (2000) also state that “the sum of theoretical work to date suggest that morale is best conceived as a multidimensional construct” (p. 37). In reviewing the literature on morale, Johnsrud, Heck and Rosser also quote Baynes (1967) and Lindgren (1982) in their study to further define morale. Baynes defined “morale as a quality of mind and spirit which combines courage, self-discipline, and endurance” (p. 108), while Lindgren mentioned that “when a group has one or more objectives that it considers to be worthwhile, and also feels that its activities contribute to those objectives, we say that is high morale. High morale usually expresses itself in terms of optimism—a belief on the part of members that success will attend their efforts” (p. 103).

Johnsrud, Heck, and Rosser (2000) and Johnsrud and Rosser (1999) state that midlevel professionals “know a great deal about their particular function but are rarely involved in the decision making most important to that function. As a result, they often feel as if they had no authority for decisions that are made, and yet they are held responsible for outcomes” (p. 39). Additionally, Henkin and Persson (1992) explain that “non-academic employees…” (p. 2) “claim disenfranchisement” (p. 2) when they “may lack representation and/or participation in aspects of university governance” (p. 2), which could also impact morale.

Rosser and Javinar (2003) refer to Belch and Strange (1995), Berwick (1992), Evans (1988), Scott (1992), Johnsrud and Rosser (1999a) and Johnsrud and Rosser (1999b) to note that “previous research has also shown that recognizing student affairs administrators for their competence and expertise is important to their satisfaction and morale” (p. 823). Rosser and Javinar found in their study that the longer the professional has worked in the field the less “they
feel valued as employees” (p. 822). Quality of life was defined as “professional activities and career development, recognition for competence and expertise, department and external relationships, perceptions of discrimination, working condition” (Rosser & Javinar, 2003, p. 823).

Rosser and Javinar (2003) refer to Ward (1995), to illustrate the attrition of student affairs professionals with less than two years of experience in the field. “The study found that the morale of new professionals is enhanced when their expected level of decision making autonomy is met. More specifically, when these new student affairs professionals have been supported in their decision-making abilities, their morale is enhanced…” (p. 815).

The results of the study conducted specifically by Rosser and Javinar (2003) found that higher levels of satisfaction and morale were attained when “they [midlevel student affairs professionals] also believe they have authority to make decisions, and that the leadership in their unit is strong” (p. 823). Recognition for competence contained the following subset of questions for respondents to answer within the study conducted by Rosser and Javinar (p. 826):

8. I am given recognition for my contributions;

9. I am given recognition for my expertise;

10. There is a sufficient guidance from my supervisor;

11. I feel a high degree of trust from my supervisor;

12. I receive feedback on my performance;

13. I have the authority to make decisions;

14. Mentoring is available in my unit;

15. I have a positive relationship with senior administrators;

16. There is strong leadership in my unit;
17. I feel the pressure to perform.

This “multidimensional construct” (Johnsrud, Heck & Rosser, 2000, p. 37) of morale speaks to the midlevel administrator’s ability to voice his or her concerns about institutional policy and process. The ability to voice one’s ideas, concerns, and/or thoughts about institutional policy and process go under the larger umbrella of “governance activities” (p. 39). Based on this previous research about satisfaction, morale, and intent to leave, the student conduct administrator, a role which is encompassed within the midlevel administrator grouping, and his or her ability to voice his or her concerns, ideas, and/or thoughts can have a direct impact on how he or she views the role of a student conduct administrator. This view can in turn impact his or her staying on in the role of a student conduct administrator.

The ability of student conduct administrators to voice concerns about the institutional policy and process to address conduct violations, which at times can directly impact the changing of policy and process, go hand-in-hand with them being recognized for competence and expertise within their work. Holmes, Edwards, and DeBowes (2009) point out that “student conduct and conflict resolution professionals are routinely tapped to provide leadership for an array of complex situations in which a student’s behavior is in conflict with an institutional policy, standard or member of the community” (p. 51). In this way, “professional oversight of adjudication and other dispute resolution processes is naturally expected to be fair and impartial to ensure equitable educational outcomes for all involved parties” (p. 51). However, based on the fact that student conduct work began during the Colonial Era under the premise of “in loco parentis” (Waryold & Lancaster, 2008, p. 9) many policies in the present day are ill-equipped to provide, fair and equitable processes for students via a social justice lens. Holmes et al. (2009) state that “the common model of adjudication may not always be equipped to bring about
effective resolution of conflict when the institution’s principles and the student’s behavior are in discord with each other” (p. 58).

It is during these moments that student conduct administrators should be able to voice their concerns in order to provide a more balanced process but one that still fits the needs of the students and the institution. Moreover, the policy and process must continue to align with the institutional and departmental mission and vision. Holmes et al. (2009) mention that “as student conduct and conflict resolution administrators, we are entrusted with significant institutional power. That power necessitates that we are clear instruments of justice if we intend to transform, rather than replicate, the oppressive social systems that lurk within our institutions” (p. 59). Once more, during their moments of discord with institutional policy and process, student conduct administrators should be able to voice their concerns, ideas, thoughts, and opinions about institutional policy and process in order to bring about necessary change for the betterment of students and the institution.

Additionally, as found by Rosser and Javinar (2003), if midlevel administrators feel as though they are recognized for their expertise and competence they are more satisfied in their work and more likely to stay in the field. For the purpose of this study, recognition for expertise and competence is based on the conduct administrator’s ability to use voice to facilitate change within the conduct process. If the administrator does not feel empowered to use his or her voice to facilitate change within the process, can he or she be recognized for expertise and competence? This sentiment of feeling empowered and being heard is echoed by those who advocate for the use of informal practices such as restorative justice. With restorative justice, offenders have a direct role in the sanctioning process along with the harmed parties. Both parties together come up with the recommended sanctions. The recommended sanctions are not
ones assigned to the offender, but rather ones that he or she has agreed upon. This concept of being heard and being part of the process directly impacts the likelihood of their following through with the sanctions, therefore speaking to the low rate of recidivism within restorative justice.

For the purpose of this study, voice, similar to morale, can be seen as a multidimensional construct of how one feels heard within his or her work as a student conduct administrator—valued in the ideas he or she brings forward, autonomous in making decisions as a student conduct administrator, and included in making institutional policy and procedural change. As mentioned previously, Burns (1982) defines “goodness of fit” between individuals’ work-related values, student affairs division staff needs, and graduate preparation programs” (p. 11). This balance of “individual expectations” and “the needs of potential employing institutions” (Burns, 1982, p. 11) is related to ones’ own work values and the values of the institution and department. These values encompass the needs of both parties and are reflected in the work of the administrator. In this study, I looked at the impact that one’s ability to use voice in his or her work as a student conduct administrator has on his or her role and his or her intent to remain in the position.

Summary

This chapter provided a review of the literature relevant to the creation and implementation of student conduct practices from the onset of higher education to the present day. Included was a brief history of American higher education, the evolving role of student service approaches to misconduct, and contributing factors in the attrition of student affairs officers. A brief summary of formal and informal practices as well as a framework for morale and voice was also provided.
Chapter 3: Methodology

As a previous student conduct administrator at a community college, I am interested in understanding the impact of one’s ability to use voice on the role of the student conduct administrator at the community college institution. Does the ability to utilize voice to facilitate change within the student conduct process influence the administrator’s desire to remain in the position at the community college institution? For the purposes of this study, voice is defined in multiple ways; however, the ability to utilize the ProSocial voice as defined by Dyne et al. (2003) is the primary definition I used for the study. Several questions underscored the methodology of this study. Do conduct administrators feel empowered in their roles? Do they feel as though they have a voice in the process and in policy making at the institution? In their roles as student conduct administrators, does their ability to use voice in the conduct process impact how long they remain in their roles? Ultimately, if a student conduct administrator can remain in line with his or her own values, mission, vision, and voice in the process, will he or she be more likely to remain in the role of a student conduct administrator at the community college institution?

Research Framework

Crotty (1998) mentions that meaning is “constructed by human beings as they engage with the world” (p. 43). Armino and Hultgren (2002) advocate for the use of qualitative research within student affairs because “including qualitative research is important not because it might be ‘trendy,’ but rather because good qualitative research brings voice and insight forward for all constituents living complex phenomena, including underrepresented people and their experiences. Using good qualitative work to demonstrate effectiveness allows institutions to realize their mission more fully” (p. 458). Silver and Jakeman (2014) make the case for the use
of a social constructionist epistemology conceptual framework by defining epistemology and constructionism through the lens of Arminio and Hultgren (2002) as well as Merriam (2002). “The epistemology and methodology of this study complemented one another, allowing us to explore how students interpreted and made meaning of their experiences during graduate study” (Silver & Jakeman, 2014, p. 172).

Arminio and Hultgren (2002) mention that “meaning is more than what is observable in the world to be measured and counted. The authors refer to Becker (1992) who mentions that “meaning ‘does not reside in the object, in the person, or in the other. Meaning occurs in between, and both person and object are necessary participants in its co-creation” (p. 450). Additionally, epistemology “is a way to understanding what we know and how we know” (Crotty, 1998, p. 3), focusing on how one interprets and makes meaning of their engagement in their surroundings aligned with the social constructionist viewpoint.

Bernard (2013) states that within constructivist grounded theory “respondents and researchers create data together, interactively, during an interview” (p. 525.) In order to better understand how student conduct administrators at the community college institution make meaning of their lived experiences at the two-year institution and interpret their role in connection with the institution, I used a social constructionist epistemology framework. Through this lens, I was actively involved, along with the participants, in the meaning-making experience, as meaning is made through the understanding of all parties involved (Silver & Jakeman, 2014).

**Methodology**

I used a qualitative approach to better understand the lived experiences of student conduct administrators who work at the community college institution. “Narrative studies are also influenced by phenomenology’s emphasis on understanding lived experience and
perceptions of experience” (Patton, 2002, p. 15). The role of the participant as a student conduct administrator at a community college was the primary driving force in the definition of lived experience in this study. While gender, race, or ethnicity might feature in the individual responses of study participants, they were not the motivating factors being studied. I was interested in understanding the participant’s career journey into the community college and what impact his or her ability to use voice to advocate for and facilitate change within the conduct process has on his or her remaining in the position.

The role of the student conduct administrator at the community college may differ from one institution to another based on the written and unwritten job responsibilities. For the purposes of this study, student conduct administrator is defined as an individual who has student conduct oversight as one of his or her primary job responsibilities. Participants were required to be those that enforce the student code of conduct and assign sanctions based on conduct violations. Therefore, the use of narrative inquiry was based on the role as defined in this study.

Patton (2002) states that “some questions lend themselves to numerical answers; some don’t” (p. 13). Qualitative research asks questions to obtain answers to the questions that cannot be answered by numerical data. These questions allow participants to share their own stories and make meaning of their own experiences via the researcher. “In qualitative inquiry, the researcher is the instrument” (Patton, 2002, p. 14).

While quantitative research allows for the collection of data from a larger number of participants, qualitative research focuses on a smaller number of participants. For the purpose of this study, I interviewed 12 participants in order to understand the experiences of student conduct administrators at community colleges. Qualitative data is able to “capture and communicate someone else’s experience of the world in his or her own words” (Patton, 2002, p. 47). Patton
stresses that although a smaller group of participants allows for greater understanding of the issue being studied, it “reduces generalizability” (p. 14). Based on the focus of this study, a qualitative approach was best to gain in-depth detail about the experiences of student conduct administrators at community colleges.

Research Design

Patton (2002) describes the use of narrative inquiry by asking the following foundational questions: “What does the narrative or story reveal about the person and the world from which it came? How can this narrative be interpreted so that it provides an understanding of and illuminates the life and culture that created it?” (p. 115). In asking participants who are currently employed as student conduct administrators at a community college to participate in this study, I promised to “honor people’s stories as data” (Patton, 2002, p. 115). Each participant was asked to share their own story via in-depth interviews conducted by me, and their stories are used as the primary source of data. “The object is to discover themes and recurring structures” (Bernard, 2013, p. 501.)

The use of narrative inquiry in this study allowed for a better understanding of the experiences of student conduct administrators that work at the community college institution. I previously worked at a community college in New Jersey as a student conduct administrator. Bernard (2013) references Clandinin and Connelly (2000) who state that “often, in the end, the narrative combines views from the participant’s life with those of the researcher’s life in a collaborative narrative” (p. 14). I note my own personal bias later in this chapter due to my previous work at a community college. Narrative inquiry allows for student conduct administrators at the community college institution to provide their own personal story and make meaning of their own experiences as conduct administrators at two-year institutions. Moreover,
through each participant’s narrative of working at community colleges, a better understanding of the cultural meanings associated with working at a community college can be gained. In comparison to four-year public or private institutions, community colleges function with an open door and open enrollment policy, meaning that all students are admitted into the institution. Additionally, community colleges aim to serve as transfer and/or vocational institutions. Students who attend community colleges either transfer out to four-year public or private institutions or begin working upon graduating with their degree.

With open enrollment and open-door policies, community colleges aim to provide open access education opportunities for all students. The average age of community college students is between 18 and 27. However, community colleges also have a higher nontraditional student population due to the flexibility of courses being offered and lower tuition costs. The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) states that as of July 2014, 29% of students attending public community college institutions were students with dependent children, therefore falling into the nontraditional student category. This diverse student population and structure unique to community colleges creates a culture exclusive to two year institutions.

**Sample/participants.**

Qualitative research allows for the use of a smaller group of participants in order to gain better understanding of the issue being studied. This focus on a smaller group of participants allows for a great detail of information from participants and an understanding of their lived experiences via narrative inquiry. I utilized in-depth, open ended interviews and written documents, in the form of a preinterview participant information form to gather data (Patton, 2002).
“In judgement [purposive] sampling, you decide the purpose you want informants (or communities) to serve, and you go out to find some” (Bernard, 2002, p. 176). Purposeful or judgement sampling was utilized to provide participants who currently work as student conduct administrators specifically at community colleges. Patton (2002) defines purposeful sampling as “cases for study (e.g., people, organizations, communities, cultures, events, critical incidences) selected because they are ‘information rich’ and illuminative, that is, they offer useful manifestations of the phenomenon, not empirical generalization from a sample to a population” (p. 40). I invited student conduct administrators at community colleges via contact information provided on each institution’s website. Additionally, the Association for Student Conduct Administrators (ASCA) has a community college Community of Practice. This Community of Practice is designed specifically for community college student conduct administrators. I invited these individuals via email, as well as a current member of ASCA. Since the desired number of participants was not obtained, I also invited individuals via NASPA. NASPA is another leading professional organization for those that work within higher education.

As a previous community college student conduct administrator, I have current contacts within the field who work at community colleges across the country. None of the participants in the study were people whom I worked with during my time as a student conduct administrator at a community college. I obtained a pool of interviewees until the desired sample size was obtained. For this study, I was interested in interviewing 10 conduct administrators with varied levels of experience in the field. However, the final sample size resulted in 12 study participants. Interviewees were chosen to showcase a variety of years in the field. I was looking for diversity with regard to present and previous job responsibilities within the field of student conduct. The sample size was based on these pre-defined factors, and I had hoped to have five men and five
women to participate in this study. Participants were asked to take part in a qualitative narrative inquiry, in order to better understand their career trajectory into working at a community college while allowing me insight into the culture of community college.

For the purpose of this study participants had to meet the following criteria:

1. Participant is currently employed at a community college.
2. Participant currently serves as a student conduct administrator with conduct being part of their current positional responsibility at the community college institution.
3. Participant has been serving in this role for six months or longer.
4. Participant has more than one year of professional experience serving as a student conduct administrator at a community college, four-year public, or four-year private institution.
5. Participant has the ability to sanction students and inform policy change based on student code of conduct violations.

**Instrumentation**

As mentioned by Patton (2002), within qualitative research, the researcher serves as the instrument. For the purpose of this study, I served as the primary source of data collection. Additionally, I used questions from the ASJA Campus Conflict Resolution Survey (Karp, 2008), designed for the Association of Student Conduct Administrators (ASCA) formerly known as Association of Student Judicial Administrators (ASJA). I used this ASJA campus conflict resolution services survey to “determine what kinds of conduct and conflict resolution services are offered on our campuses, what kinds of training people have, and what resources they would most like ASJA to provide” (p. 1). The questions in the Karp instrument were combined with questions from the demographic questionnaire used for the McNair (2013) doctoral study.
survey instrument was provided to all participants to complete and return prior to the scheduled in-depth interview. I obtained permission from Dr. David Karp and Dr. Kimberly McNair via email to utilize the survey instrument and demographic questionnaire (see Appendixes F and G).

In-depth interviews with all participants provided each individual with an opportunity to share his or her story in his or her own words. An interview guide was used to conduct the research in this study. Patton (2002) states that an interview guide “is prepared to ensure that the same basic lines of inquiry are pursued with each person interviewed” (p. 343). This semi-structured interview allows the researcher to ask questions based on responses of the participant but also ensures that a basic set of questions are answered by all participants.

I developed the interview guide based on the question options that Patton (2002) labels as “experience and behavior questions; opinion and values questions; feeling questions; knowledge questions; sensory questions; and background/demographic questions” (pgs. 349-351). These questions in the form of an interview guide “forces the interviewer to be clear about what is being asked and helps the interviewee respond appropriately.” (p. 349). Additionally, the variety of questions stays true to the purpose of qualitative interviewing as defined by Patton. Indeed, “the purpose of qualitative interviewing is to capture how those being interviewed view their world, to learn their terminology and judgements, and to capture the complexities of their individual perceptions and experiences” (Patton, 2002, p. 349).

Data collection

I conducted the interviews by telephone and digitally recorded them for transcription purposes during the data analysis phase of the study. I conducted one 60-90-minute interview of each participant based on my interview guide of questions. All participants were initially asked to speak about what led them to working as a student conduct administrator at the community
college institution in order to gain better understanding of their career pathway into working at the community college institution. The remaining questions were based on a predeveloped interview guide that allowed me to ask questions based on the conversation that developed (Patton, 2002). The interview guide also allowed the participant to go as in-depth as necessary in answering each and every question while honoring their narrative. Interviews did not have to be a minimum of 60 minutes or a maximum of 90 minutes. I wanted to allow each participant enough time to share his or her narrative if necessary.

Data analysis

In qualitative research, the narratives are analyzed to see what the data reveals. I used a method of analysis similar to the one employed by Klotz (2014) for the purposes of this study. I discovered themes within the narratives based on three separate passes over the data. Klotz states “the first pass at the data occurred as the interview was happening. The second pass at the data occurred after each individual interview was completed, as I played the audio recording, and listened to it within one day of the interview. The third pass at the data occurred after all the interviews were completed, when I reviewed each transcript individually” (p. 57). For the purposes of this study, the second pass at the data occurred when I transcribed each interview. During the second pass through the data, I began pre-coding the data.

