Mentorship for Women in Higher Education: An Approach to Workforce Development

A Dissertation submitted
to the Graduate School
Valdosta State University

in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of

DOCTORE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

in Public Administration

in the Department of Political Science
of the College of Humanities & Sciences

April 2021

Tiffany Bayne

Master of Public Administration, Georgia College & State University, 2011

B.A. Political Science, Georgia College & State University, 2009

This dissertation, "Mentorship for Women in Higher Education: An Approach to Workforce Development," by Tiffany Bayne, is approved by:

Dissertation Committee Chair

Jamie Workman, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Higher Education Leadership

Committee Members

DocuSigned by:
Chris Ferland
0224CB4A62C2423...
Chris Ferland, Ph.D.
Associate Vice President of the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness

DocuSigned by:
Cara Smith
9F08D5B9779E4B1...
Cara Smith, Ph.D.
Director of Institutional Effectiveness

DocuSigned by:
Keith Lee
5E6F5754699D4C7...
Keith Lee, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Political Science and Public Administration

Associate Provost for Graduate Studies and Research

Becky, K. da Cruz, Ph.D.
Professor of Criminal Justice

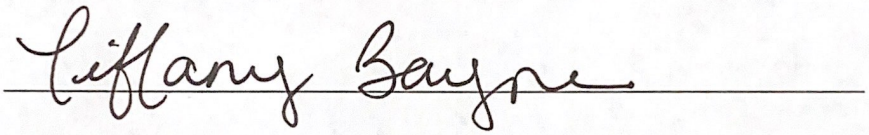
Defense Date

April 1, 2021

FAIR USE

DUPLICATION

I authorize the Head of Interlibrary Loan or the Head of Archives at the Odom Library at Valdosta State University to arrange for duplication of this dissertation for educational or scholarly purposes when so requested by a library user. The duplication shall be at the user's expense.

Signature 

I refuse permission for this dissertation to be duplicated in whole or in part.

Signature _____

ABSTRACT

Women are out enrolling men in institutions of higher education as well as filling the staff ranks. Despite the growing presence of women on our campuses, they are not progressing to the topmost leadership roles. The purpose of this study is to identify how mentoring relationships prepare women staff in higher education as leaders. A gap exists in the knowledge community around staff development as leaders in higher education. This project contributes to the knowledge community around women staff development in higher education by exploring the research question: *How does mentoring contribute to leadership and workforce development for women in higher education?* A phenomenological study utilized semi-structured interviewing to examine the experiences of women staff across three higher education settings, four year universities, community colleges, and technical colleges. The data collected from these interviews were coded and analyzed for themes.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this research project represents the hard work and dedication of many. First, I would like to thank my Chair, Dr. Jamie Workman. Dr. Workman took a chance on my project and reached outside of her own department to support this research. She shared with me her passion for Student Affairs and championed my academic pursuit of a professional experience. I also owe a debt to my committee: Dr. Keith Lee, Dr. Cara Smith, and Dr. Chris Ferland. This group of academic scholars represented the true multidisciplinary nature of Public Administration. They leant me their experiences across professional and academics fields as well as their diverse experiences in research design. I am thankful for their supportive and thought-provoking questions toward my research. Another thank you is dedicated to Dr. Holly Fling. This friend and co-worker shared her expertise in the English language, editing many drafts of this research project. She not only shared her skill with me, but she shared the joy of learning about this topic.

More importantly, I would not be at this point in the journey without the unfailing support and love of my family. Every time I tried to quit; my incredible husband Doug gently pulled me back to the desk. His quiet but steady spirit filled in the gaps when I simply could not see the end of this journey. To our parents, thank you for all of the encouraging words, the meals cooked, and most of all the free babysitting! This accomplishment is yours. To my sweet babies, Hunter and Avery, you kept me both distracted and motivated. I pray to be shoulders worthy for you to stand on.

Finally, to the mentors that inspired and participated in this study. Thank you for taking the time to reach back. Our lives are better because you cared.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Significance of the Study

Women's advancement opportunities and access to leadership roles in the workforce have shifted in thought from a glass ceiling metaphor to the concept of navigating a labyrinth (Eagly & Carli, 2007). This phenomenon leaves women exploring multiple paths to leadership, often unsure what strategies are successful and without a clear trajectory. Because women's leadership and access to leadership roles across industries occurs inconsistently and unreliably, much research has been dedicated to understanding how women lead and how women find themselves in leadership positions. This is particularly true in institutions of higher education where women are enrolling at higher rates than men, yet women leaders remain underrepresented in leadership roles. While women make up 57% of enrolled students, only 23% of university presidents and less than 30% of board members are women in these institutions (The White House Project, 2009). The rate at which women are enrolling in institutions of higher education should be creating a clear pipeline to leadership in higher education; the failure of that transition creates a need for intentional study. Tolar outlined the importance of studying women's trajectory into leadership, "learning how women understand their pathways to leadership informs the conversation and contributes to the scholarship on leadership development, particularly the role of mentoring in that development" (2012, pp. 182-183). Contributing to the knowledge of women's leadership

development and advancement pathways is imperative to the future of higher education administration.

Since the Great Recession, higher education has been forced to transform at rapid speeds. Changes in funding models, increased costs, expanding enrollments, emphasis on diversity and inclusion, and demands for transparency have forced college leaders to become nimble strategists with a primary responsibility to manage change. This ever-changing landscape requires a new type of leadership and "women possess great potential to be transformative leaders in the academy at a time when their talents are much needed" (Dunn, Gerlach, & Hyle, 2014, p. 9). The changing landscape of higher education will require a new approach to developing staff at all levels of the institutions, especially in leadership roles. This research pursued the examination of the literature around women's development in higher education; then studied the development of women staff in higher education. The ultimate purpose of this research is to offer insight that will inform strategies of women's development, preparing the industry with more women leaders and a stronger workforce in higher education.

Public administration finds itself an interdisciplinary field. Not quite the study of business and economics, and not quiet the pontification of political science, public administration provides a framework for the intersection of many sectors, as they relate to the public. Higher education institutions play a crucial role in public administration. These institutions provide education and training to the future global workforce and often are the front lines of global change. They are tightly woven in public policy, public funding, and are often the battle ground of addressing social change. This coupled with the vast workforce represented in higher education, grounds this research in public

administration. Understanding how higher education prepares women staff for success in their roles has endless positive implications for future research in the field.

Background of the Study

Mentoring, captured by the formal and informal relationships across levels of an organization, has had a presence in organizational life from the beginning of formal work environments. Much research has been dedicated to understanding the value and relevance of mentoring, specifically as it relates to workforce development. Kram (1985) provided the foundation for understanding the types of mentor relationships as well as the roles mentoring plays in individual development. Kram's work was the first organization of mentoring literature that described these relationships as evolutionary processes, definable in distinct phases (1985, p. 48). Kram provided the knowledge community with a framework to understand common themes and definitions around mentor relationships in the workplace environment. Expanding on Kram's work, further study has been dedicated to understanding the role of gender in the success of a mentor relationships. Many of these studies have been dedicated to how women's mentorship programs are used as workforce development, but few specifically address mentorship as a tool in higher education staff development. Most literature available about the advancement of women in higher education is dedicated to understanding how faculty navigate the promotion and tenure track and into administrative roles. Far less knowledge is dedicated to the development of women staff that support the functions of higher education, across the institution. Further, for years the mentorship knowledge community has leaned on theories such as social learning theory and has been explored through the lenses of role congruity theory. The mentorship research community has been criticized for its

deficiency of theory-based studies, lacking a research model or framework that would produce results independent of theoretical explanations for the results found, but instead could directly analyze the relationship between mentoring inputs and outcomes (Janssen, 2016, p. 506). Mentorship theory itself is relatively young, with Kram's work from 1985 known as the starting place for most current mentorship research. This research project sought to provide an intersection of mentorship knowledge with higher education workforce development, specifically for women working in higher education.