Precoding is described as “circling, highlighting, bolding, underlining, or coloring rich or significant participant quotes or passages that strike you—those ‘codable moments’ worthy of attention” (Boyatzis, 1998; Saldana, 2009, p. 16). Moreover, “start coding as you collect and format your data, not after all fieldwork, has been completed. When you’re writing up field notes, transcribing recorded interviews, or filing documents you gathered from the site, jot down any preliminary words or phrases for codes on the notes, transcriptions, or documents
themselves, or as an analytic memo or entry in a research journal for the future reference” (Saldana, 2009, p. 17). These “preliminary jottings” (p. 17) can lead to “preliminary codes” (p. 17) during a secondary pass through the transcribed interviews and ultimately to a “final code” upon final review of common themes within participants’ interviews (p.17).

These preliminary jottings as referenced by Saldana (2009) are similar to another technique called pile sorts (Bernard, 2013, p. 526). With the pile sorts technique, the researcher looks for key phrases within the data that he or she believes are important. The researcher then writes those phrases onto 3x5 index cards and places the cards in front of them sorting or placing them into similar piles. These piles then become the identified themes from the interviews (Bernard, 2013.)

During the third pass through the data I began highlighting words, phrases, and themes as they came up in the data. Bernard (2002) defines inductive or “open” coding as “becoming grounded in the data to allow understanding to emerge from close study of the texts” (p. 444). During transcription, I became grounded in the data due to my close study of the text. Since qualitative research views “people as data sources, in the sense that they are repositories of knowledge, experiences, feelings or whatever, which are relevant to your research” (Mason, 2009, p. 31), participant’s narratives were seen as the primary source of data for this research study.

Participants and “their interpretations, perceptions, meanings and understandings, are seen as the primary source of data” thus providing an “insider view rather than imposing an ‘outsider view” (Mason, 2009, p. 56) into the issue being studied. I studied participants’ narratives as the primary source of data, to gain better understanding of the shared experiences of student conduct administrators who work at the community college level. Additionally, all study
participants were provided their interview transcriptions via email in order to verify accuracy. Each participant was given two weeks to provide any necessary feedback. I informed all participants that after two weeks I would assume all information was accurate and proceed with the study.

During the first pass through the data, I began by reading the texts and “underlining or highlighting things as they go” (Bernard, 2002, p. 444). As Klotz (2014) mentions in her study, this method is termed “eyeballing” (Bernard, 2002, p. 445). However, Strauss and Corbin (1990) argue that “another important source of names are the words and phrases used by informants themselves, catchy ones that immediately draw your attention to them. These terms are called in-*vivo* codes (p. 69). I reviewed all narratives for “actual phrases” or “words of the real people” (Bernard, 2002, p. 444) in order to understand the themes that were present within each participant’s story.

Patton (2002) defines direct quotations as “a basic source of raw data in qualitative inquiry, revealing respondents’ depth of emotion, the ways they have organized their world, their thoughts and what is happening, their experiences and their basic perceptions” (p. 20). I analyzed narrative inquiries for the direct quotations provided by participants as a raw source of data. I utilized these direct quotes as actual phrases or words of the real people as defined by Bernard (2002).

Saldana (2009) describes coding examples at length by discussing coding by patterns, coding filters, coding as a heuristic, pre-coding, preliminary coding, the codebook, coding manually, and coding electronically (pgs. 3-22). Coding by patterns and themes are broken down by providing examples of patterns or themes that can emerge while coding the data from participant’s transcripts. I used in-*vivo* coding in order to directly quote participants, providing a
direct category of a code. Bernard (2013) states there are four methods for discovering themes: “highlighting, pile sorts, word counts, and key-word-in-context (KWIC)” (p. 525.) Highlighting falls in line with in-vivo coding as the researcher utilizes word for word quotes from the transcribed interview to name themes (Bernard, 2013, p .525.)

Three passes through the data allowed me to follow Saldana (2009), Bernard (2002, 2013), and Klotz (2014) for data coding purposes. I began by reading the texts and “if you see something that you think is important, highlight it, either with markers or on the computer” (Bernard, 2013, p. 525). This procedure aligned with Saldana (2009) with “preliminary jottings” (p. 17) leading to “preliminary codes” (p.17) and ultimately a “final code” (p.17). I conducted a line by line analysis of each transcription. I maintained each participant’s privacy by providing pseudonyms for all participants.

**Trustworthiness**

I assumed that all participants were honest and truthful about their individual stories. Johnson and Christensen (2014) stated that “when qualitative researchers speak of research validity, they are usually referring to qualitative research that is plausible, credible, trustworthy, and therefore defensible” (p. 299). For the purposes of this study I assumed that all participants were credible and their stories plausible and trustworthy, therefore defensible.

For this study, each participant’s story was the primary source of data. I analyzed all interviews and written transcriptions to see if the data revealed similar themes and outcomes. “As an outcome, ‘triangulation’ is said to occur when results converge on the same conclusion” (Johnson & Christensen, 2014, p. 299). It is important to note that Johnson and Christensen also argue that findings can at times diverge instead of converge based on triangulation and that this does not make the findings of the research insignificant. “However, findings sometimes do not
converge but are divergent. This is not necessarily a problem, because it can be quite useful and important to look at our objects of study in different ways and learn from the different methods and perspectives. It is an ‘empirical question’ whether findings converge or diverge, and both convergent and divergent findings are important” (Johnson & Christensen, 2014, p. 299).

I also utilized interpretive validity by asking for participant feedback (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). “Interpretive validity refers to portraying accurately the meanings attached by participants to what is being studied by the researcher” (p. 300). In this way, the researcher tries to understand and make meaning of the “inner worlds” of the participants. I aimed to interpret the stories of the participants as accurately as possible. This approach was strengthened by allowing for participant feedback. “By sharing your interpretations of participants’ viewpoints with the participants and other members of the group, you may clear up areas of miscommunication. Do the people being studied agree with what you have said about them?” Again, it must be noted that this approach is not always perfect, as “participants may attempt to put on a good face,” but many times this method may reveal necessary “inaccuracies” (Johnson & Christensen, 2014, p. 302) within the interview.

Limitations/delimitations

The purposeful sampling utilized in this study limited the ability to generalize about all community colleges across the country. Delimitations include the fact that only community college student conduct administrators were interviewed for this study. Additionally, only two community colleges in this study provided residential facilities on campus for students. For that same reason, generalizations about community colleges based on the option of housing for students cannot be made.
I served as a student conduct administrator at a community college prior to my current role. I believe it is important to note this factor, as I have my own ideas of what issues serve as unique challenges of being a conduct administrator at the community college institution. The work of student conduct administrators at the community college institution has been an interest of mine due to the varied student population and open-door policies for admitting students. As a conduct administrator at a community college institution, I noticed the impact that the open-door policy had on my work as an administrator, since all students were accepted into the institution and the institution had open access to all community members.

Patton (2002) notes that due to the smaller number of participants in qualitative narrative inquiry, generalizations to a larger group cannot be made. Rather, the qualitative narrative inquiry can provide in-depth and detailed analysis based on the narrow focus. Additionally, generalizations cannot be made for all community college student conduct administrators although I did not discriminate based on institutional location.

**Summary**

This chapter provided the methodology and research framework for the study being conducted. I outlined the participants of the study and method of data collection. From there a description of the data analysis method was provided as well as information regarding the trustworthiness of the data. Finally, I provided the limitations and delimitations of the study.
Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter provides data collected from 30-60 minute interviews with 12 participants, including seven men and five women, who serve as student conduct administrators at community colleges across the United States. I begin by providing background information about the participants, demographic information about the community colleges represented in the study, and trainings in which the participants engaged in thus far in their careers. The themes in direct relation to the research questions and the impact of voice in one’s role and retention in that role were (a) the importance of being heard; (b) the consequences of voice not being valued; (c) the result of voice being valued; (d) the use of voice in policy creation and revision; and (e) the use of voice in sanctioning and procedure. Other themes revealed included (f) congruence with mission, vision, and values; (g) challenges of working at a community college; and (h) approach to addressing student conduct. Finally, other commonalities that emerged during the interview included 50% of participants’ first position within student affairs being in residential life and how most aspired to take on the dean of students position as their next role.

Participant Background

All participants in this study were asked to complete a participant information form prior to the one individual interview. Although I had originally intended to interview only 10 participants, five females and five males, the final pool of participants included 12 student conduct administrators at the community college level. Five of the participants self-identified as female, and seven as male. The desired amount of 10 participants was reached and all participants had various years of experience in the field of student conduct. However, after 12 student conduct administrators currently employed at the community college institution expressed interest in taking part in the study, I did not want to turn away eligible participants.
Therefore, the number of study participants was increased to 12, while still having five female participants within the overall participant make up. Institutions within the study included community colleges from the west coast, northeast, and midwest.

To maintain privacy for the participants, I have removed all names of any institutions mentioned in the study. All mention of the cities in which institutions were located have also been removed. Institutions included those with and without residential housing for students. Out of all the study participants, (n=12), two of the institutions provided housing facilities for students on campus. The only notable difference between those with housing facilities versus those without were the types of incidents that those student conduct administrators had to address and the struggle of navigating those processes when the facilities were not owned by the institution. For example, participant “Miranda” mentions the fact that since the residential facilities on her campus are owned by an outside company, training the staff and ensuring that institutional policy and process are adhered to is difficult. Additionally, although students reside on campus within the residential facility, the number of students who live on campus is small. For this reason, much of the programming at the community college institution is still geared toward the average commuter student.

The following tables and Figure 4.1 provide the demographic information for all participants: information about educational degrees; trainings received by the participants directly and trainings their staff have received, whether they have staff; trainings that participants have an interest in; enrollment numbers at the institution; and how often study participants read publications relating to conflict resolution.
Table 4.1

_Self-Identified Gender_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2

Background of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3

Age Range of Participants

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<th>Ages</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>40-49</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Group</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 or older</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not answer</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4

*Higher Education Completed*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Degree</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Degree (Ed.D., Ph.D., etc.)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*One of the study participants is currently enrolled in a doctoral program.*

Table 4.5

*Institutional Information*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Campus*</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Campus</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Campus</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Study participants were asked to select as many as would apply to their campus (i.e., suburban and multi-campus, urban and multi-campus, etc.).
Table 4.6

**Institutional Information-Enrollment Numbers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall Semester Full Time Enrollment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2,000-4,999</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000-9,999</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000-15,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,001-20,000</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,001-more</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Training Background**

I asked all participants to reflect on training they had attended, training their staff had attended, and trainings they had an interest in attending using a portion of a survey instrument developed by Karp (2008) for the Association of Student Conduct Administrators (ASCA). Specifically, they were asked about training that “they or their staff had attended or had interest in attending under the larger umbrella of conflict resolution practices.” The following definitions are provided for the reader to give reference to each of the terms utilized within this section of the required participant information form. These definitions were kept the same as in the Karp (2008) questionnaire. Permission to use the survey instrument was given by David Karp (Appendix G) and the full survey instrument is included in Appendix H.
Figure 4.1. Training by type.

In Figure 4.1, “self” stands for the student conduct administrators themselves, “staff” stands for other staff that the student conduct administrator sent to trainings, and “self-2” stands for the trainings the student conduct administrator hopes to attend in the future. Within this graph, “CR” stands for any training relating to conflict resolution, “M” stands for any training relating to mediation, “RJ” stands for restorative justice, and “SJ” stands for social justice. All trainings listed that fit under the general umbrella term of conflict resolution were counted within that type for the purposes of the graph. It is for that reason that the numbers within “self-2” are high in comparison to the rest. Participants of the study expressed high interest in attending trainings that were related to conflict resolution, mediation, restorative justice, and social justice. This high interest in attending trainings that fall under the larger umbrella of conflict resolution led me to believe that study participants had a predisposition or bias toward wanting to advocate for more inclusive conduct processes.
The following section provides information for each of the study participants with reference to training, years in current position, years in field of student conduct, job responsibilities, training responsibilities on campus, and campus partners. In order to provide greater background information for all study participants, I am providing information revealed during the interview in this section. Six of the participants involved in the study began their careers in residential life. Nine of the participants transitioned from the four-year institution to the two-year institution. Only one study participant had worked in community colleges for the entirety of her career. This transition from four-year to two-year came up frequently within the participants’ responses, in that most compared their two-year experience to the four-year and mentioned what would be different with addressing and handling student conduct at the four-year college. Many stated that after being at the community college institution they may or may not return to the four-year college for their next role, with reasons that ranged from simply loving the community college experience, the community college student population, and/or the ability to wear multiple hats.

In addition to potentially remaining at the community college institution for their next step, nine participants stated that the next position they aspired to would be as a dean of students or a vice president of student affairs. When defining these two positions, participants stated that they wished to serve as appeal agents for student conduct violations rather than the day-to-day administrators handling and investigating the cases. There was one participant who stated that she intended to leave the field altogether, while the remaining 11 participants stated that they had no intention of leaving the field of student conduct. In order to protect privacy, I have referred to each study participant by their chosen or given pseudonym.
Noel. Noel had been to 12 hours of conflict coaching training and training specific to his institution related to student conduct and Title IX as well as training through another professional organization, D. Stafford and Associates. His staff had been to the annual Gehring Academy judicial training institute provided by the Association of Student Conduct Administrators (ASCA). His staff had also participated in the institution specific training and training via D. Stafford and Associates. Noel was interested in attending the Gehring Academy-Senior Administrator Program and stated that he frequently read publications relating to conflict resolution. Noel has been in his current position for one year but has been working in the field of student conduct for four years.

Joan. Joan has been working in the field of student conduct for 18 years. She has attended one training via the National Behavioral Intervention Team Association (NaBITA), another professional organization. Joan was unsure of what training her staff had attended but stated that her staff had been to some kind of training. Joan marked interest in learning more about the general overview of all conflict resolution practices and stated that she sometimes reads publications relating to conflict resolution.

Miranda. Miranda has been working in the field of student conduct for 16 years. Miranda indicated that she had been to one Gehring Academy training provided by ASCA. Miranda did not have any other staff to send to trainings and expressed interest in attending other Gehring Academy training such as the senior administrator program and mediation training program. Additionally, she expressed interest in attending a mediation training outside of the Gehring Academy. Miranda also stated that she sometimes reads publications relating to conflict resolution.
Hank. Hank has been involved in the field of student conduct for 15 years. Hank has been to three Gehring Academy trainings, including a judicial training institute, a midlevel managers program, and a restorative justice institute. His staff has been to Title IX trainings and he has an interest in attending the Gehring Academy Senior Administrator Program, conflict coaching, and mediation, not specifically at the Gehring Academy. Hank stated that he sometimes reads publications relating to conflict resolution.

Jack. During his almost 17 years working in the field of student conduct Jack has attended two Gehring Academy trainings, specifically a judicial training institute and a midlevel managers program. Jack did not indicate that his staff went to any trainings but he expressed interest in attending the Gehring Academy-Mediation Training Program, Gehring Academy-Conflict Resolution Specialist Program and the general overview of all conflict resolution practices. Jack indicated that he rarely reads publications relating to conflict resolution and that he has been in his current position for almost five years.

Layla. Layla has been working in the field of student conduct for 13 years. Layla has been to the Gehring Academy Judicial Training Institute and she did not have any staff to send to trainings. Layla expressed interest in attending the Gehring Academy-Mediation Training Program, Gehring Academy-Conflict Resolution Specialist Program and the general overview of all conflict resolution practices. Layla mentioned that she sometimes reads publications relating to conflict resolution.

Bernard. Bernard has been in the field of student conduct for two years. Neither he nor his staff have been to any formal trainings, but he expressed interest in attending the Gehring Academy-Judicial Training Institute, the Gehring Academy-Senior Administrator Program, and
the Gehring Academy-Conflict Resolution Specialist Program. Bernard also mentioned that he sometimes reads publications relating to conflict resolution.

**Victor.** Victor has been working in the field of student conduct for 13 years and five months. Victor had attended eight years of conflict coaching, 60 hours of mediation, and 16 hours of restorative justice training. Victor did not have any staff to send to trainings and expressed interest in attending the Gehring Academy-Judicial Training Institute, Gehring Academy-Mediation Training Program, and the Gehring Academy-Conflict Resolution Specialist Program. Victor also frequently reads publications relating to conflict resolution.

**Mandy.** Out of all the study participants Mandy had been to the most trainings and had the most staff that attended trainings as well. She herself had been to the Gehring Academy Judicial Training Institute, Gehring Academy Mid-Level Managers Program, Gehring Academy-Senior Administrator Program, eight hours of Conflict Coaching, eight hours of Mediation training, and eight hours of Restorative Justice. Her staff had been to the Gehring Academy Judicial Training Institute, Gehring Academy Mid-Level Managers Program, Conflict Coaching, Mediation, and Restorative Justice. Mandy expressed interest in attending the Gehring Academy Mediation Training Program, Gehring Academy-Conflict Resolution Specialist Program and more Restorative Justice. She sometimes reads publications related to conflict resolution and has been in the field of student conduct for 15 years.

**Sean.** Sean has been working in the field of student conduct for a little over two years. In that time, he has not yet attended any formal training programs via ASCA, but has attended trainings via ATIXA, Association of Title IX Administrators, NaBITA, and other professional organizations within the field of student affairs. Sean is the only staff member at his institution working as a student conduct administrator and therefore has no other staff to send to trainings.
He expressed interest in attending the Gehring Academy Judicial Training Institute, the Gehring Academy Mid-Level Managers Program and the General Overview of all Conflict Resolution Practices. He sometimes reads publications relating to conflict resolution.

**Maxine.** Maxine has been working in the field of student conduct for 16 years. She has attended the Gehring Academy Judicial Training Institute and the Gehring Academy Mid-Level Managers Program. Her staff has attended the Gehring Academy Judicial Training Institute at some point and she expressed interest in attending the Gehring Academy Senior Administrator Program, the Gehring Academy Conflict Resolution Specialist Program and Arbitration. She sometimes reads publications relating to conflict resolution.

**Ralphie.** Ralphie has been working in the field of student conduct for 15 years. During this time, he has attended the Gehring Academy Judicial Training Institute and other trainings via ASCA. His staff has also attended training via Maxient, a third-party company that provides a web-based software system to manage student conduct cases, and he expressed interest in attending the Gehring Academy-Senior Administrator Program, conflict coaching, and social justice lens training. He sometimes reads publications relating to conflict resolution.

All study participants (n=12) expressed interest in trainings they would like to attend and all but one study participant had attended at least one training during their time in the field. The inability to attend could be related to a myriad of things, including finances. Out of all the study participants, only four had ever participated in trainings related to conflict coaching, mediation, social justice and/or restorative justice. Most of the participants did not have additional staff members to send to trainings.
Themes

I asked each study participant to provide information about training background and training interests in order to understand and identify a predisposition or bias toward wanting to advocate for more inclusive conduct processes. Additionally, based on participant responses to the interview questions about conduct processes and approaches, I wanted to understand if those with conflict resolution training had a better understanding of the spectrum model (Schrage & Thompson, 2008) pathways and a higher inclination to implement the model at their institution.

The themes that emerged during the analysis of interview transcriptions began with the importance of being heard. Overall, participants stated that even though their voice may not have led to the ultimate resolution chosen, there was an importance in at least being heard during the process. In this study, being heard implied having the opportunity to speak one’s opinion aloud but did not imply that the student conduct administrator’s opinion had to be the one that was followed and implemented. Rather, participants explained the need for their voice to be valued by being heard.