Statement of the Problem

Higher education is a rapidly changing field, with more demands from institutional leadership than ever before. The development and advancement of women in the higher education workforce is well suited for the changing times of the field. Grogan (1996) found women education leaders as challengers to traditional perspectives and that they provide unique approaches, alternative techniques to leadership, and are willing to reform outdated practices. Developing women leaders in higher education is a potential strategy for these institutions to become nimble and responsive to changing markets and demands. However, while college enrollments proportionately represent women, the upper ranks of leadership still belong primarily to men. The National Center for Education Statistics found that in 2017, women made up 56% of total undergraduate enrollments and they project that ratio to hold until 2028 (2019). Contrary to enrollment trends, women are not advancing as leaders in higher education organizations. Johnson found that "men out earn women by $13,874 at public institutions and by $18,201 at private institutions" (2017, p. 9). Further, as of 2016, women were not proportionately represented in the presidencies holding only 30% of these positions across all institutions

of higher education. When women were selected to serve as president, they were more likely to have previously served as a senior executive, whereas men were more likely to be selected from outside of the higher education field into a presidency. Finally, women are outnumbered by more than two to one for public and independent governing boards of these institutions (p. 9). Walking across campus, it might be easy to overlook the glass ceiling women are facing in higher education. Women are not missing from campus; they are missing from the senior leadership roles that govern decisions and strategic initiatives of the institutions they staff and matriculate.

It is imperative for institutions of higher education to offer strategic and intentional staff development for women staff, specifically those looking for advancement and leadership opportunities. This study is dedicated to exploring how women in higher education have experienced mentorship as a development tool for their success in the workforce. It is the goal of this research to provide specific recommendations for staff development to institutions for higher education in hopes that they may be able to diversify their leadership and retain qualified staff.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

This study is guided by a model that provides a theoretical framework for understanding mentoring as a development strategy for women staff and how that might lead to skills development and confidence building. The ultimate goal of this study is to produce knowledge that informs higher education leaders in effective staff development techniques for women staff. By providing these women with effective and meaningful staff development opportunities, they are able to contribute positively to the diverse and

ever-changing needs of the field. This model provides an intersection of social learning theory and collaborative leadership theory, within the context of mentorship theory.

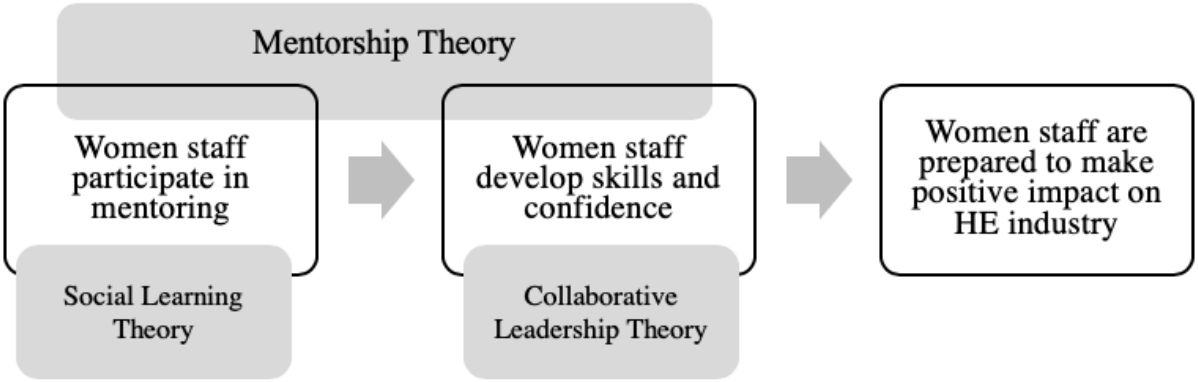


Figure 1. Mentoring Model for Women Staff in Higher Education

The model illustrated above provides the framework for this study's purpose and anticipated outcomes as well as the approach to the literature review and methodology. The model assumes that women staff who are participating in mentoring will develop skills and confidence that translates into positive impacts being made in higher education. Kram's mentorship theory provides a connection for the two inputs, participation in mentoring and develops skills. Both social learning theory as well as collaborative learning theory guide the understanding of the development taking place in women staff's participation and growth through mentoring relationships.

Mentorship Theory

While the observation of mentoring relationships is found throughout ancient literature and contributes to the fabric of human nature, the pragmatic research of mentoring is a relatively new academic field. Most scholars point to Kathy Kram's work in the mid-1980s as the starting point for mentorship theory, though more recent

researchers deny the Kram's work as a fully developed theory for study. The greatest criticism of Kram's theory is that she failed to produce a testable definition of mentorship theory. Instead, Kram's work was dedicated to understanding the characteristics and functions of mentorship. These attributes are explored in the literature review. In 2007, Bozeman and Feeny penned an analysis and critique of the collective work done towards defining mentorship theory. They wrote, "mentoring research adds up to less than the sum of its parts; although there is incremental progress in a variety of new and relevant subject domains, there has been too little attention to core concepts and theory" (p. 719). They found mentorship theory to be underdeveloped, largely due to its interdisciplinary nature. This has led to mentoring literature that is fragmented across many theoretical perspectives and fields of research and therefore difficult to assemble as a true theoretical paradigm. Bozeman and Feeny recognized that mentoring was closely related to concepts such as coaching and apprenticeship, all having the uniting theme of knowledge transmission (Bozeman and Feeny, 2007, p. 724). While Kram did not provided a bounded definition of mentorship theory, many scholars have used Kram's work as a theoretical grounding for future research and have even attempted to pen a definition of mentorship theory based off Kram's framework. In 2002, Eby and Allen offered the following definition on of mentorship theory based on Kram's 1985 publication, *Mentoring at Work: Developmental Relationships in Organizational Life*, "mentoring in an intense long-term relationship between a senior, more experienced individual (the mentor) and a more junior, less experienced individual (the protégé)" (p. 456). Kram herself described the characteristics and outcomes of mentoring, offering the following description:

> A mentor relationship has the potential to enhance career development and psychological development of both individuals. Through career functions, including sponsorship, coaching, protection, exposure-and-visibility, and challenging work assignments, a young manager is assisted in learning the ropes of organizational life and in preparing for advancement opportunities. Through psychosocial functions including role modeling, acceptance-and-confirmation, counseling, and friendship, a young manager is supported in developing a sense of competence, confidence, and effectiveness in the managerial role. (p. 614)

Kram also provided an account for the mentor's experience adding that they gained recognition for providing the service of mentorship to talented protégés in the organization and also received the benefit of personal satisfaction for investing in others. Bozeman and Feeny's definition of mentorship theory finds roots in Kram's descriptions of the phenomenon on mentoring but offers boundaries and a testable framework. They propose,

> Mentoring: a process for the informal transmission of knowledge, social capital, and psychological support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional development; mentoring entails informal communication, usually face-to-face and during a sustained period of time, between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom, or experience (the mentor) and a person who is perceived to have less (the protégé). (Bozeman and Feeny, 2007, p. 731)

Mentorship research spans across many fields of study and has led to a truly multidisciplinary framework. Mentorship theory finds its root in adult learning and human development. Mentorship taking place within the contexts of the workplace and

organizations are also influenced by organizational and social development frameworks. Mentorship theory, despite the incomplete nature of the study, grounds this research in a framework built on the understanding that knowledge is sharable, and employees can be developed from more experienced members of their organization. Mentorship theory provides a foundation for the learning and skill development that takes place in the participation in a mentoring relationship.