Participants stated that if they felt as though their voice was not valued—a second theme titled the consequences of voice not being valued—they would leave their position and potentially the institution. Two of the study participants (n=12) stated that they had previously left other positions at other institutions when they felt their voice was not valued. All other responses to the question about voice not being valued within this study were based on hypothetical situations. A third theme, the result of voice being valued, connected to participants feeling that their work was valued and that they were empowered in their role as student conduct administrators. Study participants said that if they felt like their voice was valued, they felt as
though they were contributing to the overall work of the institution and that they felt happy coming to work.

A fourth theme spoke to the use of voice in policy creation and revision, and the fifth theme was about the use of voice in sanctioning and procedure. Participants also spoke to the need for congruence with institutional and departmental mission, vision, and values, a sixth theme. Other themes that emerged from prompts within the interview guide were the challenges of working at a community college such as resources in staffing, finances, burnout in the field, and the approach to addressing student conduct. Other interesting commonalities that were discovered during the in-depth interviews, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, were about how many of the study participant’s first positions in student affairs were in residential life. Additionally, many of the study participants reflected on their desire to pursue a position as Dean of Students as their next position. These commonalities are not discussed in detail in the following sections but are mentioned due to their reoccurrence in the interviews. The following themes provide the direct responses from participants in response to the interview questions. All names provided are pseudonyms given by the participants themselves or assigned by me if no name was given.

**Importance of Being Heard**

All study participants (n=12) stated that the impact of voice in how student conduct is addressed at their institution is significant when looking to remain in their role. As mentioned previously within the literature review, the “multidimensional construct” of voice (Johnsrud et al., 2000, p. 37) speaks to the midlevel administrator’s ability to voice his or her concerns about institutional policy and process. The ability to voice one’s ideas, concerns, and/or thoughts about institutional policy and process go under the larger umbrella of “governance activities” (Johnsrud
et al., 2000, p. 39). Furthermore, I was looking at the student conduct administrator’s ability to utilize the ProSocial voice as defined by Dyne et al. (2003). The ProSocial voice is defined as one which allows an employee, i.e., the student conduct administrator, the ability to state aloud his or her work-related ideas in an “intentional, proactive, and other-oriented” (p. 1371) manner to benefit the work of the overall institution.

Participants stated that voice impacted their feeling valued at the institution, increased morale in their role, and increased happiness and desire to come to work. On the other hand, if participants felt as though their voice was not valued, the majority stated that they would look for employment elsewhere. Many stated that by their voice not being valued, morale would decrease, coming to work would be difficult, and some even described situations in which they had left previous positions for that very same reason.

In order to determine the importance of being heard as a student conduct administrator at the community college institution, I asked participants: “How important is it to you that your voice be heard in how student conduct is addressed at your institution?” The following sections provide the direct responses from participants. This question was asked to address the primary research question of the study: “What impact does the ability to use voice as a student conduct administrator influence the professional remaining in the position?” The ability to use voice is the foundation in determining the importance of being heard. The need to be heard is inherently built into the ability to utilize one’s voice in the role. Additionally, what impact does the administrator’s inability to utilize voice and therefore not be heard impact retention in the role?

In response to the question about the importance of being heard in addressing student conduct at her institution, Miranda, responded:
“It’s important, especially when we are running with such a small staff. It’s very important that my voice be heard as the person who’s in charge and training other people and doing those types of things. It’s important. I would have a hard time working somewhere very long that, where my voice wasn’t heard.”

Hank responded similarly, stating that being heard is “extremely important.”

“…role is more than just a title and somebody who gets to hand out what the institution says. I want to know that I’m able to bring myself to the work when we are having these experiences of here, let me hear your stories, people want to hear how that impacts and shapes how we are going to make policy and how we are going to make procedure because that’s going to be informed by the actual experiences, who, we as the professionals are hearing directly.”

Jack echoed the same sentiment about the importance of being heard since he is the one doing the work on a day-to-day basis. He noted that if his voice is not heard as the primary administrator, he does not feel good about not being heard in how the day to day work is handled. Moreover, Jack in responding to the importance of being heard mentions the need for empowerment in ability to make policy decision on his campus.

“I think it’s fairly important just because I am the person doing conduct on my campus and kind of the only person responsible for doing it…. It doesn’t really feel good to have to be the person responsible for implementing this whole process but have no voice in how this process is done, or little voice I guess… I should be empowered to make some policy decisions about how that gets executed on the campus. Just as I would expect any director of student conduct at a four-year institution to have some authority to dictate how that process was going to work at that institution.”
Jack’s mention of empowerment with regard to process implies the use of the ProSocial voice as defined by Dyne et al. (2003). A ProSocial voice in the context of process implies the ability to mention work-related ideas and opinions for the benefit of the organization (p. 1371). In this way, Jack would have the ability to mention the ideas he had with regard to process at his institution in order to benefit the organization.

Likewise, Joan considered the importance of being heard in how student conduct was addressed at her institution as “paramount” since she did the work on a day-to-day basis. Joan mentioned how illogical it would be to have any individual in any position perform a task in which they have little to no say in how the work is done.

“I would say it’s paramount considering I’m the person who [is] responsible for that duty. I think it would be illogical to have, in any position, to allow a person to perform a particular duty but they have no say in it. To me that’s just a lack of logic.”

Mandy stated that the need to be heard is “imperative.”

“I don’t think I can continue working there if I was not given that level of autonomy and decision making and able to develop policies and procedures without everybody trying to challenge all the things that I do.”

Ralphie went a step further to describe the importance of being heard due to the communal voice that he believed he represented at his institution. The importance of voice and being heard then went above and beyond the need for one’s self to be heard, but rather the greater need to be heard as a representative of the larger population.

“I think it’s fairly important. I want faculty to have an input as well and I also want students to have an input and I also think that sometimes my voice is a representation of some of the students…. I sometimes think that my role is to make sure that I’m keeping a
pulse on our students and helping to ensure that we are meeting their needs….I think one of the unique parts is that I get to see the whole process from a 30,000-foot kind of level as well as I get my hands right down in the trenches and so being able to see and being able to do both of those really gives me a unique perspective.”

Along the same lines as Ralphie, Noel mentioned this concept of the communal voice and the expectation of having, needing, and using that communal voice as an upper-level administrator.

“I think it’s extremely important. I mean the reality is that I’m in the [position] as well so I’m really seen as the person who has to, who should be having connections with students and be having a better connection with students in the end.”

This idea of having a voice for the people, so to speak, repeatedly came up when participants were asked about how they defined having a voice. Victor, like many of the participants, even asked for the question to be clarified because he was unclear if the question spoke to his own personal voice or the voice of the overall community (i.e., faculty, staff, and students at his institution).

Researcher: “Sure. Ok. With all that being said, how do you define having a voice in the student conduct process?”

Victor: “For me personally? Having a voice?”

Researcher: “Mhm.”

Maxine noted that being heard in how conduct was addressed at her institution was very important—again, mentioning the fact that as the primary conduct officer for the institution, she was doing the work on a daily basis and therefore needed to be heard.
“Oh, very. I believe that whoever is doing it needs to; we are where the rubber meets the road, we are meeting the students daily. We need to be heard. I think we are probably more important than the higher administration.”

Hank stated that voice is defined by the involvement of the administrator within institutional committees and how the administrator is asked to use his or her voice at the institution. Additionally, he mentioned the need to remember the voice of the students who go through the process and what is being shared with administrators.

“For me I used to feel like having a voice in the process was really individually based and allowed me to have my one-on-one meetings and in that space, have control over what kind of sanctions were issued and when students were found responsible versus not. I still think that’s a part of it but I think larger what I’ve learned over these last few years is having a voice in the process it really matters most about what are some of the committees that we are asked to be on.”

Sean stated that it was important to be heard because he likened his voice to the voice of the institution, which encompasses faculty, staff, and students. The importance of being heard in Sean’s case was critical because there are times where one must advocate for the student through the process.

“Your voice, you’re hired by the institution so you are a voice of the institution, trying to educate the students through the process of student conduct.”

Like others, Sean stated the importance of being heard due to his being the only student conduct administrator on his campus. However, Sean made the distinction to say that being heard did not equate to his voice being the sole authority on how the incident should be addressed. The
importance of being heard was not the same as your opinion being the final say about an incident.

“It’s very important to me as the sole person who does conduct on our campus. I feel like my voice needs to be heard, I don’t ever believe it needs to be done the way I say it but if we are going down a route… I feel like the voice is very much needed cause I’m the one who’s actually practicing it.”

Noel mentioned a similar sentiment as Sean with regard to being heard, but did not feel as though his opinion had to be the final one to be followed. Rather, his ability to utilize the ProSocial Voice, (Dyne et al., 2003), in order to mention his ideas or opinions as related to the incident, demonstrated to him that his voice was valued. Again, stating that the need for a community perspective or voice on the issue is most important. For Noel, the importance of being heard was present so that the community as a whole could be heard.

“I mean there have been days where my voice may not have, or the decision may have not gone my way but I respect that. I think that’s what makes us successful here because there are a variety of perspectives; to kind of go back to your previous question they rely heavily on me cause of my interactions with students because that’s kind of the role, that’s kind of how I shaped my role of [title of position] to be very interactive with students you know it’s just my own personal philosophy vs. that’s an expectation of what you need to do but I think it’s important for students to see who I am.”

Layla defined voice by being empowered in her role to do what she believes is best, which at times includes allowing students a voice in the sanctioning process. This sentiment aligns with the spectrum model (Schrage & Thompson, 2008) pathways.
“Ok. I think that having a voice, my voice, in this is being able to work with that student in the manner in which I think is most productive. My voice is also working with that student to determine which sanction would be best for them. Sometimes I let students talk with me about the sanction.”

As evidenced by the participant responses, it is critical that participants feel as though their voice is heard as the primary student conduct administrators at their institutions. The importance of being heard echoes the sentiments found in the Rosser and Javinar (2003) study which defined the quality of life for student affairs professionals as partially based on “recognition for competence and expertise” (p. 823). Overall, being heard showcased the value for the role and work of the student conduct administrator who is doing the work on the ground, so to speak, day in and day out. The importance of being heard played a role in the perceived consequences of one’s voice not being valued if they felt as though their voice was not heard and not valued as discussed in the following section.

The Consequences of Voice Not Being Valued

Participants were asked the following question to understand the impact on retention in their current role if their voice was not valued: “If you feel as though your voice is not valued, what impact does this have on your staying in your current role as a student conduct administrator?” This interview question relates back to the primary research question of the study: “What impact does the ability to use voice as a student conduct administrator influence the professional remaining in the position?”

After understanding the importance of being heard in how student conduct is addressed at the institution the researcher wanted to understand the impact of the administrator’s voice not being valued on retention. The majority of participants, n=10, answered the question as a
hypothetical, while two participants, Miranda and Jack, described previous positions in which they had left due to their voice not being valued. Miranda stated the following:

“It makes a huge difference. Part of the reason I left my previous role was because we’d had a large leadership change, upper leadership change, administration, and sort of the effects coming down the chain of command was that was my voice was being less heard and changes were being implemented that I didn’t agree with even though I might have had information to show why we shouldn’t do it that way. It was not valued and so that made it very hard to stay. So yes, that definitely plays into me, into my thought process.”

In this situation, Miranda utilized the exit option instead of trying to use voice (Hirschman, 1970) to showcase her dissatisfaction with the changes that were occurring at the institution with regards to student conduct. When voice failed, exit was the only option. Hank stated that if his voice was not valued, he would first try to ascertain if the issue was institution-specific. He went on to say that he would try to determine if voice not being valued was an occurrence of working as a student conduct administrator at the community college institution, and if it was, he would not be able to remain in the role for long.

“I definitely believe that if I felt that my voice was not valued that I will probably first seek to find out if that’s institution specific and if so I probably wouldn’t remain in that position for very long because I think it would be very exhausting to continue to do work in a space where I didn’t feel like I was adding in any value….before leaving the field completely I would see if it’s institution specific but I couldn’t be in a position where my voice did not hold any value.”
Hank alluded to the fact that leaving the field completely was possible if he was unable to find an institution that fit with his values and one that valued his voice. Hank mentioned the option of exit only after exhausting the avenue for voice (Hirschman, 1970).

Jack stated that if his voice was not being valued, that may speak more about the culture that was created at his institution. Additionally, Jack stated that if he felt like he was losing his voice, it would directly impact his morale.

“I think it would be part of a multitude of factors that I would have to weigh. One of the reasons I am so happy here is because I have so much flexibility and a lot of day to day control. If my voice wasn’t being heard I think that would say something about the college, and division, and my supervisor’s culture that they created…. if I feel like I’m losing my voice that would certainly impact my morale….”

Ultimately, Jack mentioned the possibility of leaving the institution, as he had done in a previous position, if his voice was not valued and he felt unhappy. Ralphie echoed the same sentiment as Hank; leaving the field completely was possible if his voice was not valued within his work as a student conduct administrator. Ralphie connected the need for one’s voice to be valued with a reason for burnout within the field itself.

“I’m glad that my voice is valued. I think that if it was not I probably would not be able to; I would not want to stay in that field as long. I do know that there are colleagues that have had struggles and challenges and that is part of the burn out in the field of student conduct administration; when their ideals are not matching the institutions or they have to hold a standard that they are not comfortable with and maybe not agree with. I think that’s a very hard thing for someone to do for a very long period of time.”
When asked about the impact her voice not being valued at her institution would have on her remaining in her role Mandy stated that she would also most likely leave the institution.

“"It has a huge impact. I probably would not stay at my institution if I did not have that. Unfortunately for us, we’ve had a lot of leadership change and so sometimes it has been a real struggle continuing to educate all the new leadership that comes in on a rotating basis. I’ve been at my institution a little over nine years and I am the longest standing of the [titles of upper level administration].”

Mandy mentioned the use of voice as a means to educate new leadership at the institution about student conduct process and policy. In her ability to use voice to educate, Mandy was able to provide context to new leadership about student conduct process and policy in order to create congruence between her office and the leadership at the institution. This congruence may be important with regard to retention in her role at the institution. Maxine echoed the same sentiment when asked about the impact of her voice not being valued. Maxine likened the impact of being heard to being supported in her role as a student conduct administrator.

“I would say huge. I think if it’s not heard or supported I’m pretty much looking to get out because it’s a hard job and you have to know that your voice is being heard and that you’re supported.”

Bernard mentioned the need for voice to be valued because it directly impacts the quality of work people do at the institution. Moreover, Bernard also stated that if voice was not valued then people may seek out opportunities where their voice is valued.

“I think the real answer to that is that when people don’t feel valued they lose interest, they don’t do as good of a job…. Their interest may lay in other places. They may start looking and thinking about other opportunities…. In terms of your question I think it’s a
general question that if you don’t feel valued and you don’t feel like people listen to you, you lose interest and you start looking for other opportunities. I think that’s the bottom line at least in my experience.”

Joan mentioned that if her voice was not valued, her basic human needs would not be met. To Joan, the impact of voice not being valued had a great impact on the individual’s psychological needs. Ultimately, like most participants, Joan stated that if those basic needs were not met, individuals would look elsewhere for institutions that would support them and value their voice.

“I imagine just by human nature; a basic psychological need is for autonomy and so if I’m not valued at a particular institution for any of the work I do then I would definitely seek one where I would be. I think that’s pretty basic because there’s no need to have the level of experience, depends on the individual, if they have a high level of experience and education to back them up as well then you have yourself a lot of mobility to look for institutions that would support you.”

Layla had a hard time answering the question because of her own connection to the field, which began through her experiences as an undergraduate student. Her personal undergraduate experience caused Layla to think beyond the need for her own voice to be valued. The impact that her undergraduate experience had on her partially led her to pursue her position as a student conduct administrator. However, Layla did say that if her voice was not valued she would be more likely to move to a different position at the institution. That transition would work only if she continued to feel a connection with the students.

“I think I would still stay. It’s very hard for me to understand an institution that would not value my voice so I think I might be a little, this is hard for me to answer fully. However,
if my voice wasn’t valued, at my institution, I would be more likely to move to a different position, in which I felt like my voice was valued, if I felt I still had the student connections.”

Victor mentioned the immediacy with which this same type of conversation had come up for him at work in the week preceding the interview. He stated that his inability to impact policy and process at the institution had a large impact on his not feeling as though his voice was valued. This lack of feeling valued had a direct impact on his desire to remain in the role long term.

“I had this conversation with my supervisor last week…”’be honest, is this something that you want to do for a while?’ I told her I wasn’t sure. I noted that part of it was that feeling like I didn’t have as much impact on the process and policy as I wanted to. Part of it had to do with something that’s in my role that’s actually not, it’s not really related to conduct but because I do case management for behavioral intervention and threat assessment and I supervise our counseling center I do a lot of that crisis response piece like that immediate student having a melt down and they’re out bursting and I have to go on location wherever that student is and deescalate and manage the situation.”

Sean mentioned that if his voice is not valued, he begins to wonder what may have gone wrong in the way he handled the case. He provided an example of a time where his voice was not valued while managing a high-profile incident, and how he felt due to that experience. For the sake of privacy, I have omitted pieces of Sean’s response in relation to the example about a specific student at his institution.

“It really hit me hard where I’m just like what? Why? How is that possible? Why does that happen? With mass shootings that have occurred on campus, with mass riots that are
happening, why would a board of trustees not take that into consideration when trying to expel a student? … Ok so in the sense of like, that really hit hard for me because I was just like I did everything according to the board policies. I built the case accordingly…. I think that really hit hard when that happened. For a moment, I kind of just lagged around and said does it even matter anymore.”

Noel was the only participant who did not feel that lack of voice would cause him to feel less engaged or content at work. He stated that there are many days where his voice is not valued or heard in the context of decision making, but that is the beauty of having a community of voices.

“I mean there have been days where my voice may not have, or the decision may have not gone by way but I respect that. I think that’s what makes us successful here because there are a variety of perspectives…. but if my voice isn’t heard it is what it is. You know in the end the vice president and I don’t always see eye to eye but in the end, he’s the vice president and I respect that.”

Study participants reflected on leaving their current positions if their voice was not valued. The overall consensus showcased a need for voice to be valued from the ones who are doing the work on a day to day basis. Moreover, study participants reflected on how they understand the student, faculty, and staff voice within the conduct process, which again adds to the need for their voice to be valued. This sense of the communal voice presented itself within the need to be heard and the need for voice to be valued. I then asked study participants to reflect on the impact of their voice being valued in their work.
The Result of Voice Being Valued

When asked about the impact of voice being valued, most participants stated that they would feel excited to come to work, feel empowered in their work, morale would go up, they would feel they added value to the institution, and many went as far as to say they would have no reason to leave their position. Study participants also reflected on their ability to be creative as student conduct administrators if they felt as though their voice was valued. Another term they utilized was empowerment. Study participants reflected on feeling empowered in their work if their voice was valued. Overall, unless participants had a direct experience with voice not being valued, the responses to this question were based on how individuals feel when coming to work. The responses were also based on how individuals feel coming to work at their current institution. The question asked to understand the impact of voice being valued was: “If you feel as though your voice is valued, what impact does this have in your staying in your current role as a student conduct administrator?”

This question relates back to the primary research question: “What impact does the ability to use voice as a student conduct administrator influence the professional’s remaining in the position?” After understanding the impact of voice not being valued, I wanted to understand the result of voice being valued on the student conduct administrator’s retention in that role.

Joan mentioned the impact of feeling valued on the emotional, mental, and physical state for each person.

“It has a significant role because it makes it pleasant to perform duties that you know you need to perform in order to have sustenance in your livelihood. There are the differences between individuals and those that are unfortunate to work in jobs that they completely have disdain for and they are stressed, physiologically, biologically, their bodies just get
tense before they even get to work. …. It’s difficult to go to a place where there’s a lack of appreciation for your value as a human. That’s unpleasant and it again affects the psyche…. Again, that mental health is so critical across the board regardless of what you do it is very much needed. So yes, it makes me feel good and has a very positive impact.”

Maxine stated that if her voice were valued she’d have no reason to leave her institution. “I think it keeps me here. It absolutely gives value to what I do, keeps me motivated, empowers me to make it better, empowers me to assess it, evaluate it, analyze it, make sure we are doing best practices and meeting the needs of the campus; so, I feel valued.”

This idea of empowerment implies a connection with the ability to utilize a ProSocial Voice (Dyne et al., 2003) since the ability to use this type of voice allows the employee to express work-related ideas or opinions “based on cooperative motives” (p.1371) in order to benefit others, such as the organization.

Similarly, Bernard stated that if voice is valued, people are more likely to stay at the institution and be active contributors in their work. Moreover, instead of leaving, individuals will feel like people value the work they do and feel good about the work they do daily.

“I think it’s the opposite. When people feel valued you’ll see that they are more likely to stay around and be contributors because they feel like they are being valued. So instead of leaving you’re probably going to feel good about the fact that people care about the role you play and they value what you do.”

Jack stated that if his voice is valued he would have no reason even to engage in the job search process.

“It would give me no reason to even look. It would boost my morale, give me more reason to search out more to do, search out more opportunities to expand my role. If they
value me and they demonstrate that value both with words and deeds, giving me more to
do, then I’m not going. I’m not leaving.”

Ralphie noted that when his voice is valued he could make efficient change within the
conduct system at the institution, and would not be inclined to leave his role.

“It definitely helps to feel like I’m engaged and connected. I feel like “I’m effective at
being able to make efficient changes, make effective changes that can better our conduct
system. I think try to improve the overall experience for our conduct board hearing
officers and our students is something I get joy with, knowing that I can shape that.”

Hank mirrored Bernard and Ralphie; when his voice is valued he is not looking to leave
the institution and he also feels he can be creative in his work.

“When it’s valued I’m staying and I’m actually happy about my work and I think that
even more than just doing the work I’m able to be more creative and feel more supported
in trying new things and really figuring out how we remain effective in the work that we
are doing.”

Noel echoed a similar perspective. He stated that if his voice is valued it allows him to
continue doing good work. However, he again clarified that being heard and being the sole
authority on how something should be addressed are two very different things. The idea of a
communal voice or approach emerged again in his response. This communal voice and
perspective is one that is echoed within the use of restorative practices. With the use of
restorative practices all parties’ voices are heard, valued, and necessary to come to a unified
decision about the appropriate sanctions (i.e., punishments based on the violation). If all parties
are not held accountable and all voices are not heard, then the process is deemed unsuccessful.
“It continues for me, to allow me to do what I’m doing. I have no background in student conduct in terms of education. However, I’ve really grown to really enjoy student conduct and I think, you know, as I see my voice being heard it allows me to continue doing the good work you want to do. But I’m also aware that my perspective isn’t the only perspective like I mentioned before and sometimes there are complicated cases and I need to take in input from other folks and be told that this is going to be the decision just because and I’m ok with that.”

Miranda stated that when her voice is valued, “it makes me excited to come to work.” She further stated that it “makes me feel part of a team and that my work is valued.” Miranda also mentioned that “being valued is very important and it does keep me where I’m at. It also keeps me energized.”

Some participants provided shorter responses but mentioned the impact that voice being valued has on their remaining in the role. Mandy stated just four words in response to the question: “It’s a huge one.” Sean described the impact of voice being valued on his remaining at the institution in this way. “When it is valued I love it.”

Although Victor stated the impact of voice being valued on his role as important he also went on to discuss the difference in his voice being valued at a local and system level and how that impacts his work.

“I always have to remind myself of this that I actually do feel empowered and feel like I have a voice on the local level. At my campus while I can’t change system level policy or college wide stuff as often as I think it might need to be changed or as quickly I think that I feel very valued; that my voice matters in my department on my leadership team on my behavioral intervention team with my immediate supervisor and with our campus vice
president. Those core groups of people that really matters in terms of feeling recognized and valued for the work that I’m doing definitely feel like I have a voice with those people. Beyond that the further out it gets the less and less I feel like I have a voice in the process which is actually probably parallel to how everybody else experiences their work too.”

Layla recognized the impact of her voice being valued but stated she wouldn’t leave the field if it was not valued systemically Her mindset was based on her own experience as a student who had gone through the student conduct process in college.

“I think I would continue to stay in the field just cause like I said I don’t think it’s a hard profession for me because of my mindset that I bring to the job every day. I value working with students and being a product of the student conduct process I want them to also learn from this and hopefully have that kind of ah-ha moment.”

Overall, study participants reflected on feeling empowered and productive in their work if their voice is valued. Many mentioned that coming to work is enjoyable when you feel as though you are valued in your work and your voice matters. Others, like Joan, reflected on the physical, emotional and mental state that one experiences when voice is valued. Hank mentioned his ability to be creative when his voice is valued. The positive affirmations from study participants when voice is valued were consistent. The use of voice in policy creation and revision were not as consistent with all study participants.

**The Inconsistency of Voice in Policy Creation and Revision**

When asked the question about having a voice in creating policy at the institution, 50% of participants stated they had a voice while 50% stated they did not. All participants agreed that having a voice to change and revise policy as dictated by incidents on campus and changing
legislation was critical, but only some had power to make policy change. For those that did not, most of that was attributed to bureaucratic red tape. Red tape in this context refers to the necessary protocols and steps that must be taken to have policy approved and changed. In most cases, student conduct administrators can advise of necessary policy change but the change must be approved by the institution’s board of trustees or board of governors depending on the system in place. Additionally, prior to reaching the highest level at the institution, other stakeholders at the institution (i.e., faculty, staff, and students) must also agree to the recommended changes.

Moreover, some individuals had to operate under statewide policies due to the states in which their institutions were located. Others had to work with general counsel or the board of trustees offices to implement policy changes and/or revisions. All agreed that there was a need to have a voice in policy revisions but that the ability to have a voice in policy creation beforehand was ideal. Additionally, all stated that having a voice with regard to policy empowered them in their work at the institution. All in all, the responses to this question were split with regard to who had a voice and who did not have a voice in creating or revising policy. The question asked of all participants was: “Do you feel you have a voice in making the policy?”

This question relates back to a subset research question: “What, if any, impact does the ability to facilitate change in the institution’s student conduct process influence the professional’s remaining in the position?” The student conduct administrator enforces the student conduct policy but what impact, if any, does the inability to facilitate change within the process, which is directly impacted by the written policy, impact the administrator remaining in the position? Although study participants did not mention leaving their current positions due to lack of control in creating policy, some did mention more frustration in the inability to facilitate change in written policy than others who had full control.
When asked if she had a voice in creating policy, Mandy stated that she had full control. “I write all the policies. So yes. I have complete control over the policy. Some people put some edits in, I do send it, we have to send it through our student development leadership team. That’s all of the directors/managers/deans in student development then it goes to the senior leadership team, which is all the vice president’s and the president. Then depending on if it is something that impacts the entire team it would go to what is called our administrative council which is all the deans, directors, managers, at the institution for review. And I receive feedback if there is anything that people think should be changed and I usually get minimal feedback.”

On the other hand, Victor did not feel as though he had a voice in creating policy. The need to balance the delicacy between his institution and the state system level created issues for Victor to create policy change at his own institution. His inability to voice his concerns or recommendations for the policy at his institution directly connected to his not feeling empowered in his role as a student conduct administrator. Moreover, this area of red tape caused Victor to feel less enthusiastic about even recommending and creating policy change for the betterment of the institution.

“Not yet. I think that’s the short version. All policies for our college are set at the system level so we develop our SOP and things around how we implement those policies but we’re not legally empowered as a college to make policy at the college level. It’s kind of an odd duck situation. It’s not typical I think of a lot of other state community college sort of administration but because all of the major policy decision are made at the system level I don’t always feel like I can have a voice in them…. Certainly, I’m not empowered in my role to impose policy. I have to go through layers and layers of people to get to that
level of proposing a policy that would impact the system office. That creates a barrier to me wanting to create policy because it’s very time consuming to do so.”

Noel stated that he has a voice in creating policy or at least contributing to creating policy. However, at Noel’s institution there is also a system-wide policy that must be followed.

“I think it’s a couple ways. One we’re creating policies or we’re contributing to create policies and just because of the role of [title of position] I have influence in that.”

Jack felt as though he did have a voice in policy creation in some ways but not in others. He mentioned how some of the policies he was working with were those that were adopted by him from others when he started the role. Jack mentioned the struggles of enforcing policies without having a historical background as to the creation or need.

Researcher: “Ok. How do you define having a voice in the student conduct process?”

Jack: “When I thought about revising the code after my first year here, very receptive to it [reflecting on his supervisor], I knew all about the model code that existed, that I was able to help adopt. I think he’s been receptive to that. I think other staff members here they recognize the difficulty of conduct work and they respect my decision.”

Researcher: “Do you feel you have a voice in making the policy at the institution, which I think you kind of answered as well?”

Jack: “I did answer kind of yes to that but I think in a lot of ways my answer is often going to be no. Some of the Title IX stuff, which is not my area, was written without me, just given to me to be reviewed. They were in the process of creating the tobacco policy my first year so that process had started long before I started, but then it fell on me to enforce it.”
Layla mentioned the use of a community approach to creating policy change. During the time of the interview Layla was in the beginning stages of getting the necessary people in the room to begin that process.

“\n\nI do have a voice. My supervisor, the vice president and I have talked about getting a committee together which I would oversee that in order to potentially overhall, excuse me, our student code of conduct. She is willing and she knows that since I deal with it every single day I should be the one to kind of oversee the overhaul but then also understanding that this needs to be a faculty, staff and even student’s decision on the overall process because ultimately, we all have to live with the student code of conduct and so having, allowing them to have a say is probably the best way to do this. Ultimately, I would be there to bring in some student development theories and then also bring in best practices from the student conduct field as well.”

Ralphie reflected on the fact that he had the strongest voice at the institution with regard to policy change.

Researcher: “How do you define having a voice in the student conduct process? So, you personally.”

Ralphie: “…. I will revise our student conduct code every three years and so I have a voice in being able to navigate that procedure of collecting feedback from our faculty and staff, looking at the language that we use in our code. We just recently changed language to be more inclusive to move away from some of the comparisons to the court system, we are now using the terms like reporting party, responding party vs. accused or guilty and some of those things. We are trying to look at some of the language we are using, very intentional and I have a voice in being able to help with that.”
Researcher: “Well you answered my next question, because that was saying if you feel like you have a voice in making policy, so I think you’re going to go ahead and say yes.”

Ralphie: “Yup, I sure will. I think that I probably have the strongest voice at our institution on the student code of conduct at this point.”

Hank stated that he had a voice in policy creation but reflected on how long some changes took to take effect.

“I do. The only challenge to that would be I think that we try to formalize a lot which I think is very important but the processes for like seeing some procedurals change happen is a little longer, it’s slower than I would like for it to be. Whereas I get to chair the committee that oversees some of these changes and I get to really work with our partners to establish what we’ll introduce and things like that before we get to see it in action it has to go through many approvals and hoops that can sometimes take longer than anybody would like.”

Miranda, like Victor and Noel, reflected on the challenges of being part of a larger state system when it came to systemic policy related to impact and voice. She reflected on the fact that she had a greater ability to impact policy when at her previous institution, which was a four-year institution.

“…. we are part of a state system. I get why I don’t have as much of a voice. I have more of a voice in how we practice our policy then the policy itself.”

Bernard also worked within a larger state system which affected his ability to change policy specifically at this institution. When asked about having a voice in policy change, he said not really.
“I don’t think because I say it should be changed it’s going to be. That would be an argument I think many conduct officers have to bring to a central body. We have a committee, we meet monthly, I guess what you call the student conduct officers of [institutional system name] and that group would bring it to the person that leads the group and I’m sure it would be a matter handled at a higher level. We’d talk to [institution name] legal, probably have to go through the board of trustees. So, I don’t have, I can’t change policy by myself, or solely change the rules that govern our code of conduct. I don’t have that power unfortunately.”

Joan, like Mandy, stated she had a large voice in policy change. Her response was short and to the point. “Yes, I do, so my answer is yes.” Sean interpreted the question a bit differently, and answered stating that he had the ability to impact how the policy was interpreted and used up until a certain point.

“How I look at it, I have a voice in, more than what I feel I also have the power and the authority to do what I can to help a student up to the point of suspension. Once I get to the point where I feel like we need to go for suspension I feel after that part I don’t have power or voice on it. It’s just how well did I build a case for the student to the student’s code of conduct hearing board, how well does that present to the president, and how well does that present to the board of trustees.”
Overall, study participants were split on the use of voice in policy creation and revision. Some participants, such as Mandy, reflected on having full autonomy in policy creation while others, like Sean, reflected on the inability to be as vocal as deemed necessary due to the larger state system at play. Study participants reflected on the ways in which they were trying to impact policy revision and creation at their respective institutions. However, when trying to change policy as an institution within a larger state system, study participants reflected on the impact that kind of change had on all the institutions within the system. Similar inconsistencies arose when discussing alternative practices for sanctioning outside “status sanctions,” which will be defined in the next section.

**The Use of Voice in Sanctioning and Procedure**

Although most participants felt like they had a voice in how to sanction students, based on the violation, many still utilized what Victor termed “status sanctions.” Status sanctions are those that are seen as the sanctions assigned to students within the formalized adjudication process (i.e., a written or verbal warning, probation, suspension, and/or expulsion or dismissal from the institution). These are sanctions outlined within the Model Code (Stoner & Lower, 2008). The following two questions were asked following one another to understand the current sanctioning practices at participant’s institutions: “In what ways, if any, do you agree with current practices regarding sanctioning for violations of the student code of conduct at your institution?” and “In what ways, if any, do you disagree with current practices regarding sanctioning for violations of the student code of conduct at your institution?” Overall responses spoke to the participant’s ability to sanction—i.e., punishments or assigned consequences, for lack of a better word—for violations. Status sanctioning included levels ranging from a verbal or written warning, at the very bottom, to probation (i.e., monitoring of student’s activities while
remaining on campus), suspension (i.e., a separation from the institution for a predetermined period of time) and expulsion (i.e., a permanent separation from the institution). Participants also spoke about educational sanctions and defined these as community service or written papers.

These two back-to-back questions in the interview relate back to the second subset question of the study: “What, if any, impact does a student conduct administrator’s ability to advocate for the use of their choosing to address conduct violations influence his or her remaining in the position?” I wanted to understand the impact of the student conduct administrator’s ability to utilize the approach and sanction of their choice on retention. Although study participants did not outright say they would leave if they were unable to advocate for the approach of their choice, some participants did reflect on utilizing more social justice based approaches over utilizing sanctions that were not termed “status sanctions.”

Sanctions are utilized as a consequence to the violation of the student code of conduct if the student is found responsible for the alleged violation. All institutions have a student code of conduct and outlined sanctions which student conduct administrators are able to utilize. Victor further explained his opinion of “status sanctioning” within his responses to the questions.

“I don’t always think that status sanctioning, without some sort of other educational piece, works particularly well. Sometimes the educational piece can be that conduct appointment but sometimes it needs to be something a little bit more in-depth and we just don’t have that structured yet at our institution to be able to do that. … We are working on trying to set some standards on how we sanction for status sanctions but also create kind of a database for educational sanctions for different code violations so we have something else to support the student in creating that interaction to be more development…. I also think that while we do a pretty good job of equity across the board
each campus functions independently so a student might have a very different interaction with me than they do with the conduct administrator at another campus and given the same violation may be sanctioned differently.”

Victor elaborated on his state system and why those at the state system level may be hesitant to allow for alternative sanctioning processes or procedures.

Researcher: When you mention the system, I know you mentioned the [state name] system of having a different code to follow that’s implemented by that office but if you were thinking of restorative practices what else do you believe is a resistance to setting it up at your institution or do you believe that there are other resistances to setting it up at your institution?

“Victor: … I want to see about embedding more restorative approaches to student conduct work, then just these administration hearings with a one on one and I get to decide what happens to your experience. …The dilemma that I run into in my college and all of us do in the state for the most part is that all of us belong to the [state] community college system and we have a uniform student code of conduct and grievance procedures. … To make substantive change to conduct process I have to go through the system office and it takes forever.

…. I think there’s always a question about legal liability and due process which is fine and I actually welcome that conversation because I certainly don’t want to do anything that would violate a student’s 14th amendments rights…You know the “we’ve always done it this way, why should we change it if it’s working most of the time?” And the other cultural piece is if we change something at the system level that impacts [number] member colleges so they are very slow to change because any change needs to be
implemented down through all the member institutions and that can take time and it can be clunky and whose responsible for it. Since we don’t have any one person in the system office dedicated to the student conduct kind of idea, we have our legal team and they write policy and do policy advocacy to the [state] department of higher ed.”

Victor went on to elaborate what he meant by restorative practices.

Researcher: “When you mentioned restorative practices, what does that mean for you? What are some of the practices that you’re hoping to put onto campus?”

Victor: “I used to do a lot of work with restorative practice circles so you’d have a couple of trained facilitators and handful of community members who sit down with the complainant and respondent and talk through perspectives and vantage points and try to get to the core of what the issue is and then create a mutually agreed upon outcome. ….

For me it kind of plants the seed for things beyond and it helps the students understand conflict resolution and effective communication, all these other, concrete learning outcomes that an administrative hearing doesn’t always get to. I’m also a really big proponent of mediation, particularly for classroom conflict issue like that aggressive outburst case I just mentioned.”

Other participants, such as Noel, mentioned similar concerns about following a system-wide policy and how that impacts the work they are able to do at their respective institution.

“I mean I think it provides us a framework. What I wish is that our code of conduct you know our [name] rules was updated…. You know they give you the general disorderly conduct but you know we want to try to be a little more specific and sometimes we may be reaching for things. You know I may say disruption of the classroom because you looked at it or you were cyberbullying one of your classmates or something like that. It
really is sometimes a grey area, I keep on saying that, just because I think [institutional system] needs to do a better job in updating the code of conduct but once again it’s that system approach and what I’ve found is when I go to the conduct meetings, because we have conduct meetings throughout [institutional system] for all the conduct officers the approach sometimes isn’t the same at all institutions and that’s concerning. I think communication amongst institutions is also important so we talk about whether or not we agree with things, but if a stop is at one institution we’d had situations where they’ve [students] been allowed to register at our institution. It’s not a universal stop so we are kind of working through some of those things with software and things like that, but it’s just in terms of the policy itself I think it definitely needs an updating.”