Social Learning Theory

When considering the exploration of mentoring as it relates to a human resource development strategy, Bandura's social learning theory provides a strong foundation for understanding how learning takes place within the context of an organization or other collective experience. Social learning theory assumes that "modeling influences produces learning principally through their informative functions and that observers acquire mainly symbolic representations of modeled activities rather than specific stimulus-response associations" (Bandura, 1977, p.6). Bandura's theory provides an understanding of learning that takes place in observation and reflection. Mentoring provides an identical platform for learning, where mentees are able to observe the successful and unsuccessful qualities or characteristics of their mentor; reflect on how to emulate those qualities for themselves; ultimately to achieve positive workplace outcomes. Bandura's theory provides a strong blueprint for understanding mentoring as a staff development tool because it provides an explanation of how employees learn in the context of the workplace organization. "In the social learning system, new patterns of behavior can be acquired through direct experience or by observing the behavior of others" because most of the behavior people demonstrate are learned "deliberately or inadvertently through

influence or example" (1977, pp. 3-5). This type of learning, specifically as it relates to the workplace environment is resource conscience in comparison to reward and punishment systems that Bandura described as "exceedingly laborious and hazardous if it proceeded solely on this basis," offering short term outcomes that would need constant revitalizing (p. 5). Allen found social learning theory directly linked to the learning that takes place in mentoring relationships, specifically the modeling that takes place between the mentor and mentee. "Mentors serve as the veteran models of behavior for their protege and provide the protege with rules that govern effective behavior in the organization" (Allen et al., 2004, p. 128). Social learning theory combined with collaborative leadership theory provides a sound construct for the exploration of this research topic.

Collaborative Leadership Theory

Similar to social learning theory, the collaborative leadership theory is rooted in learning through observation and reflection. Page and Margolis described collaborative leadership theory as a broadening of Kolb's 1984 experiential learning model, that describes growth and learning as taking place during reflection, "learning is not in having the actual experience but in the reflection of that experience" (2017, p. 78). Page and Margolis' description of the theory's lineage aligns closely with Lawrence's description, "collaborative leadership has roots in constructivism, collaborative learning, critical theory" (2017, p. 90). Characteristics of collaborative leadership theory cannot be separated from the traits of collaborative leadership, "shared vision and values, interdependence and shared responsibility, mutual respect, empathy and willingness to be vulnerable, ambiguity, effective communication, and synergy" (p. 91) as well as

"ongoing dialogue, critical reflection, deep listening" (p. 93). This theory allows for problem solving and decision making to be made collectively, allowing all members of the group to share their knowledge and participate in critical reflection. Learning, in the collaborative leadership model, is a collective process.

Soreson, Folker, and Brigham studied the collaborative leadership theory within the context of business organizations and thus described the theory as an orientation. The researches labeled collaborative leadership theory as the collaborative network orientation, viewing the framework as a "theoretical concept described as an orientation because it represents a worldview in how individuals organize" (2008, p. 616). When applied in the workplace, this theory produced positive relationships, the sharing of information, exchanged resources, and the overall experience of mutually beneficial activities and gains (Soreson, Folker, and Brigham, 2008).

Collaborative learning theory provides a strong schematic for understanding mentorship as a staff development tool because of the emphasis on how the theory supports learning in the workplace environment. Page and Margolis place great emphasis on the role of meaningful conversations with members of the workplace organization, highlighting the importance of peer to peer learning.

> Learners bring their experience in the organization into the learning environment. Through bringing the real-world application of their collaborative learning and leadership back into their work environments, learners receive a critical element so important to adult learners, which is the immediate application of skill development and learning to address existing challenges. (Page and Margolis, 2017, p. 83)

This relationship between learning and skill development allows mentees to implement their learning within their sphere of influence immediately. This research model supported by these learning and development theories seeks to understand that skill and confidence development.

Research Question

Much literature exists on women's leadership development, mentorship in the workplace, and mentorship as a leadership development strategy. This paper seeks to explore approaches to leadership and staff development for women in higher education that focuses on mentorship. These phenomenon and knowledge community will be explored by the following guiding question: *How does mentoring contribute to leadership and workforce development for women in higher education?*

The following questions have guided the review of the literature as well as the methodology and interview development.

1. Do women staff in higher education view themselves as leaders?
2. Are women participating in mentor-mentee relationships?
3. Are there hurdles to women finding mentors in higher education?
4. What key functions of the mentor-mentee relationship has helped women succeed in the workplace?

Research Design

This study was guided by phenomenological research practices, with data collection taking place in one-on-one interviews. Creswell described phenomenological research as "a design of inquiry coming from philosophy and psychology in which the researcher describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as

described by participants" (Creswell, 2014, p. 14). This approach to study requires the researcher to organize interview transcripts, requiring a coding system that organizes significant statements, sentences, or quotes that "provide an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon" (Creswell, 2013, p. 82). This analysis of significant statements is known as horizontalization. This study recruited participants that have experienced the phenomenon being studied, mentorship. Then using one-on-one interviews, the researcher collected data regarding the participants' experiences. The interview transcripts were analyzed for significant statements, producing generalizations about the experience of mentorship in higher education for women staff.

Data Collection

The interviews were conducted with staff from higher education institutions that identify as women. Staff were defined as non-teaching, salaried, employees. In efforts to best understand the role of mentorship in women staff's professional development, the researcher used purposeful sampling technique that offered a sample of women staff at various levels of employment inside of these organizations. Creswell described purposeful sampling as the selection of participants because "they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (2013, p. 300). Further, this study utilized criterion sampling technique to ensure that all participants have experienced mentoring.

Table 1. Criterion for Sample

Type of Institution	Staff Level
Research Institutions	"Front Line-Level" (provides direct service)
Comprehensive Institutions	"Mid-Level" (experienced, manager)
Community/Technical College	"Executive-Level" (responsible for multiple units, near top of the organization structure)
Historically Black College/University	

Table 1. outlines the criteria required for participation in this study. Women staff from institutions in the Southeastern United States employed by research universities, comprehensive colleges and universities, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) as well as women employed by community colleges and technical institutions were recruited to participate. Further, the sample reflected women staff working at all three levels demonstrated in the table. The sample included women staff working at the following organizational levels: front line staff that are responsible for direct delivery of service; mid-level employees that are experienced and are working as managers, responsible for other employees; and finally executive level employees that manage multiple units and are situated near the top of their organizations' leadership structure. By including multiple types of institutions, the patterns and themes identified in this study can be more broadly applied to future staff development techniques. Similarly, by including women staff at multiple levels of the organization, phenomenon captured by their interviews enhances the validity of the themes and significant experiences found. The table above represents twelve types of women staff. The researcher conducted twenty four interviews, two interviews per staff type.

Definition of Terms

Women Staff: employees of higher education institutions that identity as women or female gender. These employees' primary roles are not lecturing, teaching, or researching. Instead, women staff are providers of front-line services to students, lead departments or units, or are administrators.

Salaried Employees: Employees paid monthly, on a fixed amount of income. These employees' contribution to the organization are not measure by number of hours contribute, but instead the outputs and outcomes of their efforts in the workplace.

Higher Education: formal education taking place after high school, encompasses technical education as well as college and universities.