Sean, just like Noel, mentioned the same issue within his state.

“With community colleges in [state] we are all legislated so there is a practice there is a protocol although it gives me the freedom to do the restorative justice measures there is a protocol there is a standard and this is how you do it so that can be restrictive in some ways. One of the biggest things I disagree with in the current practices, because it is legislated we have to, it goes by the code of conduct through the board policies because we are a district of three institutions. If a board policy doesn’t meet the needs of what I’m doing then we’re in violation of it…. Just in a sense you always have to defend why you’re doing your certain practices but it was just interesting for me coming from four year to two year that you had to defend against the board of trustees to be able to do what we know what to do.”
When asked what current institutional practices regarding sanctioning she disagreed with, Mandy and brought up the use of a social justice lens. Karp (2013) mentions the need “as a facilitator” to “pay attention to social inequalities and try to offset power imbalances.” (p. 53).

“One thing that I guess that we don’t’ go along or I have not been able to get to work and maybe now that we are at a different place we can try that again. Is looking issues through a social justice lens because I had tried that when I first got to my institution, the place was out of control it was just awful. I’ve never experienced, even doing it at two previous community colleges, I never experienced the level of violence and the level of misbehavior then I did when I entered this institution. That’s when I started going to some of the social justice trainings, restorative justice, and we tried a lot of that and it failed miserably. I think so in a way our system does not go with a lot of the trends now because our institution was just not at a place where that would work.”

Most institutions operated under the warning, probation, suspension and expulsion sanctions. Along with these sanctions, all also added in what they called an educational sanction like a reflection paper or community service. Five of the study participants mentioned the desire to implement other alternative practices such as mediation or restorative practices, but have run into barriers not unlike those expressed by Mandy.

Within Miranda’s conduct process, every student has one of the aforementioned sanctions, i.e., written or verbal warning, probation, suspension, and dismissal or expulsion from the institution, as well an educational sanction assigned to them. Educational sanctions can include a workshop taught via the conduct office, an online course provided by the conduct office, a reflection paper, or community service among other options, because Mandy knows it to be better practice.
“You could get a warning or reprimand and just have that be it, but usually you’d get those things plus something else, under the title of educational sanction. It’s not mandated that I have to do that but we just know that’s better practice to do that.”

When asked about what she agreed and disagreed with at her institution regarding current practices for sanctioning, Miranda elaborated:

Researcher: “And the next two questions are kind of, you can answer them together if you’d like cause they kind of go, they’re opposite of each other in a sense. So, the first one is in what ways, if any, do you agree with current practices regarding for violations of the student code of conduct at your institution and the flip of that, in what ways if any do you disagree with current practices regarding sanctioning for violations?”

Miranda: “…as I say that the other challenging part for me, I think, is that there’s less alternative opportunities for sanctions as far as like I basically just assign a lot of papers. I know that’s not best practice to the ‘t.’ I wish there were other opportunities but it’s not as connected, we are not as connected to community service options on campus and in the community and also I think the fact that our students, like I mentioned before, have so much life going on that asking them to go and do 10 hours of community service and write about it would be a much different hardship then what I’m used to or what my previous experience has been.”

Study participants mentioned the use of what Victor termed “status sanctions.” When speaking to educational sanctions, most discussed the use of reflection papers or community service but time was a concern when assigning those type of sanctions. Victor spoke about his desire to utilize more restorative practices while Mandy outlined why restorative practices did not initially work on her campus.
Mandy, Victor, and Hank spoke about wanting to use more restorative practices on their campus and these three study participants had attended restorative justice, social justice, conflict coaching or mediation training over the course of their career. The only participant who also spoke about the use of restorative practices without any formal training was Sean. Although other participants mentioned the need to use a social justice lens, Victor, Mandy, and Hank spoke in greater detail about the use of these alternative methods. Overall, study participants primarily discussed the use of sanctions as outlined within the Model Code (Stoner & Lower, 2008).

**Congruence with Mission, Vision, Values**

The responses to the question, “How do your ideas for addressing student conduct align with the institution and department mission, vision, and values,” revealed the need for the administrator’s own mission, vision, and values for addressing student conduct to be aligned with the institution and their own department. All participants stated that this congruence was necessary. Overall, participants responded by saying that their ideas for addressing student conduct were educational in nature. Some participants went so far as to say that they could not see themselves continuing to work at an institution where their ideas for addressing conduct did not align with the departmental and institutional mission, vision, and values. Participants also stated that they want students to learn from their mistakes and as a result not repeat the same mistakes moving forward.

Maxine stated that her ideas for addressing conduct aligned well with her institutional and departmental mission, vision, and values.

“I think it aligns along with it as being educational and lifelong learning. It aligns completely. It’s all educational and being good citizens, civil responsibility, personal responsibility so my sanctions always follow those. I want them to learn from it and

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change their behavior knowing it might not happen in the first time but I’m very supportive, get them the resources they need to be successful in school, knowing they come from tough backgrounds and it’s all new to them so how do they figure this out. But also, my philosophy is sometimes they need someone to light a fire under them to say this isn’t life. You don’t get to act this way and keep going and it’s a privilege to live in our halls and we have behavior expectations on campus. That to me is education. That is lifelong learning. They’ll learn that lesson one way or the other, either easy or hard.”

Sean described how his office has four core values and noted the alignment between his office, the Office of Student Life, and the institution, but did not mention how his own mission for addressing student conduct was aligned with both.

“Each one of our core values links up to one or more of the institution’s core values and that’s kind of how we align the office.”

Joan reflected on the parallel between her ideas for addressing conduct and the institutional and departmental mission, vision, and values.

“I think we have a parallel…. it would be that my vision and the district vision we parallel in how we approach discipline and enact it.”

Bernard stated that he was unsure.

“That’s a good question. I don’t know. You know I’d like to believe that everything we do aligns with our mission and vision, when it comes to helping students…. I think that when you look at our mission and vision for [institution name] it’s providing access and opportunity to students. Sometimes they make mistakes so I’d like to believe that what I’m doing is in concert, not working against the mission to try to be understanding to people who may have done the wrong thing or made a mistake. When we’re looking at
ways to empower them so that they don’t make the same mistakes and that they are successful. I think for me that answers what kind of connects those themes.”

Miranda equated her ideas for addressing conduct to her voice being heard and stated she could not remain working at an institution where her ideas of how to address student conduct did not align with the institutional and departmental mission, vision, and values.

“They align well. I think that my voice is heard. I am the only conduct officer and my new [supervisor title] doesn’t have any conduct experience and so that sort of gives me an automatic boost of being the expert which is great and interesting all at the same time, but I would have a really tough time working at a place where my values didn’t align or where my thoughts about things didn’t align with what we were doing.”

Hank mentioned that due to the young history of his office he has had a big part in shaping the values of his office on campus.

“Greatly. They align very well but again thinking about the culture of our institution the office of student conduct as a standalone unit is probably about eight years old and I’ve been with the college for five years and so I’ve had an opportunity to participate in shaping what those value statements are.”

Ralphie mentioned speaking with higher administration about their view of student conduct when he first began his role at his current institution. Ralphie also reflected that the lack of congruence with institutional and departmental mission, vision, and values could lead to burn out over time.

“…. when I first came on board I was able to sit down with the different chairs of our student conduct board and I sat down with the vice president of our institution to understand what their philosophy was on conduct. It matched very similarly, as far as it
being restorative and educational was more of the purpose rather than just being punitively focused. I think it’s very well aligned.

…. I do know that there’s colleagues that have had struggles and challenges and that is part of the burn out in the field of student conduct administration when there ideals are not matching the institutions or they have to hold a standard that they are not comfortable with and maybe not agree with. I think that’s a very hard thing for someone to do for a very long period of time.”

Layla similarly stated that her ideas for addressing conduct aligned well with the institutional and departmental mission, vision, and values.

“Ok. We talk about serving our students, and with that I think my values of treating every individual on their own merits is definitely aligned with my institution’s mission vision and values and then also my division goals as well.”

Jack had to pull up his institutional mission and vision. He created the mission and vision for his department, so he’s certain it reflects his ideas for addressing student conduct.

“I help facilitate students’ development. I think they very often don’t get it, don’t understand what they are doing wrong or how their actions might have consequences both in college and in other arenas. I try to be student focused. I think the students appreciate when they meet with me I heard their side, I listened to them, heard what they had to say. I think that makes them feel more open to feedback…. I think since I came up with the mission statement it automatically reflected my values, since my office was new, it didn’t exist before I started, I get to develop the direction I want to go.”

Similarly to Ralphie, Noel mentioned sitting down with upper-level administration to discuss the vision for addressing student conduct at the institution.
“When I first came up here and inherited student conduct the vice president and I sat down and kind of talked through what his vision was and what my vision was and we kind of agreed to how we were going to approach things. That’s something that we’ve worked with our faculty, with our staff throughout our college for them to have a better understanding…. It’s kind of working and reiterating what our mission and vision is in terms of how we work with our students and also our faculty…. we do a lot of joint trainings w/public safety and our student wellness and counseling colleagues. We present together to kind of say we are all in the same page with what the mission, vision and philosophy is.”

Mandy also mentioned how her vision for addressing student conduct aligns with upper administration at her institution.

“It goes along with our college’s core values and I am very fortunate that I’m pretty much given full autonomy to developing the conduct system. I don’t have anybody checking up on me they just review, ok this is great…. I have goals and objectives that are developed every year that are in line with the college’s strategic plan, educational plan and so then the vision of my student development vice president they have their goals and their visions for their division. Every year I do everything keeping those all in mind and I actually have to utilize their goals and have to show how my goals relate to the strategic plan of the college.”

Victor mentioned how support from his direct supervisor was important in making sure that his vision for addressing student conduct aligned with the institutional and departmental mission, vision, and values.
“I report directly to our [supervisor title] and I have a lot of support from her around the types of changes that I want to make to the process. For instance, I want to see about embedding more restorative approaches to student conduct work, then just these administration hearings with a one on one and I get to decide what happens to your experience. I want to do something a little bit more restorative than that as I did at my last institution so I have a lot of support from that level from the person who oversees all of student affairs. The dilemma that I run into in my college and all of us do in the state of [name of state] for the most part is that all of us belong to the [name of state] community college system and we have a uniform student code of conduct and grievance procedures.”

All study participants reflected on the need for their vision and values to align with the institutional and departmental mission, vision, and values. Overall, study participants stated that their vision and values did align with their institutional and departmental mission, vision, and values of their current institution. Some participants, like Jack and Hank, reflected on their ability to create the mission, vision, and values of their departments, while others including Joan stated that their mission, vision, and values were parallel to the institution and department.

**Other Themes**

Other themes emerged from an analysis of the study participant’s responses to the interview questions. These themes do not necessarily inform answers to the overall research questions, but one expects other themes to emerge from well-crafted interviews in a qualitative research study. Additionally, as mentioned earlier, other commonalities between study participants were discovered via the interview questions but are not discussed in detail.
Challenges and Opportunities of Working at a Community College

Many participants stated that the makeup of the community college population was a major challenge since these institutions “get everybody.” Getting everybody in this context meant that all students were allowed and permitted to pursue their education at the community college institution. Indeed, due to the open access feature of community colleges, most participants felt that, unlike four-year institutions, they had to plan for every type of student that walked through their institutional doors. Additionally, the population, which includes faculty, staff, and students, was rather transient in nature. Many individuals came and left the institution within a semester, which forced administrators to continuously do the same training for all members of the community rather than building from the foundation from semester to semester.

Sean mentioned that the transient population forced him to do the same trainings again and again with students rather than build on a foundation each year as one might do at the four-year institution.

“The students change over every year. It feels like I have a new crop of students every year. And every year I’m teaching the same materials over as far as student leadership over and over again each year. With the four year institution they stick around for maybe two, three years sometimes four years before they move on. But here it feels like every year I’m lucky to keep students for two years. That I think has been my biggest challenge, retaining students because either they come for that one semester for classes or they, by the time I find out about them they’re already a semester or a year into their AA degree or transfer and by the time I get them trained to do stuff they are out of the door onto bigger and better things.”
Additionally, while students at four year colleges come to campus with their own “baggage,” students attending community colleges with open access bring even more baggage. This baggage could be issues with other students from their high school or issues from their surrounding neighborhoods. For this study, neighborhoods were defined as the surrounding cities in which the institutions are located. Participants went on to further explain that the issues students had with other individuals, whether they were current students at the institution or outside community members, often came back to campus. In these instances, incidents on campus could be due to gang involvement or a student could be acting out because he or she is homeless or struggling financially to the point where they are unable to afford food.

Added “baggage” also included the dynamics of the student’s home life. The average community college student was described as one who attended class around a full-time work schedule. Study participants reflected on students not having time to complete sanctions (punishments) because they would go from school to work to home. Participants felt as though this left little time for the integration of voice within the conversations they had with students going through the conduct process on both the part of the administrator and the student. For these reasons, study participants felt like they were tasked with handling all types of behavioral and personal issues unique to the community college experience.

Many felt that students treated the community college institution as the “13th grade” and did not take their time there seriously, which impacted how the student conduct administrator was able to do the job. Sean mentioned this issue as a barrier to addressing conduct at his institution.

“I think a lot of times at [institution name] it’s an extension of high school. We get a lot of high school drama and issues. There’s a lot of oh this happened in high school drama
and you’re like well, this is now college and they’re like this is not college it’s just
[institution name] it’s just an extension of high school so working around that framework
and having them really understand no this is your college experience it’s no longer your
high school experience.”

Likewise, to this issue of the 13th grade, many students came in developmentally or
educationally behind, adding another layer to the work of the student conduct administrator.
Mandy mentioned both the complications that come with being an open access institution and
taking on the baggage of the students that walk through the door.

“Some of the biggest challenges is that we get everybody. We don’t have a selective
admissions process so then you have dual credit students who could be 15, 16, 17, 18
years old that come through the process. We have individuals who are having GSD and
ESL. We have criminals that literally have just been paroled from prison and told that
they must attend school as part of their probation. I think some of the challenges that we
have is that they bring a lot of baggage from their particular neighborhoods a lot of past
school experiences…. A lot of people came from a lot of different places it was a
selective institution at the community college we have everything that kind of rolls over
from behavior that was experienced in high school that we now have, it rolls into the
college and it’s almost like a continuation of high school so if you had a beef with
somebody in high school there it is again in college and that continues; that behavior
continues or that animosity continues so there isn’t a break. It isn’t a fresh start …”

Miranda also mentioned the challenges of working at an institution with open access,
since everyone came from a different walk of life.
“… we are challenged by the fact that the population is so different…. I think everybody is coming from such a different place that, that can be challenging.”

Noel echoed Mandy in having to address student conduct violations that resulted due to “baggage” that students brought with them from high school or their neighborhoods.

“… I think it’s really our population you know the population we work with; it’s really kind of understanding where they are coming from. Sometimes there’s still a myth of what a community college is and the reality is that our students bring their experiences from their neighborhoods, from their environments that they are coming from to school. I also think it’s also kind of understanding the environments that they are coming from. For instance, their maybe a student acting out but you know there may be reasons for that. I’ve had situations where students are living on the train or they’re living in a shelter or they are in abusive relationships so there’s always that kind of back story there. I just try to understand that so it’s a real representation of their neighborhoods and their situations so I think that’s a challenge; something that people who may have not necessary worked at a community college or may have worked at a four year they may not see it all the time. Our population they are from [city name], from cross sections of [city name] so there are a lot of gangs; there are a lot of violent things that have gone on; a lot of drug use so that comes into play and how-to kind of navigate and mediate through that, that’s something to kind of pay attention to.”

A few of the participants also spoke about burnout in the field due to the nature of the work and the workload. Participants spoke of the impact that dealing with students’ “baggage” had on them personally. Burnout, as defined by Guthrie et al., (2005) is a “state of fatigue and frustration arising from unrealistic, excessive demands on personal resources leading to physical
and mental exhaustion” (Marshall et al. 2016, p. 152). Sean mentioned the fear of burnout when reflecting on what could cause him to leave the field of student conduct.

“…. but if I was to leave or transfer out of another position the major thing that I think that would impact that, and trust me this runs in my mind every day at the end of every semester, is burnout. It’s just however much you know you’re doing well and you’re helping the students out it’s a burnout position, especially in my role, and I’m sure this happens at a lot of community colleges with the conduct officer, who has tons of other responsibilities….it would be burnout.

…. Because when you’re the only officer and you’re working on conduct you can’t be like I’ll just look at that case tomorrow you have to look at that case today or otherwise tomorrow it will open up another huge bag….no matter how much I love it, it has developed me as a professional a lot, it’s burnout.”

Similarly, Victor mentioned how “there’s a piece of that work that is emotionally and physically taxing for me and that’s another reason that I may not stay in this role for more than a couple of years” Maxine went a step further to say that support is “bigger, because I think conduct, you can get burnt out on it.” Study participants reflected on the need for support when doing this work because they were often tasked with making the hard or tough decisions that others at the institution did not want to make. Additionally, the need for support came in the physical form of having a staff to assist in doing this work. Study participants reflected on the fact that some of them were the only student conduct administrators at their institution and handling the high volume of cases can lead to burnout.

**Resources in forms of staffing and funding.** It is for these reasons that another area of concern emerged related to voice and personal empowerment in terms of resources. Resources in
this case included lack of staff, lack of financial support, and lack of time. Many stated that the
hindrance to adding additional types of sanctions or impacting policy had to do with their
inability to prep for meetings and prep for alternative sanctioning methods. In order to utilize
alternative resolutions, administrators need not only time to prep for the meeting with the
student, but also time for the use of voice in having the meaningful conversation with the student
through the process. Moreover, certain alternative sanctions require the need for additional staff.

Mandy stated that at her institution, her office is usually the last in consideration for
funding and staffing.

“…. I’ve been at my position 10 years now and I am always at the end of the line when it
comes to priorities of funding and staffing.”

Miranda brought up the same concerns with resources at the community college
institution.

“I think it’s challenging that resources are not always as available both financially and in
general other types of resources to help our students in a way that we would really like to
or have the person power to be able to really help them. I think that’s what’s more
specific to community college...”

**Additional responsibilities.** Participants also stated that they all had other
responsibilities on top of being the conduct officer for the institution. These other responsibilities
took up a good amount of time as well and did not always get the necessary time due to the
reactive nature of addressing student conduct violations. On the other hand, many stated that they
welcomed the additional responsibilities as a break from only doing student conduct. Some
stated that if those additional responsibilities did not exist in their roles they would struggle
doing student conduct work 100% of the time.
Mandy mentioned this in comparison to those that work at four-year institutions. “We have all these other responsibilities on top of conduct and compared to some of my colleagues at the four-year institution where they can solely focus on conduct; at the community college level, we are given other responsibilities that have nothing to do with conduct and we are trying to do it all. And at least at my institution when I first got there we would have between 400-600 cases every academic year and with only one person I would say only one person combined full time to handle all those cases is overwhelming and was a detriment…. They are usually a one-person shop and they also have other duties as part of their responsibilities along with conduct.”