Mentoring, Mentorship, Mentor Relationships: a relationship between employees (one usually more experienced) that contributes to the development and learning of the younger employee.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study examined the role of mentorship in human resource development for women staff in higher education throughout the Southeastern United States. There are both limitations and delimitations to this study, which should be thoughtfully considered when considering how these results may inform the development of staff development strategies. These limitations are:

1. Participants were selected based on the criteria that they had participated in a mentoring relationship. This criterion did not require a minimum number of meetings or engagement with the mentors. It is possible that there is great variance in the quality of mentor relationships captured by this study.

2. The researcher and interview process had little control or influence over a participant's willing to discuss the topics presented in the interview. Some participants may share more freely than others, generating a deeper understanding on certain aspects of the phenomenon being studied, in comparison to others.
3. The twenty-four participants represented in this study do not reflect the experiences of all women staff in Southeastern institutions of higher education. This limits the generalizability of this study.

The delimitations of the study that should be taken into consideration when interpreting the results generated by the study are:

1. As the researcher, I identify with the potential participants that will be recruited for this study. I am a woman working in higher education administration, with members of the staff reporting to me. I have been in multiple mentoring relationships, both as a mentee and mentor. My personal assumptions, values, and biases may have an impact on the way the interviews are conducted as well as how the data are collected and analyzed. I will work diligently to prevent researcher bias in this project.
2. While there are twelve types of interview participants, this sample does not take into account further ways to categorize higher education institutions such as public, religious, private, and independent schools. The results of this study may not directly translate into every institution because funding models and mission orientations were not considered.

3. This study is geographically bound, making it difficult to generalize the findings outside of the Southeastern United States.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into four additional chapters. Chapter two, the literature review explores the existing knowledge of mentoring, staff development in higher education, and women's leadership development. Chapter three, the methodology is dedicated to outlining the strategies for recruiting and vetting participants, conducting the interviews, the collection of data and finally the approach to analyzing the data. Chapter four will explore the findings of the data analysis. Finally, chapter five will offer a discussion of conclusions drawn from the data as well as considerations for future research.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mentorship in the Workplace

In 1985 Kathy Kram published, *Mentoring at Work: Developmental Relationships in Organizational Life*. This work has become the practical and theoretical guide to understanding mentorship in the workplace and provides the basis for mentor-based staff development. Before Kram, mentorship studies leaned heavily on social learning theory and other adult learning theories to understand how people learned from one another in the context of organizational life. Kram provided an organized framework for understanding the types of mentoring as well as the potential outcomes for mentoring relationships. Recent mentoring research has used Kram's mentorship theory as a basis to further explore specific types of mentoring such as the intersectionality of mentoring and identity. This literature review will explore Kram's framework for mentorship in the workplace and will also highlight more recent literature that expanded Kram's work.

Qualities and Characterization of Mentorship Relationships

Kram's framework of mentorship in the workplace is rooted in the understanding that workplace relationships are formed and experienced within the context of the organization's culture. How an organization approaches the coordination of tasks and assignments, facilitates performance evaluations, and the reward structure all influence

the behavior of the individuals inside of the organization, thus will have an effect on the way those individuals relate and interact (Kram, 1985, pp. 15-16). A solid foundation for successful workplace mentorship is built on individuals being empowered and encouraged to work across the organization chart. A workplace that approaches projects and assignments that "legitimize interaction across hierarchical levels encourage individuals at different career stages to interact with each other" (Kram, 1985, p. 17). This dynamic allows more experienced members of the organization to teach, coach, and provide feedback to less experienced employees of the organization. An organization seeking to create a productive and successful mentorship program must evaluate the culture of work and ensure the opportunity for cross level collaboration and coordination to take place. More recent research upholds Kram's outlook on the role of mentorship in the workplace, demonstrating that employees that had participated in a mentorship relationship were more likely to experience positive career outcomes than their peers who had not. These positive career outcomes including higher compensation, promotions, an overall greater satisfaction with career, and finally a stronger intention of remaining with the organization that facilitated the mentorship (Allen et al., 2004).

There are two basic functions of mentorship relationships that take place within the context of the workplace. Mentor relationships can encompass either or both functions depending on the needs and expectations of both the mentee and mentor. Career functions of mentorship relationships are characterized by a higher-level manager helping a newer employee learn how to navigate the organization and for the purpose of "advancement in the organization" (Kram, 1985, p. 22). Career functions depend on "the senior person's position and influence in the organization" (p. 32). The other function of

mentorship focuses on psychosocial outcomes which emphasize identity clarification, confidence and competence development, and building of personal and professional self-worth. Psychosocial functions depend on "the quality of the interpersonal relationship" between the mentor and mentee (p. 32).

Table 2. Kram's Mentor-Mentee Relationship Functions

Career Functions	Psychosocial Functions
Sponsorship	Role Modeling
Exposure-and-Visibility	Acceptance-and-Confirmation
Coaching	Counseling
Protection	Friendship
Challenging Assignments	

Kram organized both career and psychosocial mentorship functions into categories that describe the way the mentor and mentee relate and ties potential relationship outcomes to the description of the relationship. Table 2. demonstrates show Kram described both career functions and psychosocial functions of mentorships. Sponsorship creates opportunities for advancement for the mentee and depends on the mentor actively nominating the mentee for career moves and promotions (Kram, 1985). Exposure-and-visibility occurs when higher level mentors assign specific projects or responsibilities to the lower level mentee. These projects allow the mentee to work with key members of the organization, thus gaining them visibility with other higher-level managers. In contrast, protection in mentor-mentee relationships is characterized by the higher-level manager taking responsibility for the work of the mentee in contentious situations. The mentor may become involved when the mentee is not prepared to navigate the conditions presented. The coaching function is built on the mentor's willingness to enhance the mentee's understanding of the organization, "suggesting specific strategies for accomplishing work objectives, for achieving recognition, and for achieving career

aspirations" (p. 28). Finally, challenging assignments is a mentor-mentee relationship based on the strategic development of the mentee's work-based skill set. Specific projects or tasks are assigned, ongoing support is offered, and feedback is provided for the purpose of developing the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the mentee. These mentor relationships are focused on career outcomes, specifically the development of new skills and advancement opportunities. On the other end of the mentor-mentee relationship continuum are the types psychosocial functions taking place in mentorships. Allen et al. found that the career functions and their outcomes described by Kram are directly related to the mentor and mentee's attraction to the tasks of the work, thus leading to workplace success (2004).

The most common function of a psychosocial mentor relationship is role modeling. This function allows the mentor's "attitude, values, and behavior" to be a model for the mentee to understand success in the context of the work environment (Kram, 1985, p. 32). Similarly, the acceptance-and-confirmation function occurs when the mentor's support, positive feedback, and mutual respect helps contribute to the mentee's sense of competence in the organization. Counseling functions of the psychosocial mentor-mentee relationships occurs when the mentor provides a space for the mentee to explore internal conflicts. These conflicts involve exploring the mentee's competence, potential, relating to peers, navigating supervisors without compromising values, and managing work-life balance. Finally, friendship functions are characterized by a "mutual liking" and "enjoyable informal exchanges" taking place both inside and outside workplace experiences (p. 38). Allen et al. studied participant satisfaction of both mentees and mentors. Their research revealed that mentee satisfaction as it relates to

psychosocial outcomes had more to do with their satisfaction with their mentor than it did with career functions. Thus, the mentee's ability to find the mentor likable mattered more for psychosocial relationships than for career functions (2004).

While Kram organized mentor relationships according to primary function, which was upheld by Allen et al. (2004); Janssen, van Vuuren, and de Jong (2016) offered another view of how to organize and characterize the relationship between a mentor and mentee. Janssen et al. offered a continuum, represented by informal and formal mentor relationships. Informal relationships were broadly characterized by the individuals themselves connecting, driven by shared or common needs. In contrast, a formal mentorship requires pairing by a third party, with the objective of meeting organizational needs (2016). While both informal and formal mentor relationships can produce positive outcomes for an organization, informal relationships are unbounded, with the focus exploring both professional and personal development topics. In addition to exploring the outputs of these organizations, as well as how they are characterized, Kram (1983) developed a framework for how they form, develop, and dissolve. All functions of mentorship are subject to the phases of the mentor relationship cycle.

The phases of a mentor relationship were described by Kram as an evolutionary process that depended on "the functions provided, individual experiences, and the quality of interactions" (1983, p. 48). She organized this process into four phases, the initiation phase, the cultivation phase, the separation phase, and the redefinition phase. The initiation phase is typically the first six to twelve months of the relationship, with both individuals typically experiencing positive thoughts about the relationship, encouraging the relationship to continue. The cultivation phase lasts two to five years and is the period

of time in the relationship when the functions are maximized. It is also during this period that the positive outlooks of the initiation phase are put to test by reality and the pair discovers how valuable the relationship is to each of them. The separation phase takes place after three to five years and typically occurs when "the nature of the relationship is altered by structural changes in the organizational context and or psychosocial changes within one or both individuals" (p. 56). Finally, the redefinition phase occurs if and when the relationship takes on a new form. For some mentor-mentee relationships, this phase does not take place, however some relationship become more responsive to the current needs of both individuals and evolves as the circumstances around the relationship have changed (1985).

Mentorship Program Design in the Workplace

While Kram is largely acknowledged as the first scholar to capture the characteristics, yields, and hurdles of mentoring, mentorship relationships have existed throughout history. Despite the long history of mentoring relationships, designing and measuring intentional mentor programs in the work organization is relatively new research, **"**organizations are increasingly recognizing the value of mentoring relationships and attempt to reap the advantages through launching formal mentoring programs as part of their career development initiatives" (Scandura & Pellegrini, 2007, p. 8). Miller and Byham lay out a case that organizations cannot afford to miss the opportunity of workplace mentoring, "organizations benefit from the knowledge transfer; mentoring helps retain the practical experience and wisdom of the long-term employees. And, as a result of mentor-led professional development, companies realize both productivity and retention gains" (2015, p. 48). Kram's work on mentoring relationships in the workplace

marked the beginning of a rapidly growing field of literature around mentorship. This literature is multidisciplinary and finds home in many academic fields including Management, Public Administration, Leadership, and Human Resource development to name a few. In 2007, Allen and Eby published the *Handbook of Mentoring: A Multiple Perspective Guide*. A chapter penned by Scandura and Pellegrini was dedicated to understanding the approaches and methodological issues with workplace mentoring. They outlined the importance of workplace mentorship programs clarifying the difference between other developmental relationships such as supervision and leadership. The need for this clarification was because of the difference in outcomes in supervision versus mentoring. Supervision produces short term outcomes such as a positive appraisal or evaluation, where mentoring produces long term outcomes such as promotion and development. Similarly, they provided the example of leadership in contrast to mentorship in the workplace. Workplace leadership finds decision making to be directive while workplace mentoring is participative. Developing workplace mentorship programs must have clearly defined boundaries, definitions, and intentions to avoid dysfunction.

In addition to providing the framework of how and why mentor relationships take place within organizations, Kram also outlined intentional steps organizations can take to encourage mentorships within the workplace. First, there must be an intentional design for how communication flows through the levels of the organization. How jobs and projects are designed, specifically how levels of employees communicate and interact over these jobs create the opportunities for the facilitation of mentor-mentee relationships. Further, Kram suggests that organizations consider carefully how they plan to rotate jobs and offer promotions. The timing of these moves should be done in

compliment to the mentor relationship process, not against it unintentionally causing a mentor relationship to end prematurely (1985). Allen et al. encouraged future research on why both career function mentoring and psychosocial mentoring produce positive work-related values such as job satisfaction, yet career function mentoring was more effective in producing actual career outcomes such as advancement. Their research of mentoring theory was not able to produce an explanation of this dynamic (2004).

Srivastava offered caution when designing work based mentoring programs, highlighting that "formal mentoring programs are often targeted to specific employee populations, such as new employees, senior managers, or high-potential employees" (Srivastava, 2015, p.430). When designing programs, intentional outcomes should guide the recruitment and selection of participants. Labin introduced the AXLES model to program planning for workplace mentoring programs. The AXLES model addresses five key components of mentoring programs: alignment, experience, launching, effectiveness, and support (2017). Like many program models, the AXLES model is founded on the need to define the purpose of the program. The "align to purpose" stage of the model requires program planners to identify the organization's needs, values, culture, and partners. These responses are used to develop a program purpose statement which will guide all other components of the model and planning process. Phase two, "Design the Experience" requires program planners to consider how the mentor program will be structured, the potential schedule of events and activities and how participants are recruited and then matched. Once the program design is complete, the program enters into the "Launch the Program" phase of the model. This milestone creates a "cohesive experience for participants" and must be considered in the context of the overall program

experience. The fourth stage of the model, "Evaluate Effectiveness" is central to the ongoing success of the program. This stage allows organizations to capture success stories of their mentoring program as well as being equipped to make intentional improvements to the program for future success. The final stage of the model, "Support Participants" is the opportunity to provide resources to the mentees and mentors participating in the program. This final stage is focused on meeting participant needs so that the learning and development from the mentoring relationship can be captured and produce positive workplace outcomes (Labin, 2017). The AXLES model is similar to many program models but is specifically designed for workplace mentoring programs. This model directly ties organizational values and culture to the desired outcomes for participants.

Contributing to the literature about workplace mentorship program development, Scandura's research offers a pragmatic view of the possible dysfunctions of mentoring in organizational life, defining dysfunction in mentoring relationships as occurring when "the relationship is not working for one or both parties; one or both parties' needs are not being meet in the relationship; or one or both of the parties suffering distress as a result of being in the relations" (1998, p. 453). This research offers caution to program developers, providing intentional program design instruments that decrease the likelihood of negative outcomes from mentorship relationships. Because of the close personal nature of mentor relationships, "the consequences of negative interactions could be detrimental to relationships" (p. 450). If a workplace plans to launch a mentor program, potential proteges and mentors should be given the opportunity to participate right from the start. Formalized mentoring programs need to gain input from both parties for the purpose of

matching mentoring pairs. Random pairings do not allow the individuals' goals, interests, or experiences to be taken into consideration. Program designers should also plan for training and orientation sessions early in the mentoring matching phase of the program. The best way to avoid potential mentoring dysfunction outcomes is to help participants understand tendencies of interpersonal conflict. Scandura (1998) recommended training programs dedicated to preparing protégé's and mentors to address relational difficulties, boundaries of work relationships, sexual harassment, diversity issues in relationship development, and setting expectations. Organizations should prioritize the programmatic insight Scandura has offered, failure to do so could lead to costly negative outcomes such as absenteeism and turnover. Further, organizational mentoring programs must design an exit for the protégé if the mentor relationship is failing or demonstrating dysfunctional characteristics. This allows the mentor relationship to conclude in a manner that minimizes the negative impact of a relationship that was failing to meet the expectations of one or both parties.