**Other Commonalities**

**Student Conduct Philosophy**

Almost all of the study participants, when asked “What is your student conduct philosophy?” stated that the process should be educational wherein it holds the student accountable for his or her actions but also educates the student about what he or she did wrong. After going through the student conduct process, the student should be able to understand the consequences of his or her actions and not repeat the violation. Recidivism is one of the goals within the work of student conduct. Administrators hope to educate students through the process, hold them accountable, and impact future decision making.

Reducing recidivism is one of the primary outcomes within restorative practices. Karp (2004) mentions that “participants tend to be more satisfied by their experiences with this process as compared with traditional court processes, and recidivism rates for offenders in restorative justice programs are lower than for those who received traditional sentences” (p.5). Although Karp speaks to recidivism within the criminal process as a result of utilizing a
restorative justice approach, a case can be made within the student conduct process since, as outlined within the literature review, formalized adjudication processes are legalistic and formal.

As mentioned by Zehr (2002) earlier in the literature review as well, “Restorative justice requires, at minimum, that we address victims’ harms and needs, hold offenders accountable to put right those harms, and involve victims, offenders, and communities in this process” (p.25).

This shared vision for sanctions or outcomes in the process and value for voice of each participant impacts the takeaway for each individual. In other words, if the offender has a voice, feels as though he or she is heard, and has a say in the final outcome, then he or she is less likely to repeat the violation. In this regard, the process is also developmental in that it educates students but also meets the student where he or she is in life. Finally, the concept of due process came up as well for some participants, i.e., remaining fair and neutral through the process.

Noel mentioned this need to be make sure the student felt he or she was heard during the process.

“… we work very closely with our public safety. We usually get incident reports of situations and the way I approach things, I also want to hear a student’s side of the story. There are not necessarily any absolutes unless a crime has been committed and they’ve been arrested and things like that but I really try to go into any situation as objective as I can.”

Mandy mentioned the need to meet the student where they are developmentally and to approach addressing student conduct through an educational lens.

“… because I’m at a community college I feel as an educator as all educators we have a responsibility to teaching the whole student. It may not just be on subject matter that they are taking a class for credit but it’s the outside learning experiences that also will
help our students grow and develop into productive citizens and employees. So, through that conduct process I look at it through an education lens. We need to provide students with tools in their toolbox to make better choices to be an ethical person to look at it from another person’s perspective and how we need to support choices that don’t violate other people’s rights. I really try to be an educator and I think that’s just another part of the educational and developmental process of a college student through the conduct process.”

Jack’s student conduct philosophy was a tiered approach, which he shared with the students.

“I tell students when they come in that we are going to do three things. 1. I want to make sure that you’re treated fairly 2. That you learned something from all this and 3. That if you did something wrong you’re held accountable and if I don’t do those things I did not do my job and I want you to tell me.”

Layla echoed the sentiment of being educational so that students learn to make better choices. Moreover, she stated that students need to know that one offense does not define them.

“I feel that just because a student violates our student code of conduct they are not a bad person they just may have made an error in judgement or a poor decision. I think that a lot of learning can come out of the student conduct process and I share that with students so that way they know that they are not a bad person. We want them to learn from this so that way they can be a better citizen more productive and also help them learn from this and do better, make better choices later down the road. Whether that’s the next day or a year or even a couple of years we want them to work on the life skills and figure out how they interact with others around them.”
Joan provided the most succinct definition for student conduct philosophy, but again echoed Layla’s thoughts on how one incident does not define a person.

“My student conduct philosophy would be… that behavior is fluid and one incident doesn’t define a person. That would be it.”

Maxine expanded on the need for the process to be educational. She felt that by holding the student accountable for his or her actions she shows them that she cares about them, again linking accountability and education.

“… structure, process, accountability and care. It needs to be a fool proof process where it’s fair and equitable. There has to be a lot of accountability and tough love, is the care part because I have that structure that means I care and holding them accountable is how I show them that I care about them. It’s about growth and education about people as human beings and citizens.”

Victor mentioned that a student conduct violation meant that something was out of place in the student’s experience. This need to focus on the whole student was necessary in order to better understand how the incident fit into the student’s journey at the institution. Victor also mentioned that the whole process needed to be developmental.

“….. I see conduct violations as an indication that there’s something off in the student’s experience holistically. But the entire process for me is developmental, focused holistically on how this incident or incidents fit into the student’s whole journey at the college. Again, to me they are systematic.”

Sean mentioned the need for students to better understand how their actions impact the larger community. This sentiment of community learning reflects restorative practice values. As mentioned previously, within restorative practices all participants are given a voice to reflect on
the impact of the incident in order to determine how best to repair the harm. Participants of the process work together to determine how best to repair the harm and the offender is given a voice within the process as well. Through this collaborative process the sanctions (punishments or necessary outcomes of the process) are determined together, as a community. If the offender is placed on suspension (a predetermined term of separation from the institution) then the ways in which to reintegrate the offender back into the community after the term of suspension is complete are also discussed. The offender is welcomed back into the community after completing the assigned sanctions. Sean echoed these sentiments.

“In a nutshell, my student conduct philosophy has always been we’re humans we make mistakes. And it’s just how do we recognize that mistake, how do we fix and heal that mistake in our community and how do we move forward from that as a community. I feel it’s our job as members of our community to understand one another and see everyone comes from a different walk of life and how do we as a community help a member of our community understand the wrong that has happened or the infraction that has happened and help them to understand that, reflect upon it, and move forward from it.”

Miranda stated that the student needs to take accountability for his or her actions as a member of the larger campus community.

“I see myself as an educator so I don’t teach in a classroom but I teach about life and I teach about the outside of the classroom. I often think about it as the fact that it’s my job to help students learn what it means to be accountable to the community that they are a part of in a safer way than like the real world does it. We add some cushion but we’re still teaching them how to be accountable for the decisions that they make the intents that they have and don’t have. I think we can teach a lot about equity and accountability and
civility and those types of things through conduct that we get that chance to, you know like I said, walk alongside a student in their not bright shiny choices moments that we all have and then help figure out who they want to be and how to get to that place.”

Similarly, Ralphie mentioned the need for students to understand the impact of their actions.

“My personal philosophy is that the importance of the student conduct field is about maintaining integrity of the student body…helping students understand that their actions or behaviors how they might have damaged the integrity of that entire institution or the entire student body and how we could restore it.”

Hank mentioned that these moments of hardship and challenge allow the students to learn the most. As student conduct administrators, the role is to help students come back from these mistakes and to make sure the student makes meaning through the process.

“My philosophy is that I think we learn most in times of being challenged. What some might call mistakes. I think giving people the opportunity to say that we’re looking for growth opportunities and really trying to see how people can bounce back from those opportunities and I don’t necessarily see it as a failure but as an opportunity for us to kind of partner together, gather resources and try to make sure people understand expectations and how to utilize those resources that are available at an institution. I think learning primarily but also then mistakes, designating time to it to ensure that the learning is meaningful.”

Summary

This chapter discussed the findings of the study. Participant training and demographic backgrounds were discussed first. The themes in direct relation to the research questions were (a)
the importance of being heard, (b) the consequences of voice not being valued, (c) the result of voice being valued, (d) the use of voice in policy creation and revision, and (e) the use of voice in sanctioning and procedure. Other themes revealed included (f) congruence with mission, vision, and values; (g) challenges of working at a community college; and (h) approach to addressing student conduct. Finally, other commonalities that emerged included almost all of the participants’ first positions within student affairs being in residential life and how most aspired to take on the dean of students position as their next role.
Chapter 5: Discussion

Overview of Findings

This study contributes to the current literature of student affairs by a) understanding the impact of voice on the role and retention of the student conduct administrator, b) differentiating how voice being valued and not valued can impact retention of the student conduct administrator at the community college institution, and c) discovering how experiences using voice can have a significant impact on the role and retention of the student conduct administrator. This chapter will discuss and outline the impact of the findings, which showcase the importance of being heard and the issues with voice not being valued.

Nine of the participants stated that they would look for a different position if their voice was not valued at the institution. All participants stated the importance of at least being heard in how conduct is addressed. This need to be heard did not automatically mean that individuals believed that their way was the best way. Rather, the participants felt the need to be heard based on the work they did “on the ground” as student conduct administrators at their respective institutions.

Retention was another focal point that emerged. All participants spoke of the direct impact of voice being valued on their physical, emotional, and/or mental well-being at work. The term “morale” was utilized more than a few times to say that if one’s voice is valued, then morale at work increases. Moreover, participants stated that they feel like they want to and need to contribute more to the work if their voice is valued. Conversely, without voice being valued participants stated that even the physical act of coming to work is dreadful.

Two of the nine participants who stated they would leave if their voice was not valued went so far as to cite examples of times they had left previous roles at other institutions due to
their voice not being valued. Other participants mentioned the direct connection of voice being valued to feeling supported in one’s role at the institution. Additionally, participants stated that the need to be supported in this work was vital to their success as a student conduct administrator.

Although burnout was referenced a few times by participants, mostly it was within the context of being overwhelmed by the work and working too hard. The idea that one’s voice not being valued or his or her ideals not aligning with the institutions could also lead to burnout was only vocalized by Ralphie. However, all participants agreed that their mission, vision, and values did in fact align with their respective institution. Participants noted that this concept of fit between the individual and the institution is important in the work that is being done by student conduct administrators.

**Discussion Based on Themes**

**Voice and Morale**

All of the study participants stated the importance of being heard in their work as a student conduct administrator. Moreover, nine of the study participants stated that if their voice was not valued they would begin looking for other places of employment. This finding aligns with Hirschman’s (1970) theory on exit being a last option when the option of voice has failed. For this study, failure is defined as the administrator’s voice not being valued in his or her work but also by the inability to change process and policy based on dissatisfaction.

In addition to nine of the participants stating that they would leave their current position if voice was not valued, three of the study participants stated that if their voice was not valued that would at the very least impact their day to day work at the institution and role as a student conduct administrator. Two had left their previous institutions because their voices were not
valued. In response to the question about the impact of their voice being valued, most responded by saying that they would feel excited to come to work, feel like contributors at the institution, be engaged, and have a higher morale at work.

Johnsrud and Rosser (1999) discussed similar results in their study, which aimed to examine morale of mid-level administrators in higher education. Their study resulted due to the limited research on morale. The definitions of morale provided consisted of a larger community definition and an individual definition. For the purposes of my study, both definitions apply.

Johnsrud and Rosser refer to Zeitz (1983) who defines morale as “members’ affective or emotive responses to the organization—their general sense of well-being and enthusiasm for collective endeavors” (p. 124). Rosser (2004) refers to Bany and Johnson (1975) who define morale as “the feelings and emotions that arise as members in the organization interact with one another” (p. 320). Johnsrud and Rosser reference Lindgren (1982), who states in his original text, Leadership, Authority and Power Sharing, that “when groups rate high in cohesiveness it means that they have a strong attraction or ‘pull’ for their members. They feel drawn together by a mutual attraction…. the group has a feeling of ‘getting some place’ or of making progress” (pp. 102-103).

Johnsrud and Rosser (1999) reference Doherty, (1988) who mentions that “low’ psychological morale implies that the individual sees himself or herself as one who is powerless or socially unimportant” (p.124). Using these various definitions of morale, Johnsrud and Rosser stated that for the purpose of their study morale was defined as a “state of mind regarding one’s job, including satisfaction, commitment, loyalty, sense of common purpose and respect for one’s work” (p.124). Recognition was one of the perceptual variables of the study. Johnsrud and Rosser found that “whether midlevel administrators feel that they are recognized for their
competence is one of the powerful predictors of their morale” (p. 136). Additionally, “recognition can take many forms; but to enhance morale, the administrators must perceive that their ability and efforts are valued and appreciated by the institution” (Johnsrud & Rosser, 1999, p.136).

With regard to this study, the perception of recognition and morale increase when participants feel like their voice is valued. Participants of this study reflected on how voice being valued was necessary due to the fact that they were the ones doing the day to day work at their institution for student conduct. Moreover, by voice being valued, a sense of appreciation for the work they do and the knowledge they hold within the field of student conduct came through as well. Seven of the study participants described their voice as a student conduct administrator similarly to the ProSocial voice as defined by Dyne et al. (2003). These seven study participants were those that were able to create or revise policy at their institution and/or had the ability to create workshops or courses as educational sanctions for student conduct violations. Three of the study participants felt as though they did not have the ability to change or create policy due to state systems in place. Additionally, these three participants were those that felt they found workarounds in the policy in order to make the policy work for them as a student conduct administrator. Out of all study participants, two demonstrated a ProSocial voice (Dyne et al., 2003) in some ways but not in all aspects of their work as a student conduct administrator.

If one’s voice is valued and the individual is given the opportunity to speak about the knowledge they hold in the work they do, then the concept of competence comes through as well. This concept of knowledge compares to the term competence. Many of the participants in this study reflected on how gaining trust to create change in policy and process took time, but once competence in the field of student conduct was established, the process to create change
became easier. Some went so far as to state that they were seen as student conduct experts at their institution after serving in that role for some time.

These findings demonstrate the need for voice and knowledge to be valued as reflected in the statements made by Johnsrud et al. (2000) as well as Johnsrud and Rosser (1999) when speaking about what impacts morale. As previously outlined in the literature review, the authors mention how morale is impacted for midlevel professionals when they “know a great deal about their particular function but are rarely involved in the decision making most important to that function. As a result, they often feel as if they had no authority for decisions that are made, and yet they are held responsible for outcomes” (p. 39). Additionally, Henkin and Persson (1992) explain that “non-academic employees” (p. 2) “claim disenfranchisement” when they “may lack representation and/or participation in aspects of university governance” (p. 2) which could also impact morale. This need for autonomy in decision-making in the day-to-day work is seen in the responses of the participants of this study. Moreover, the importance of being heard and the value of voice directly impacted how participants stated they would feel about their positions and how it would decrease their overall morale.

All of the study participants stated how the ability to utilize voice and have a ProSocial voice (Dyne et al., 20003, p. 1371) in order to at least be heard was important. One of the participants, “Miranda,” elaborated on the fact that she had left her previous position because her voice was being heard less even though she had information about why the changes being made in the student conduct process were not best practice. She went on to state that as the administration made changes that were not in congruence with her values and ideas for addressing student conduct, it made it harder for her to remain in the position.
This idea of incongruence goes back to Tinto’s (1987) “Principles of Effective Retention.” Ultimately, this incongruence with how student conduct processes were being changed at the institution caused the individual to leave. As her voice became less valued and she chose to use her ProSocial voice (Dyne et al., 2003, p. 1371) less often, Miranda searched out a new position where her voice was heard and her ideas for addressing student conduct were in alignment and in congruence with the institution. Overall study participants stated that when their voice is valued they feel as though their work is valued, they feel empowered and motivated, and thus feel an overall sense of value as an employee.

Participants stated that they felt an overall sense of joy and engagement in their work when they felt as though their voice was valued, thus increasing morale. When voice is valued, they become active participants in their work and feel like they are adding value to the institution as a whole. Participants stated that if their voice was not valued it would be hard to continue working at the institution. Rosser (2004) indicated similar results about midlevel administrators’ intents to leave the field if morale was low.

Ultimately, some of the study participants had left positions at the four-year level to work at community college institutions. Some stated that they loved their experience at the community college institution and some mentioned they may look for opportunities only at the community college level moving forward. Johnsrud and Rosser (1999) found a similar theme in their study. Of all the respondents, those that worked at the community college institution reflected higher rates of morale. The authors of that study did not know why that held true but only that it made an impact. This finding may be one for a future study with regard to morale and the community college institution.
In the end, the participant responses in the present study with regard to the importance of voice being valued resulted in a direct connection to the student conduct administrator’s engagement, enhanced morale, and for some, retention in the role. The importance of being heard was valued as well, and nine of the participants stated that if their voice was not heard and valued then that would have a direct impact on their remaining in the role and the work they continued to do at the institution. Participants clarified that being heard was different from being the only voice in the room and that being heard did not imply their recommendations should be the only ones taken each and every time. Rather, being heard reflected a value for their voice and opinion but that did not mean their recommended course of action to the situation at hand was the only to be implemented. In this regard, being valued came through in the collaborative process that leads to change, rather than being the change agent themselves.

This need to be heard within the larger community relates to Bany and Johnson’s (1975) definition of morale: “the feelings and emotions that arise as members in the organization interact with one another” (Rosser, 2004, p. 320). In relation to this study, if one’s voice is not heard and/or valued, then the administrator may perceive their interactions with one another to be poor. In turn, the administrator’s role in the larger community of the institution is diminished and he or she begins to feel like they are not an active engaged member of the community. If this pattern continues, then the administrator leaves the institution to find a community in which he or she feels that day- to-day interactions with other members of the community are sought out and valued. This lack of integration and community membership and isolation at the institution are components within Tinto’s (1987b) “Principles of Effective Retention.” Tinto mentions that if a student does not feel like a member of the institutional community then that impacts
persistence. This sense of belonging was necessary for the student conduct administrator at the
community college as well.

Participants further went on to say that their voice being valued meant that they were
heard, supported, and encouraged to share their input on how student conduct was addressed at
the institution. These views of voice being valued are similar to the definition of the ProSocial
voice (1371) provided by Dyne et al. (2003). The need for voice to be heard, at the very least,
was necessary since all participants felt that they were the ones in the trenches, on the ground
floor doing the work on a day-to-day basis. Many reflected this concern by saying how can we
do the work if our voices are not at the table when changes are being made that directly impact
our work. Some participants went so far as providing examples of times that they felt like their
voices were not heard and/or valued. The examples provided showcased that if administrators
felt as though their voice was not valued, their intent to leave the role increased.

The importance of being heard and thus having their voice be valued was important for
all, but how voice was individually defined differed based on the participant’s view of voice.
Many defined voice as their own while others defined their voice as their own but one that also
needed to reflect the needs of the larger community. This larger community included students,
faculty, and staff.

In this regard, the primary question of this research study, “What impact does the ability
to use voice as a student conduct administrator have on the professional’s remaining in the
position?” resulted in nine of the participants stating that they would leave their position if their
voice was not heard in their role as a student conduct administrator. However, although
participants expressed frustration with their inability to create and/or revise policy, none
explicitly stated they would leave their position if they were unable to revise policy or utilize
approaches of their choosing to address student conduct violations. Participants did express a strong desire to utilize more educational sanctions and/or social justice approaches, such as those outlined in the spectrum model (Schrage & Thompson, 2008), in their work to address student conduct violations. Additionally, all participants expressed a strong desire to attend conflict resolution trainings. All participants also mentioned the need for congruence between their values in how student conduct should be addressed and the mission, vision, and values of their department and institution.

**Voice, Vision, Mission, and Values**

Marshall et al. (2016) found in their mixed methods study that institution fit and supervisor support played a significant role in student affairs professionals leaving the field completely. Within this theme, “valuing of professionals” (p. 155) and the “larger organizational culture issues at their institutions that eventually led to their departure” were cited as reasons for the lack of institutional fit felt by employees. (Marshall et al., 2016). I found that all participants within the present study stated that their values aligned with the institutional and departmental mission, vision, and values.

Participants further stated that they would have a hard time working at an institution where their vision and values as a professional did not align with the institution. Silver and Jakeman (2014) similarly found that graduate students “struggled to reconcile the social nature of their work with the function they believed a university was meant to fulfill, namely the education of students” (p. 175). The participants in this study stated that their student conduct philosophy is centered on being educational. If there is incongruence between the institution’s philosophy to address student conduct and the student conduct administrator’s philosophy, then the administrator may be more likely to leave the position at the institution, as demonstrated by
participants of this study. This finding relates back to the “philosophical conflict” described by Stamatakos (1978, p. 326) and the impact of incongruence, as applied by me, on retention as mentioned by Tinto (1987b).

Therefore, one’s mission, vision, and values need to align with the institutional and department’s mission, vision and values in order to create a good institutional fit. By aligning one’s personal mission, vision, and values with the institution, congruence is created in how student conduct administrators do their work. Moreover, from the perspective of all students, the office view on how student conduct is addressed at the institution should be seen as a united front from top to bottom leadership. This idea of mission, vision, and values aligning greatly impacts how student conduct is addressed at the institution.

**Burnout**

Marshall et al. (2016) found in their study that “burnout, long hours, and stressful conditions” (p. 152) impacted the high rate of attrition for student affairs professionals. Participants in the study “reported extreme work obligations, which lead to burnout, fatigue, and eventual departure from the field” (p. 152). Participants within the present study mentioned taking on multiple roles at the institution and the struggle to balance it all with limited staff. “Sean,” for example, described the case load that he had accumulated from one holiday break to another and described times where he had gotten to work early and left very late in the evening only to return early the next day.

Participants in this study included only student conduct administrators at community college institutions. The position of a student conduct administrator often is seen as a role that comes with extra stress and burden due to the type of situations that are addressed by that department on campus. As “Bernard” stated, he is the “judge and jury” at his institution and all
participants reflected on the fact that they assist in potentially placing a student on probation, suspension, or expulsion from the institution. The work of a student conduct administrator often ends with students being permanently separated from the institution. That type of responsibility on the shoulders of one individual is one that most do not want to take on. Many participants reflected on the fact that members of their institutional community want them to make the difficult calls.

Silver and Jakeman (2014) found in their study that graduate students currently working as graduate assistants within the field of student affairs experienced what they titled “emotional burdens as a result of working with students” (p. 177). This theme was categorized as one of the reasons that students choose to not work in the field of student affairs following their completion of graduate school. In looking through the transcriptions, it was noted that participants reflected on the population of students they worked with and the idea of burnout in the field. Most participants stated that one of the challenges of working at a community college was the population itself, and the implication was one where working with the community college student population itself led to burnout. Students at the community college institution can be absolutely anyone due to the open access model. Participants stated that students are often first generation, but also ones with criminal backgrounds or students with “baggage.” Additionally, students at the community college institution are often behind in their educational development.

Other Themes

Educational Development and Resources

The culture of the institution plays a vital role in how student conduct is addressed at the institution. Some of the participants reflected on the fact that often when incidents occurred at their institutions, the faculty and/or staff would react by asking why the student had not been
suspended or expelled. The student conduct administrators expressed frustration with the fact that the student conduct system was seen as a punitive means to an end. Rather, the participants of this study strived to be educational in their efforts to address student conduct violations but were, at times, challenged.

Overall, participants reflected on the educational development of the community college student and how that impacted the work they did in student conduct specifically with regards to educational sanctioning in the form of papers or essays. Additionally, many reflected on the lack of resources available to them in the form of finances and staffing. Participants stated that the lack of personnel within the office to assist with the work of student conduct was a hardship. Some participants were the sole student conduct administrators at their institutions, with the assistance of an administrative assistant.

When asked to reflect on what they would be doing in five years, most participants stated that although they want to remain in the field of student affairs and student conduct, they hope to be in a position where they could serve as an appeal agent for conduct. The day-to-day work of the student conduct administrator was not what they hoped to be doing in five years.

**Years in the Field**

In reviewing participant backgrounds and analyzing transcriptions, I discovered that participants who felt they had a stronger voice at the institution, one which could assist in making policy change, were those that had been at the institution for quite some time. Additionally, these same participants had been working in the field of student conduct for a greater length of time. This idea of being established in one’s work and role seemed to have an impact on the student conduct administrator’s ability to make change. One participant in
particular, “Mandy,” spoke about her trials and tribulations when she first arrived at her current institution.

Mandy spoke about the fact that when she first arrived, changing policy was a hardship. All key players at the institution would want to take part in making changes and provide their input. However, as she reflected on her current role she stated that she creates all policy and does not have the same challenges as when she first started at the institution. Furthermore, she stated that individuals at her institution now turn to her for guidance with respect to areas in student conduct and trust her judgement.

Conversely, Victor had only been at his institution for a short amount of time and did not feel the same way about his ability to edit the institutional policy. Part of that reason was due to a system policy at the state level which would take more time, but also because Victor was still creating the necessary relationships and partnerships to assist in the process of altering policy.

Training

Years in the field also corresponded to the amount and types of trainings individuals had attended. Some individuals had not been to any formal trainings as student conduct administrators, while others had been to several. All study participants expressed interest in wanting to attend some kind of formal training workshop or seminar for student conduct. Additionally, 11 of the 12 student participants expressed interested in attending formal training seminars or workshops specifically for conflict resolution, mediation, and restorative justice. This response causes me to believe that most participants still do not have the knowledge base to implement alternative resolution practices at their institution. Additionally, Pavelka (2013) stated that the need for a larger volunteer base is needed to implement restorative practices on campus. Volunteer facilitators primarily include students who help run restorative circles and/or
conferences. Once volunteers are trained, it is important to retain them in order to continue doing the work.

At the community college institution, the maximum amount of years that one is able to retain a student is two years, if the student completes the program on time. Ideally, even if a student is trained to be a facilitator within their first semester, the institution will only be able to utilize their skillset for an additional three semesters. More importantly, it is not in the best interest of the student to train them to be a restorative justice facilitator within their first semester at the institution as they are still acclimating to the college environment.

Even if the student is able to be a facilitator for two years, that is based on the guarantee that the student does not take a break in their education and/or transfer out of the institution early. The transient nature of the population, both student and staff, creates problems when trying to train individuals on new practices or even on old ones. Several participants in the study reflected on having to do the same trainings each semester due to the fact that they felt as though they were training a new batch of students, faculty, and staff each and every term.

**Recommendations for Practice and Policy**

In understanding the impact of voice on role and retention of the student conduct administrator at the community college, the results from this study generated thoughts on best practice and improvement at the two-year institution. Recommendations include resources for staffing and professional development along with a seat at the table for policy decision making. To start, resources—both financially and within staffing—need to be increased.

**Resources**

Despite the demanding roles played by student conduct administrators, most perform roles in understaffed offices. Participants in this study were either the sole student conduct
administrators at the institution, or an office of two at the most. Increasing staffing could prevent burnout. Handling the volume of student violations with only one or two staff members caused the study participants to be concerned about burnout. Not having the time or the colleagues to process the emotional distress from student stories allowed for few outlets for emotional recovery between cases. For these reasons, all study participants noted the need for additional staff assistance.

In order to successfully implement mediation and/or restorative justice practices, student conduct offices would require increased staffing as these practices can be much more time-intensive than the formal adjudication process. Moreover, implementing mediation and/or restorative justice on campus training is a requirement. Mediation programs can require 40 hours of offsite training, while restorative justice training programs can be from two to five days depending on the training model.

Once staffing is increased, the need for training and education is vital for the success of the administrator. Without consistent training, the student conduct administrator is not adding to the growth of the field itself, as practices change and newer processes emerge, but they are also remaining stagnant as a practitioner. This again relates to resources in terms of having the finances to attend professional development but also having enough staff in the office to continue doing the work on campus while others attend trainings. Professional organizations such as ASCA, the primary community for student conduct administrators, charge up to $700 just to register for trainings. Based on similar conversations about lack of finances, it is hard to imagine that all the participants could attend any training they wished. Plus, additional funds would be required to send the staff within the office as well. It is important to remain abreast of best practices.
As mentioned earlier, many of the participants reflected on the types of trainings they would like to attend in the future. 11 of the 12 participants stated that conflict resolution or mediation training would be the type of training that they would choose, based on the intent, design, and administration of the survey instrument itself. Due to financial constraints, study participants reflected on the higher costs of professional development and the impact that had on the ability to take part in annual training seminars. Reducing ASCA’s registration costs for professional training workshops would help. Additionally, the development of online training programs may be helpful to reach a larger audience, as this decreases cost by taking out the necessary fees for travel and accommodations and allows for the administrator to remain working while attending a training if staffing in the office is problematic. Distance learning also provides the student conduct administrator with a personalized timeline to complete the training. A final thought may be to create training programs that begin in person for a shorter period of time and continue online.

**Voice in Policy Creation and Revision**

The Student Code of Conduct is most often described as a living breathing document by practitioners in the field due to the fact that it consistently requires improvements and updates based on emerging approaches in the field and the needs of the institution. It is for this reason that the ability to use voice to improve policy—and as a result, process—is crucial. In reviewing participant responses about having a voice in policy creation, participants were split. Many felt as though they did not have a voice due to larger state systems at play; others felt like they did but the student code of conduct still outlined what “Victor” termed “status sanctioning.” Status sanctioning included warning, probation, suspension, and expulsion as defined by “Victor.” A few other participants used similar terminology when describing these types of sanctions. The
question then becomes whether administrators are utilizing status sanctioning processes due to that being the best practice, or because they do not have training or education in alternative sanctioning.

The ability to have a ProSocial voice (Dyne et al., 2003) is evident in the work of the student conduct administrator at the community college institution. Five of the 12 study participants reflected on their inability to consistently utilize their voice to create or revise policy at the institution, which directly impacted their day to day work. Two of these five participants reflected on their ability to impact policy creation and revision sometimes. Seven of the 12 participants who stated that they did have oversight over policy creation and change still mentioned factors which impacted their ability to change or revise policy, such as red tape or going through the chain of command.

The five study participants who mentioned that they were unable to consistently create or revise policy did not have the ability to utilize a ProSocial voice (Dyne et al., 2003). These five study participants did not feel as though they could vocalize all the ideas they had for policy revision because of state systems in place or because they did not have the space or authority to recommend those revisions. All five stated that they were unable at this time to make policy recommendations due to state systems or their amount of time at the institution.

It may be beneficial to allow individual institutions within the larger state systems the ability to revise policy and process based on the needs of their specific campus. The state system can provide a larger framework for each institution but allow each individual school to craft a student code of conduct that appropriately works for that campus. Each and every institution is not the same, and neither is the student population. The needs for the campus may change as the
student demographic changes, but that does not mean the state system cannot provide an overall framework to follow.

Another thought may be to allow for a quicker turnaround time if changes are recommended by the student conduct administrator. In reviewing the interview transcripts, study participants reflected on the fact that even if a revision was made to the code of conduct the board of trustees or similar entity would need to approve the revision before it could be made in the code. If student conduct administrators were able to make minor revisions to the code without overview from the board, the process of implementing policy change may be faster. Board review in that case can be left for larger scale revisions. Ultimately, I found it necessary for the student conduct administrator at the community college institution to utilize a ProSocial voice (Dyne et al., 2003) for policy creation and revision.

All 12 study participants reflected on the fact that they were the ones on the ground and in the trenches doing the work. Therefore, it was necessary that they have a voice in the policy being used to address student conduct violations at the institution since that policy dictated what they could and could not do to address violations. The policy that informs the student conduct process must be consistent in order to provide a fair and equitable process for all students which holds the institution accountable and protects it from liability. Therefore, it is not recommended to change policy or process dependent on the type of case that comes through the office. Rather, the administrator aims to have a policy and process that can work for each and every student no matter what the violation. The administrator’s ability to then craft a policy that incorporates different sanctioning approaches allows them to utilize a toolkit of sorts when working with conduct violations.
The ability to utilize the ProSocial voice (Dyne et al., 2003) for policy creation and revision would allow the student conduct administrator the ability to recommend his or her ideas for alternative approaches to addressing conduct violations. A few study participants including “Mandy,” “Victor,” and “Sean” mentioned their desire to utilize a social justice lens to address conduct violations. “Victor” and “Sean” went farther to mention that they both would like to utilize more restorative practices in addressing student conduct violations but both mentioned that at the present moment they were having to work around the current written policy and process in order to implement those practices. In order to be able to utilize the approach of their choosing the student conduct administrator needs to have that as a written part of their policy and process. Ultimately, policy dictates process and inconsistencies in addressing student conduct violations leads to legal issues at the institution (Lake, 2013).

**Recommendations for Future Studies**

Future studies should include not only student conduct administrators specifically at community colleges but also those at four-year public and private institutions. This participant pool should include those with and without residential facilities. The participants of the study should also include those from the general umbrella term of student affairs professionals. This broader study focus would allow for a better understanding of the impact of voice on retention and role of all student affairs professionals rather than just the student conduct administrator.

Participants of this study were primarily those without residential facilities on campus. There were only two study participants whose institutions provided housing for students on campus. Additionally, only student conduct administrators employed at the community college institutions were included within this study. Therefore, results from this present study cannot be
used to make generalizations about the impact of voice on the role and retention in that role of student conduct administrators at the four-year institution.

Participants in this study also only included 12 student conduct administrators at community college institutions due to the narrative inquiry approach. Therefore, recommendations for future studies would involve including student conduct administrators from all institutional types and having a larger pool of participants. A future study could be one based on a mixed methods approach wherein the survey instrument developed by Karp (2008) can be administered to all participants and follow-up focus groups can be conducted in order to conduct in-depth interviews. Greater generalizations about the impact of voice may then be able to be made for student conduct administrators within the college or university setting.

With regard to background and experience, participants in the study primarily included mid-level administrators—in other words, individuals who had been working within the field of student conduct for at least five years or more. Due to lack of participation, there were no new professionals who were included in the study. Individuals that were selected to participate were included until saturation. Additionally, although the participants of the study were diverse, the vast majority identified as white. Moreover, although I aimed to have an equal number of male and female participants, ultimately there were more male than female participants.

Future studies can allow for participants from all types of institutions. With a more inclusive and larger participant size, greater generalizations can be made for comparison than those in this study. To be narrower to start, the study could first focus on student conduct administrators at four-year public institutions and follow up with a study on those working at the four-year private institution. The recommendation for a mixed methods study would allow for a
quantitative approach by sending out a survey instrument to participants and then conducting smaller focus groups or individual interviews based on participants that have expressed interest.

Additionally, participants can also be those working within the general umbrella term of student affairs professionals. In this study, participants were limited to those who were student conduct administrators. However, if the participant’s requirement is changed to student affairs professional, the participant pool would be much larger. Moreover, it would be interesting to note the impact of voice on student affairs professionals in general. Again, to be narrow to start, another study could be conducted to understand the impact of voice on role and retention of student affairs professionals at community colleges.

Finally, the survey instrument itself could be broadened. Just as the participant pool could be expanded to include student affairs professionals outside of the functional area of student conduct, so could the survey instrument itself. Additionally, greater attention could also be focused on ethnicity as a means to understand the impact of voice within a marginalized community. The potential then could be great to support those who identify within a marginalized community and increase retention within the field.

**Summary**

This chapter provided an overview of the implications of the study findings. I outlined the impact of voice and morale on the student conduct administrator’s role and retention in that role, and highlighted other findings of the study such as burnout and years in the field. Additionally, I provided recommendations for practice, policy, and future studies.
References


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


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Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

SaintPeter's University
Institutional Review Board

To: Ms. Juhi Bhatt
Graduate
Educational Leadership
Dr. Mark Silk, mentor
School of Education
Saint Peter's University

From: Dr. Peter P. Cvek, chair
SPU Institutional Review Board

Date: November 10, 2016 - May 30, 2017

Project Title: A narrative inquiry to understand the impact of voice in a student conduct administrator's role and intent to remain in the role at community colleges

Protocol Approval Date: November 10, 2016 – May 30, 2017

In accordance with DHHS Regulations for Protection of Human Subjects (45 CFR 46.110), the human subjects application for this project underwent Expedited review and was approved as minimal risk to subjects. This project is approved as of November 10, 2016, and the approval remains active until May 30, 2017.

The IRB notes approval of letter of solicitation/consent form, demographic survey, consent form for interview, and interview protocol.

The IRB also acknowledges Certification of IRB Determination from Rutgers University, Michelle Watkinson, Senior IRB administrator, certifying that investigator is subject SPU IRB only (November 8, 2016).

The investigator agrees to conduct the research in accordance with the Belmont Report and the SPU Institutional Review Board guidelines, as well as the use of all approved protocols and forms.

Re-review of this project is required if:
• You wish to continue the project beyond May 30, 2017.
• There are any changes in the research protocol.
• There are any reports of injury or unanticipated problems involving risks to human subjects.

Note: any injuries or adverse events must be reported to the IRB within three days of the event.

( ) __

Peter P. Cvek, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board
Saint Peter’s University
pcvek@saintpeters.edu
Appendix B: Letter of Informed Consent

Dear Community College Student Conduct Officer:

My name is Juhi Bhatt, and I am a doctoral candidate at Saint Peter’s University. I am conducting a dissertation research study to better understand the impact of voice in the student conduct administrator’s role and retention in that role from the perspective of community college student conduct administrators. I am interested in learning about the impact that your ability to utilize your voice in the student conduct process to facilitate change has on your work, role at the institution, and desire to remain in the position of student conduct administrator.

Participation is voluntary and without compensation. As a study participant, you will be asked to complete a Participant Information Form and to participate in one interview with me via phone. With your permission, the interview will be digitally recorded to ensure the information is both accurate and complete. Interviews will last approximately 60 to 90 minutes and will consist of my asking you 12 open ended questions. Each interview will be digitally recorded and transcribed. A written transcript of the interview will be provided for you to review and comment on prior to data analysis.

All information related to this study will remain private; only my dissertation chair and research committee will have access to the data. No foreseeable risks are associated with
participation in this study. You may withdraw participation at any time, without penalty and without explanation.

I hope that you will consider participating in this research study. If you are willing to participate, please return the attached Participation Information Form and this signed Letter of Solicitation and Informed Consent Form to me electronically by Day, Month DD, 2016, [Redacted]. If you have questions or would like additional information about the research study, the study procedures, or your role as a participant, I may be contacted by email or telephone at [Redacted], or you may contact Dr. Mark Silk, my dissertation advisor at msilk@saintpeters.edu.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter. Your participation is invaluable to the completion of this study. By signing below, you agree to the terms presented above and consent to voluntarily participate in this research study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every effort will be made to keep any information collected about you confidential. However, it is impossible to guarantee absolute confidentiality. Saint Peter’s University IRB and other University representatives who are part of researcher’s committee may have access to information within the study. Your name and other personal identifiable information will not be included in the final dissertation. You and your institution will be given a pseudonym to protect your privacy.
In order to keep information about you safe, all data records (e.g. demographic questionnaire, digital audio recordings of the interviews, transcribed interviews, emails, scanned copies of my handwritten field notes, ant the list of participants’ contact information and other identifying personal information) will be kept in a password-protected on my personal computer which only I have access to. Physical copies of my hand written notes will be kept until a transcribed copy of the interview is received. All electronic copies will be kept for five years after the date of the interview.