Scandura's 1998 contribution to mentorship theory also explored the challenges faced by mentorship pairings that include a supervisor and employee dynamic. Specifically concerning are issues of power and control. Scandura found that these hurdles were influenced by the following potential dynamics in a relationship based on an employment contract: where the mentor may have greater control over assignments and development opportunities, and where the protégé is under pressure to meet the supervisor's demands, "given the potential consequences, the mentor-protégé relationship overlaid on a bass-subordinate relationship is a special case of mentoring, in which relational distress may be more extreme, due to the fear of retaliation from the

boss/mentor" (p. 452). Mentorship pairings that involve a supervisor and employee are not doomed for failure, but organizations wishing to conduct successful mentorship programs should consider specific program inputs to manage the potential for dysfunction in these unique pairings. Expectation management and boundary setting are crucial for success.

The knowledge community around mentoring is growing exponentially. The literature provides a sound understanding of how mentoring contributes to work organizations. Srivastava expanded the literature by exploring not only the positive work-related outcomes of mentoring in the workplace, but also identified the outcomes experienced by the mentee as it relates to their personal network. Srivastava identified four outcomes of mentoring that propels the expansion of a mentor's network. Those outcomes are access, involvement, social skills, and legitimacy (2015). Through mentoring relationships, mentees are able to access the influential members of the work organization, they are able to participate in projects that allow them to expand their network, they are able to glean from the social skills of the mentor and build onto their own, and finally their association with the mentor affords them a personal connection with a respected senior member of the organization. Srivastava (2015) identification of these outcomes were presented with caution to organizational leaders. Because mentees are offered relationships with organizational elites and are propelled to expand their own reach within the organization or industry, mentoring programs have the potential to further marginalize groups of people with fewer access points to these networks. Intentional design of workplace mentoring programs is crucial, especially for women and people of color.

Mentorship and Gender

The fields of psychology and sociology have dedicated a great deal of research to the socialization of gender. The literature surrounding mentorship and gender has been influenced by studies of women's socialization, women's learning and development, and women in the workplace. The following sections explore those themes of socialization, women's experience with mentoring, and the hurdles associated with mentoring for women.

The Socialization of Gender

Gilbert and Rossman wrote, "gender acts as a pervasive organizer in our culture" (1992, p. 234). This outlook towards the role of gender in our society can be found throughout gender studies. From early life development to career navigation, gender provides a framework for how people experience the world differently. While recent history has been marked by incredible change as it relates to gender, it still remains prevalent in how we organize and describe how people experience the world. For women, this difference in experience begins very early in life. "From early childhood throughout life, many women are exposed to pervasive messages that a woman's life should revolve around taking care of others and that their career plans are somehow superimposed on this primary obligation" (Cook, et al., 2002, p. 298). This conditioning often leads women into career paths viewed by society as helper roles such as teaching, nursing, and administrative support. Research evidence demonstrates that these career expectations create psychological barriers for women as they approach career decision making, performance, and persistence in the workforce (Sullivan and Mahalik, 2002). As a result, women's career paths are nonsequential and even sporadic (Cook et al., 2002). Even as women advance in their workplace organizations and are promoted to the top ranks, they

continue to encounter the socialized influence of gender on their experience. Adjacent to the concept of a "glass ceiling," which denotes the role of gender in keeping women from advancing in leadership positions in the workplace, Gilbert and Rossman described the phenomenon faced by women as a "glass wall." Glass walls are barriers women face at senior levels of management. These barriers "keep women out of the inner sanctum" and "off the male turf" (1992, p. 234). For example, poker nights and rounds of golf have historically excluded women, yet significant business development takes place in these settings. Glass walls also effect women's experience in mentoring, as "potential female proteges may be deselected or ignored by male mentors or given limited access to information and control of resources because of organizational discomfort with women in leadership positions" (p. 234). This creates an incredible tension for organizations, because while these gender dynamics create a hurdle for mentorship, they are also the very reason mentoring women is critical, "given the career-related obstacles that may be present for women of color and White Women, access to supportive (and challenging) mentors may assist individuals in negotiating the barriers that confront them in their path to educational and vocational achievement." (Cook et al., 2002, p. 302). Mentoring is an ideal platform for women to identify their strengths, explore their own identities, and challenge stereotypes. These developmental relationships offer social support for women as they assess their skills and abilities as well as "anticipate gender-related constraints to their career exploration, decision making, and success experiences" (Sullivan and Mahalik, 2002, p. 60). Organizations and individuals alike stand to benefit from the positive outcomes of mentorship in the workplace. It cannot be ignored however, that

women experience mentoring differently than men. The following literature review illustrates the tensions and themes present in mentoring as it relates to gender.

Women's Experience with Mentoring

Allen and Eby's research from 2004, about the role of gender in mentor relationships, expands Kram's work on the function of mentorship in the workplace. Allen and Eby's primary finding upheld that gender differences found in mentor relationships are represented along the continuum of career function outcomes and the psychosocial mentor function outcomes of mentoring. Specifically, Allen and Eby found that "the results suggested women tend to receive more psychosocial mentoring than do men and men tend to receive more career mentoring than do women" (p. 130). They found that mentors reported as having spent more time psychosocial mentoring their mentees when the mentees were women. Their research was also consistent with perspectives from social role theory, finding that the "greatest degree of psychosocial mentoring occurred between female mentors and female protégés" and the least amount between female mentors and male proteges (p. 137). Women mentors are assuming the role of caregiver in the mentoring relationships, offering advice and support beyond the context of work and career for the mentee. The research offered by Gilbert and Rossman suggests that women offer a unique role modeling opportunity for their protégés because they can demonstrate that women are both competent in their fields as well as successful in maintaining personal lives, "they are real people who are able to enter into loving and caring relationships with lovers, spouses, and children" and that female mentors "may provide an aspect of mentoring that male mentors cannot provide" (1992, p. 235).

The other major theme discussed by Allen and Eby (2004) was the tension experienced in cross-gender mentor relationships. This tension is caught between the potential benefit of the relationship with the concern of sexual harassment incidents and potential innuendos from others. Tola's 2012 research also upheld the limitation of cross gender relationships, describing them as "tricky to initiate" and associated with risk (2012, p. 180). Koontz, Walters, and Edkin's discussion of this tension pointed to the interactions between stereotypical gender roles, identities, and social norms that place pressure on cross-gender pairings. Koontz et al. also attributed these tensions to why women are often left out of informal mentoring networks, due to the fear of gossip and inability to manage the cross-gender tensions (2018). The study conducted by Koontz et al. offered strategies for combating these tensions, namely compelling the organization to formalize mentoring programs that can "foster relationship that otherwise derive from potentially exclusionary information networking" (p. 105). These formal mentoring programs provide the framework for mentoring relationships to take place in the organization and do not depend on like-personalities for form pairings, thus taking the pressure off employees to find qualified and interested potential matches. Srivastava's research on gender in mentoring echoed this call for formal mentoring in organizations, stating that these initiatives "help women overcome deficiencies in network access" and provide them access to coalitions in the workplace that otherwise they may not have been able to approach (2015, p. 428).

Challenges of Cross-Gender Mentoring

As briefly explored, the differences women experience in mentoring can create hurdles to the positive outcomes often associated with these developmental relationships.

The greatest issues facing women's mentorship is the lack of available women mentors from the executive level. Miller and Byham pointedly described the crux of this issues for workplace organizations:

> Without senior level female mentors, the lower levels of leadership are severely disadvantaged. An organizations' bench strength is weakened when a large group of employees have no one to show them the ropes – including how to elevate their social capital and prepare for the bigger leagues. (2015, p. 50)

McDonald and Westphal also studied the effect of representation in organizational leadership as it relates to women and minority rising leaders. They found that when an organization had few board level women or minority leaders represented, there were lower levels of mentoring offered to that same demographic further down the organizational chart. The lack of representation in upper levels of leadership and therefore less mentoring to women and minority employees puts these employees at a disadvantage because they receive less advice and guidance regarding "normative ways of participating in board deliberations" and worse, "tend to comply less consistently with prevailing norms to avoid controlling behaviors" (McDonald & Westphal, 2013, p. 1187). When women are able to rise to executive level leadership positions, they are eager to participate in mentoring relationships. Miller and Byham found that 74% of their research respondents indicated an eagerness to mentor and even contributed that willingness to the benefits they received from their own mentorship experiences (2015).

Turner and Gonzalez's research maintained the literature's presentation of the hurdles of cross gender mentoring, specifically the stigmas and hurdles presented by social norms as it relates to gender. Their contribution to the literature included themes

for successful mentoring across gender. Mentors and mentees wishing to participate in successful cross-gender mentoring relationships should consider upholding the following values and strategies in their mentor relationship. The foundational theme, feminist mentoring, requires an attitude that "acknowledges the potential power dynamics between a male mentor and female mentee." Both the mentor and mentee should share a commitment that focuses on an interpersonal relationship that empowers the mentee, providing for autonomy and personal development (Turner and Gonzalez, 2015, p. 8). Another theme of Turner and Gonzalez's framework for successful cross gender mentoring is a focus on professional and social needs. Mentor-mentee pairs should be matched based on identified and intentional professional and social needs of the mentee, that can be addressed by the mentor, providing a defined purpose for the relationship. Building on the theme of feminist mentoring, successful cross gender mentor pairs required mutual respect in the mentoring pair. Both participants must be "invested in the mentee's success" and "confident in their abilities" (2015, p. 9). Turner and Gonzales' also studied the role of shared background as it relates to gender and race in mentoring. They found that the same cultural and social background is not required for successful mentoring. However, both participants must be aware of their differences and maintain a dedication to active listening, recognizing bias, and an appreciation for diversity. While Turner and Gonzales research maintained a positive tone and set a way forward for cross gender mentoring pairs, Clawson and Kram also explored cross gender mentoring and offered caution in efforts to also contribute a way forward. They penned the concept, "development dilemma" to describe the tension in cross gender relationships where there is a desire to pull subordinates close in a developmental relationship yet also maintain a

desire to avoid complicate male-female relationship, causing the supervisor or mentor to push away (1984, p. 23). The tension in cross gender relationship stems from "concerns of public image of the relationship" causing men and women to "avoid one-on-one contact behind closed doors or after work hours where important work is often accomplished" (p. 24). Their research organized development relationships into two aspects, the internal relationship and the external relationship. The internal aspect refers to the relationship between individuals, the mentor and the mentee. The external relationship reflects the relationship between the mentorship pair and the rest of the organization. Both aspects of the mentorship relationship have the potential to render unproductive levels of intimacy between the pair, productive levels of intimacy, and unproductive distance. The table below summarizes the intersection of relationship aspect with levels of intimacy.

Table 3. Outcomes of Three Levels of Intimacy in Two Kinds of Relationships

	Unproductive Intimacy	Productive Levels of Intimacy	Unproductive Distance
Internal Relationship	Sexual liaisons likely; less than desired growth	Desired levels of productivity and development	Less than desired productivity development
External Relationship	Perceived favoritism and distrust	Development of respect for boss, subordinate, and for other sex.	Reinforced prejudices.

This table describes the potential outcomes of cross gender mentoring when intimacy is allowed to cross boundaries and one or both individuals lose sight of the goals and intended outcome of the relationship.

The following section of this literature review is dedicated to understanding the research and best practice of staff development in higher education. Formal mentoring

programs is a found strategy of staff development and will be explored as a standalone subsection of staff development in higher education.

Staff Development in Higher Education

Higher education today is evolving as it responds to the changing demographics of students and faculty, the rapidly changing funding structures, and the demands of the workforce looking to hire trained and capable graduates. Administrators and leaders in our colleges and universities are called to be innovative, strong communicators, business minded, and mission lead. Ruben and De Lisi described the demands of higher education leaders best in their book, *A Guide for Leaders in Higher Education:*

> We believe that institutions of higher education would benefit greatly from a heightened focus on leadership development in a number of respects, including fostering enhanced skills in the assessment of organizational and corresponding leadership needs at particular points in time, and creating additional option for effective succession planning. (2017, p. 4)

As noted by Ruben and De Lisi (2017), the literature exploring staff development in higher education is mostly dedicated to understanding how faculty advance in the academy. Even literature dedicated to the development and advancement of administrative leaders assumes that those leaders found their trajectory through the faculty. There is a growing, yet still small amount of literature dedicated to understanding the role of student affairs staff in higher education. Yet, there is a large gap in the literature evaluating the strategic and holistic development of higher education employees that provide the administrative support to the institutions. This section of the literature review presents the literature that is available to the knowledge community.

Blackwell and Blackmore identified a major hurdle to strategic and holistic staff development programs for the higher education industry. They found that the vast range of institution types and functions was the chief cause for a lack of body of study dedicated to strategic staff development for the industry (2003). Despite the hurdles to a unified staff development approach, Blackwell and Blackmore outlined the need, stating "staff expertise is the most important asset in a university; without it literally nothing can be achieved" (p. 23). They championed staff development as critical to an institutions' core functions, with the goal of enabling an institution "to recruit and retain staff appropriately skilled to undertake its mission" (p. 23). Recognizing that many employees in higher education are highly educated teachers and researchers, Blackwell and Blackmore criticized higher education as having "a weak claim to being a profession," and highlighted the lack of standards and professional code in the field (p. 20). They argued that the PhD is the most common preparation for careers in higher education, yet the training and education of a PhD prepares a person for research, not the many other duties required of higher education employees. Ruben and De Lisi expanded, "subject matter expertise, in and of itself, is not sufficient to assure outstanding leadership" (2017, p. 344). Even the criticism of higher education staff development offered by Blackwell and Blackmore is geared toward the trajectory of the faculty, highlighting PhDs as the typical training and entry into higher education. Ruben and De Lisi also argued that higher education has not generally been considered "part of a sector or industry, preferring instead to consider that we are engaged in unique, specialized, and highly differentiated roles" (2017, p. 8). Similar to Blackwell and Blackmore's critic of human resource development in higher education, Ruben and De Lisi (2017) found faculty as

having “a more detailed understanding of trends in their field – both in teaching and research – than they do of what is going on in their home institutions and in higher education more generally” (p. 8). This type of training is understood as vertical learning or vertical leadership, where a scholar invests greatly in understanding an area of focus with great depth. Vertical learning and vertical leadership may propel an academic in their field of study but limits their ability to lead the institution. Ruben and De Lisi called for leaders that were able to learn and lead across competencies. They wrote:

> What is needed now among leaders, we believe, is a way of thinking broadly about contemporary institutions of higher education – a way of thinking that involves a sophisticated understanding of the organizational and leadership challenges facing colleges and universities at all levels, a competency – and communication – based approach to leadership and leadership development, and a practical guide for current and aspiring leaders that builds on traditional competencies but expands to take account of radical changes in the higher education context. (2017, p. 5)

Ruben and De Lisi (2017) welcomed higher education administrators to consider the leadership and development competencies being used across industries as potential strategies for colleges and universities. They championed an evolved outlook on leading the academy, pointing to the rapid changes facing higher education as the catalyst for more open understandings of leading the way forward for these organizations.