If you are willing to participate, please return the attached Participation Information Form and this signed Informed Consent Form to me electronically by Day, Month DD, 2016.

---------------------------------------
______________________________
Participant’s Signature          Date

---------------------------------------
______________________________
Investigator’s Signature          Date
Leadership

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

PROJECT TITLE: A narrative inquiry to understand the impact of voice in a student conduct administrator’s role and retention in that role at community colleges

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Juhi Bhatt

MENTOR: Dr. Mark Silk

INTRODUCTION

You are invited to consider participating in this research project. Please take as much time as you need to make your decision. Feel free to discuss your decision with whomever you wish, but remember that the decision to participate, or not to participate, is yours. If you decide to participate, please sign and date where indicated at the end of this form.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this research is to understand the role of the student conduct administrator at community colleges and the impact that their ability to use their voice in their work has in their remaining in that position.

PROJECT PLAN

You are being asked to take part in this research because you are a student conduct administrator with the ability to charge students for violating the student code of conduct and
assigning sanctions for the violation at the community college institution. We expect up to 10 subjects will take part in this research.

If you decide to participate in this research, you will be asked to take part in one 60-90 minute phone interview with a semi-structured interview question guide. The interview will be scheduled based on your availability and only the researcher for this study will be present.

The research will be looking at the student conduct administrator’s intent to remain in the position at the community college institution based on his or her ability to use his or her voice in the student conduct process and policy in order to facilitate change.

The interview will take place via phone based on an agreed upon time between the researcher and research participant.

You will be in the project for about 60-90 minutes.

Your 60-90-minute interview will be digitally recorded. I will provide you with the consent form via email prior to our scheduled interview. I will only proceed with the interview if I have your signed consent form prior to the scheduled interview. In addition to all interviews being digitally recorded I will also be taking handwritten notes during the interview. I will have each interview transcribed and provide it to you as an electronic copy via email to review. You will have two weeks to review the interview transcript and provide any necessary feedback to the researcher. After these two weeks I will make final contact with you to confirm that you’ve received the electronic copy and have had a chance to review your transcript, address any concerns or questions and ask any questions of me if needed.

**Risks**

There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research.
It is possible, but unlikely that this research could cause harm if others learn of your responses, you have a sensitive response to the research topic or your responses, or in the very unlikely even that your employer finds out and is unhappy.

The researcher will try to reduce this risk by utilizing pseudo names for all research participants and institutions. No reference will be made to you by your name or your institution’s name in the final dissertation.

**BENEFITS**

If you agree to take part in this research, there will be no direct benefit to you. However, information gathered in this research may provide insight into the role of student conduct administrators at the community college institution.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

*Please revise this entire section to make it applicable to your project.*

Every effort will be made to keep any information collected about you confidential. However, it is impossible to guarantee absolute confidentiality. Saint Peter’s University IRB and other University representatives who are part of researcher’s committee may have access to information within the study. Your name and other personal identifiable information will not be included in the final dissertation. You and your institution will be given a pseudonym to protect your privacy.

In order to keep information about you safe, all data records (e.g. demographic questionnaire, digital audio recordings of the interviews, transcribed interviews, emails, scanned copies of my handwritten field notes, ant the list of participants’ contact information and other identifying personal information) will be kept in a password-protected on my personal computer which only I have access to. *Physical copies of my hand written notes will be kept until a*
transcribed copy of the interview is received. All electronic copies will be kept for five years after the date of the interview.

**YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT**

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You can choose not to participate at all, or to withdraw at any point. If you decide not to participate, or to withdraw, there will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, or any effect on your relationship with the researcher, or any other negative consequences.

If you decide that you no longer want to take part in this research, you are encouraged to inform the researcher of your decision. The information already obtained through your participation will not be included in the data analysis and final report for this research.

**QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS**

If you have questions about this research project, you may contact Juhi Bhatt at [redacted] or jbhatt@mail.saintpeters.edu. You may also contact the researcher’s faculty mentor, Dr. Silk at msilk@mail.saintpeters.edu. Please contact the Saint Peter’s University IRB at 201-761-6137 or pcvek@saintpeters.edu if you have any questions about your rights as a research participant.

**STATEMENT OF PERSON OBTAINING INFORMED CONSENT**

I have fully explained this research to the participant. I have discussed the purpose and procedures, the possible risks and benefits, and that participation in this research is completely voluntary. I have invited the participant to ask questions and I have given complete answers to all of the participant’s questions.
**STATEMENT OF CONSENT**

I understand all of the information in this Consent Form. I have gotten complete answers for all of my questions. I freely and voluntarily agree to participate in this research project. I understand that I can withdraw at any time. My signature also indicates that I am 18 years of age or older and that I have received a copy of this consent form.

_____________________________ ___________________________
Participant Signature Date

**Once you sign this form, you will receive a copy of it to keep and the researcher will keep another copy.**

I understand that I will be digitally recorded as a part of this research.

Please indicate whether you agree to be digitally recorded as part of this research.

☐ YES  (If you change your mind about this at any point, please let me know)
☐ NO

_____________________________ ___________________________
Participant Signature Date

Printed Name of Participant
Appendix D: Participation Information Form

Participant Information Form

Dear Community College Student Conduct Officer:

Thank you for participating in this very important research. This form should take
approximately 10 minutes to complete. Your personally identifiable information will be removed
from this form by the researcher. The remaining information will be coded and then shared with
the dissertation chair, as appropriate for completing the dissertation. If you have any questions,
please don’t hesitate to contact me. I can be reached via email at jbhatt05@gmail.com
or via
telephone at 201-410-1959.

Personal Information:

Name:
Title:
Institution Name:
Preferred Contact Email Address:
Preferred Contact Telephone Number(s):
1.
2.

1. What is your gender?
☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Prefer not to answer

☐ Other_______

2. Ethnicity:

☐ Black ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander

☐ White ☐ Hispanic/Latino

☐ Native American/Alaskan ☐ Prefer not to answer

☐ Other____________________

3. Which category below includes your age?:

☐ 30 or younger ☐ 30-39 ☐ 40-49 ☐ 50-59 ☐ 60 or older

☐ Prefer not to answer

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

☐ Bachelor’s ☐ Professional Degree (J.D., M.D., etc.)
□ Masters           □ Doctoral Degree., (Ed.D., Ph.D., etc.)

□ Other____________

Institution Information

5. What is your institution type? (Circle all that apply)

□ Urban           □ Suburban           □ Rural

□ Single Campus    □ Multi-campus

□ Other____________

6. What is your institution’s fall semester FTE enrollment?

□ Less than 1,999   □ 2,000-4,999     □ 5,000-9,999

□ 10,000           □ 15,001-20,000    □ 20,001-more

Training Information

Definitions

Arbitration: Parties in conflict present their positions to a neutral third party who makes a decision about how the conflict will be resolved.
Conflict coaching: Conflict resolution specialist coaches an individual about how to address a conflict.

Mediation: Mediator facilitates a meeting of two or more parties in conflict.

Restorative Justice Practice: Facilitated dialogue using a restorative model such as Accountability Board, Conferencing, or Circle

Social Justice Lens: Using a “social justice lens” requires that a facilitator recognize the role of social identity, power, and privilege in a conflict and identify the lenses used by the participants.

7. Check the trainings that you have ever participated in: (Check all that apply)

- □ Gehring Academy-Judicial Training Institute
- □ Gehring Academy-Mid-Level Managers Program
- □ Gehring Academy-Senior Administrator Program
- □ Gehring Academy-Mediation Training Program
- □ Gehring Academy-Conflict Resolution Specialist Program
- □ Arbitration: Length of training in hours:_____
- □ Conflict Coaching: Length of training in hours:_____
- □ Mediation (Not at Gehring): Length of training in hours:_____
- □ Restorative Justice: Length of training in hours:_____

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8. Check the trainings that at least one OTHER member of your staff has ever participated in: (Check all that apply)

- Gehring Academy-Judicial Training Institute
- Gehring Academy-Mid-Level Managers Program
- Gehring Academy-Senior Administrator Program
- Gehring Academy-Mediation Training Program
- Gehring Academy-Conflict Resolution Specialist Program
- Arbitration
- Conflict Coaching
- Mediation (Not at Gehring)
- Restorative Justice
- Social Justice Lens
- Other:_________________
9. For training that you have not received, select up to three that you would be most interested in receiving:

- Gehring Academy-Judicial Training Institute
- Gehring Academy-Mid-Level Managers Program
- Gehring Academy-Senior Administrator Program
- Gehring Academy-Mediation Training Program
- Gehring Academy-Conflict Resolution Specialist Program
- Arbitration
- Conflict Coaching
- Mediation (Not at Gehring)
- Restorative Justice
- Social Justice Lens
- General overview of all conflict resolution practices
- Other: _______________________

10. How often do you read publications relating to conflict resolution?

- Frequently
- Sometimes
11. About how long have you been in your current position? ____ (Years/Months)

12. About how long have you been involved in student discipline over your career? _____ (Years/Months)

13. For which area(s) below do you have formal decision making authority? (Check all that apply)

- □ Final authority in non-academic misconduct cases
- □ Final authority in academic misconduct cases
- □ First-level hearings for academic misconduct
- □ First level hearings for non-academic misconduct
- □ Judicial board recruitment, selection and/or training
- □ Legal services for students
- □ Policy development and goal setting
□ Discipline case data reporting (internal and/or external constituents)

□ Student Code of Conduct development and/or publication

□ Meeting with students alleged to have violated the student code of conduct

□ Adjudicate cases of student code of conduct violations

□ Assign disciplinary sanctions to students found in violation of the student code of conduct

□ Other_________________________

14. Do you have formal responsibility to consult with the following individuals or offices? (Check all that apply)

□ Mental health personnel (on-campus)

□ Mental health personnel (off-campus)

□ Campus police/security

□ Local police

□ Attorneys

□ No, I do not have formal responsibility for consultation with these individuals or offices

□ Other_________________________

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15. Do you have responsibility for training and/or evaluation of the following individuals?

(Check all that apply)

□ Student conduct staff

□ Faculty

□ Security

□ Other student service staff (please specify below)

□ No I do not have responsibility for training/evaluation of these individuals

□ Other_____________________

Pseudonym

In the space below, please provide a name you would like to use for confidentiality purposes. If you do not provide a name, I will assign a pseudonym for you.

________________________________________________________________________

Thank you again for your willingness to participate in this study. Please return the completed form to me via email at jbhatt05@gmail.com by Month DD, 2016.

Sincerely,
Juhi Bhatt

Doctoral Candidate, Saint Peter’s University

Higher Education Administration Doctoral Program
Appendix E: Interview Questions

1. What drew you into the field of student conduct?

2. What factors and life experiences contributed to your working as a student conduct administrator at a community college?

3. What is your student conduct philosophy?

4. What are the challenges of working as a student conduct administrator at a community college?

5. What do you believe are the key issues in addressing student conduct violations at the community college institution?

6. How are violations of the student code of conduct addressed at your institution?
   a. What role do you have in addressing violations?
   b. What impact does the student demographic at your institution have on how you address student conduct violations?

7. In what ways, if any, do you agree with current practices regarding sanctioning for violations of the student code of conduct at your institution?

8. In what ways, if any, do you disagree with current practices regarding sanctioning for violations of the student code of conduct at your institution?

9. How do your ideas for addressing student conduct align with the institution and department mission, vision and values?

10. How do you define having a voice in the student conduct process?

11. Do you feel you have a voice in making the policy?
   a. How important is it to you that your voice be heard in how student conduct is addressed at your institution?
b. If you feel as though your voice is not valued what impact does this have in your staying in your current role as a student conduct administrator?

c. If you feel as though your voice is valued what impact does this have in your staying in your current role as a student conduct administrator?

12. What do you plan on doing in five years?

   a. If leaving the field of student affairs as a whole, what are the circumstances behind your leaving?

   b. If leaving the field of student conduct, what are the circumstances behind your leaving?
Hi Juhi,

I'm well and hope you are, too.

You have my permission to use the invitation to participate form and the participant information form, and to modify as necessary for your dissertation.

If you need anything else, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Kimberly McNair, Ed.D

Sent from my iPad

On Sep 18, 2016, at 11:08 AM, Juhi Bhatt wrote:

Hi Kimberly,

I hope you are doing well.

I am emailing you to ask permission to use your participant information form for my study.

I would also like to utilize your invitation to participate form as a template for my invitation to potential research participants.

If you are alright with these requests please email me and state same in an email response.

If you have concerns or questions please feel free to email me or call me.

Best,

Juhi Bhatt
Appendix G: Email from Dr. David Karp

Dear Juhi,

I'm delighted that you are interested in using the survey instrument we developed for the ASCA Conflict Resolution Survey some years ago. Please feel free to use the items or modify them as you see fit. I would be happy to share the raw data from our survey with you for purposes of comparison and look forward to seeing your results. Best of luck with the project.

Best,
David

------------------------------------------------------------------
David R. Karp, PhD
Professor of Sociology
Skidmore College
815 N. Broadway
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
518-580-5779
Skidmore College Project on Restorative Justice

-----Original Message-----
From: Juhi Bhatt [mailto:Juhi.Bhatt@echo.rutgers.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, April 20, 2016 7:05 PM
To: David Karp <dkarp@skidmore.edu>
Subject: Re: Survey information

David,

Would you mind sending a more formal email stating that I can use your survey for my dissertation? I want to make sure I have my ducks in a row for IRB approval.

Thank you!

-Juhi

From: David Karp <dkarp@skidmore.edu>
Sent: Monday, April 18, 2016 8:31 AM
To: Juhi Bhatt
Subject: RE: Survey information

Hi Juhi,

No, we didn't do that for this survey. But here's the instrument...

Best,
David
-----Original Message-----
From: Juhi Bhatt [mailto:Juhi.Bhatt@echo.rutgers.edu]
Sent: Sunday, April 17, 2016 3:54 PM
To: David Karp <dkarp@skidmore.edu>
Subject: Survey information

David,

Do you happen to have any reliability & validity information for the survey instrument we discussed over the phone?

Best,
Juhi Bhatt
Appendix H: Campus Conflict Resolution Survey

ASJA Campus Conflict Resolution Services Survey - S09

ASJA Campus Conflict Resolution Services Survey

We are conducting a survey to determine what kinds of conduct and conflict resolution services are offered on our campuses, what kinds of training people have, and what resources they would most like ASJA to provide. We are seeking response from one member from each campus. Our survey asks about student conduct cases on your campus, including academic integrity violations. Many thanks for your participation in this survey and for the good work that you do.

Question marked with an “*” require an answer for branching purposes.
Arbitration

*Does your campus provide arbitration?
  m Yes
  m No
  m Don’t know
  m Prefer not to answer

Definition
Arbitration: Parties in conflict present their positions to a neutral third party who makes a decision about how the conflict will be resolved.
Arbitration

Approximate number of cases institution wide per year? ________________

Approximate number of cases handled by your office per year? ________________
Administrator Hearings

*Does your campus provide conduct administrator hearings?
   m Yes
   m No
   m Don’t know
   m Prefer not to answer

Definition
Conduct Administrator Hearing: One-on-one meeting between accused student and conduct officer
Administrator Hearings

Approximate number of cases institution wide per year? ________________

Approximate number of cases handled by your office per year? ________________
Board Hearings

*Does your campus provide conduct board hearings?  
   m Yes  
   m No  
   m Don’t know  
   m Prefer not to answer

Definition
   Conduct Board Hearing: Accused student appears before a group of individuals who attend and/or are employed by the institution
Board Hearings

Approximate number of cases institution wide per year? _____________

Approximate number of cases handled by your office per year? _____________
Conflict Coaching

*Does your campus provide conflict coaching?
  m Yes
  m No
  m Don’t know
  m Prefer not to answer

Definition
Conflict Coaching: Conflict resolution specialist coaches an individual about how to address a conflict
Conflict Coaching

Approximate number of cases institution wide per year? ________________

Approximate number of cases handled by your office per year? ________________
Mediation

*Does your campus provide mediation?
  m Yes
  m No
  m Don’t know
m Prefer not to answer

Definition
  Mediation: Mediator facilitates a meeting of two or more parties in conflict
Mediation

Approximate number of cases institution wide per year? ________________

Approximate number of cases handled by your office per year? ________________
Restorative Justice Practice
*Does your campus provide restorative justice practices?
  m Yes
  m No
  m Don’t know
  m Prefer not to answer

Definition
Restorative Justice Practice: Facilitated dialogue using a restorative model such as Accountability Board, Conferencing, or Circle
Restorative Justice Practice

Approximate number of cases institution wide per year? ____________

Approximate number of cases handled by your office per year? ____________
Other Conflict Resolution Services

*Does your campus offer any other conflict resolution services on your campus?

  m Yes
  m No
  m Don’t know
  m Prefer not to answer
Other Conflict Resolution Services

What other service do you provide? ________________________________

Approximate number of cases per year? __________
Training

Definitions
Arbitration: Parties in conflict present their positions to a neutral third party who makes a decision about how the conflict will be resolved.
Conflict Coaching: Conflict resolution specialist coaches an individual about how to address a conflict
Mediation: Mediator facilitates a meeting of two or more parties in conflict
Restorative Justice Practice: Facilitated dialogue using a restorative model such as Accountability Board, Conferencing, or Circle
Social Justice Lens: Using a “social justice lens” requires that a facilitator recognize the role of social identity, power, and privilege in a conflict and identify the lenses used by the participants.

Check the trainings that you have ever participated in: (Check all that apply)
q Gehring Academy-Judicial Training Institute
q Gehring Academy-Mid-Level Managers Program q Gehring Academy-Senior Administrator Program q Gehring Academy-Mediation Training Program
q Gehring Academy-Conflict Resolution Specialist Program q
Arbitration: Length of training in hours: __________________________ q
Conflict Coaching: Length of training in hours: __________________________ q
Mediation (Not at Gehring): Length of training in hours: ______________ q
Restorative Justice: Length of training in hours: __________________________ q
Social Justice Lens
q Other: __________________________

Check the trainings that at least one OTHER member of your staff has ever participated in: (Check all that apply)
q Gehring Academy-Judicial Training Institute
q Gehring Academy-Mid-Level Managers Program q Gehring Academy-Senior Administrator Program q Gehring Academy-Mediation Training Program
q Gehring Academy-Conflict Resolution Specialist Program q
Arbitration
q Conflict Coaching
q Mediation (Not at Gehring)
q Restorative Justice
q Social Justice Lens
q Other: __________________________

For training that you have not received, select up to three that you would be most interested in receiving.

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How often do you read publications relating to conflict resolution?

- Frequently
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
Please complete the identifying information below so that we can be sure each member institution is accurately represented.

First Name: ____________________________

Last Name: ____________________________

Position Title: ____________________________

Institution: ____________________________

Email: ____________________________

Years at Institution: _____
Appendix I: Certificate of Completion

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that Juhi Bhatt successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 10/02/2016.

Certification Number: 2197415.