The immeasurable differences across institutions affects the way faculty and staff are organized, often giving way to each organization’s socialized norms. Grouping, inside of an organization, has defined benefits such as providing peer support, self-regulation,

and benchmarking. However, the potential fallout from grouping includes othering non group members and interest in seeking dominance over other groups, "through self-interest or belief in centrality of its work" (Blackwell and Blackmore, 2003, p. 18). Blackwell and Blackmore emphasized the importance of grouping and the naming of groups for higher education organizations, "centrally, role boundaries and descriptions are never politically neutral since, whether formally or informally, they have to do with human interrelationships and, usually, access to resources" (p. 18). Understanding the grouping and socialized norm taking place in higher education impacts the way the industry approaches staff development, specifically for each group inside the academy. Blackwell (2003) built on this idea and urged sensitivity to these organizational patterns, values, and attitudes when developing staff development strategies. He identified four organizational patterns of university departments that influence how those groups of staff interact and therefore are developed. Those four patterns are: hierarchical, collegial, anarchical, and political (p. 121). Each of these patterns influence how decisions are made, how resources are shared, and how employees interact. Staff development strategies must take groups and organizational patterns into consideration when being planned and implemented. Ruben and De Lisi also explored the role of organizational culture in the development of employee training and assigned the responsibility of creating a supportive environment on current higher education leaders. An organizational culture that values the training and development of employees is necessary for successful staff development programs. Specifically, Ruben and De Lisi found, "to be successful, leadership educational programs and interventions must leverage the learning that occurs within the ongoing everyday environment" (2017, p. 359). Staff training and leadership

development programs have to be supported by learning environments that are found the in culture of the organization.

Mentorship as Staff Development in Higher Education.

Mentorship programs are often used in colleges and universities as a means for staff development. Potter and Tolson's research was dedicated to understanding the influence of mentoring on junior nursing faculty in the university setting. Their research upheld many of the positive outcomes discussed in the mentoring literature. They wrote, "for successful orientation and retention of junior faculty in higher education, mentoring is a must have" (2014, p. 729). Their work highlighted in the importance of organizational environment and buy in for mentoring as a development tool, "for successful mentoring to take place, the senior faculty as well as junior faculty must understand the importance of an ongoing nurturing environment; an environment that allows for freedom of respectful expression and openness to each other" (p. 720). Thurston, D'Abate, and Eddy also explored formal organizational mentorship as an approach to human resource development and focused on mentoring as a means to minimize "the presence of barriers to mentoring" (2012, p. 146). By offering a formalized mentoring program, organizations were able to address the "lack of access to mentors, inability to initiation a mentoring relationship, and fear that others will disapprove" (p. 146). Formalized mentoring programs sponsored by the college or university are instrumental in supporting new employees and making them feel welcome while continuing to be developed in the organization. Potter and Tolson warned against failing to provide access to mentors, "when the junior faculty feel a lack of mentorship, they seek employment and run to other organizations" (2014, p. 730). Tolar also found similar

challenges to mentoring inside the organization, access to mentors, mentees outgrowing their mentors, and dysfunctions of mentoring relationships (2012, pp. 178-179). When college or universities seek to develop mentoring programs, these hurdles to mentoring should be considered in the design of the program. Tolar recommended providing employees with an opt out strategy, acknowledging that "while participation serve most people well, automatic enrollment is pursued when participation is perceived as important to both the individual and the system or organization" (2012, p. 183). It is likely that an employee who chooses not to participate has identified a lack of trust in the organization or does not find the value of the program to be worth the cost of their investment in a mentor relationship.

Koonzt, Walters, and Edkin observed a mentorship-based development program geared toward female faculty. Their research upheld the identified hurdles to mentorship as a staff development approach for colleges and universities. They also identified program aspects that combatted these hurdles. This program expanded on traditional models of 1:1 mentoring where the mentor is typically an older, more senior member of the organization with a younger, newer organization member serving as the mentee. Koontz, Walters, and Edkin labeled this traditional view of mentoring, vertical mentorship, which depends on hierarchical relationships. Instead, the mixed model of mentorship also incorporated community or group mentoring, or horizontal mentoring, where the relationship was more democratic (2018). Horizonal mentoring is most commonly found in peer to peer mentoring matches and is marked by mutual learning and collaboration. Koontz, Walters, and Edkin's mix model of mentoring for faculty allowed for an equal contribution for all participants in the mentorship program. A key

characteristic of the mixed model program was that each participant was defined as "a potential mentor in an area of expertise" (2018, p. 108). The program operated the value that every member of the university community had something to offer, a knowledge and skill set that was valuable to others. This program approach offered a strategy for overcoming political and social boundaries to potential mentees in the way what all participants were considered potential mentors and rewarded diverse experiences of the faculty in the university. Potter and Tolson's research also supported this concept of each person in the mentorship serving as both the learner and the teacher, "the outcome of successful mentorship is that the learning process is reciprocal" (2014, p. 731). This reciprocal exchange of knowledge has also been attributed to the development of community within institutions of higher education. Mazerolle, Nottingham, and Coleman described this type of learning and development as a method of sharing knowledge and skills, where in the early stages of the mentoring, the mentor provides guidance and offers advice, but then a shift occurs, making way to collaboration and growth between the pair. They wrote, "the mentoring relationship is grounded by transfer of knowledge as well as the development of community among individuals with shared passion and areas of interest, a description that implies the underpinnings of social relationships and growth among like-minded individuals" (2018, p. 260). Institutions of higher education, though diverse in function and organization, are bound by the common value of life-long learning. Mentoring programs that develop community and further the training and development of employees are well suited as human resource development strategies. Specifically, mentoring is a viable strategy for developing historically marginalized people in organizations. Gangone and Lennon's research pointed to mentoring for the

advancement of women in higher education, "mentors and sponsorship matter, and in particular, active sponsorship of women, rather than just mentorship. Women and men must actively sponsor women as they navigate the labyrinth of higher education advancement" (2014, p. 15).

Women's Leadership Development in Higher Education

American college and universities have a storied past as it relates to providing access to women seeking to continue their education. Like all historically marginalized populations' relationship with higher education, women were an afterthought in the academy and only recently are proportionally represented on campuses. Today, women make up 57% of enrolled students in colleges and universities. While these matriculation rates should encourage a strong pipeline for women to assume leadership roles of higher education, only 23% of university presidents are women (The White House Project, 2009). The faculty ranks are also experiencing this discrepancy, as women are more likely than men to occupy entry level lecturer roles which causes a compounding effect for the lack of women in leadership further up the faculty ranks. As institutions have a tendency to draw from tenured faculty to fill senior administrative roles, women find themselves excluded because they are more likely to be in nontenure track positions among the faculty (Gangone & Lennon, 2014, p. 11). Similarly, Gangone and Lennon's research found that women are well represented among the faculty of community college and baccalaureate awarding institutions. However, female representation dramatically decreases at doctoral awarding institutions, especially in tenure track positions. While women are faced with navigating the labyrinth of career advancement in higher education, many researchers have found that women's natural inclinations toward

organizational leadership make them an ideal candidate to lead their institutions into the ever-changing conditions faced by higher education. Lowe, wrote, "it is likely that because of their ability to integrate networks and relationships, women benefit organizations more because of the higher value they place on relationships" (2010, p. 127). They explained that women's inclination toward working more collaboratively creates a way for change management, as women are more likely to share their authority and power with groups of people, instead of focusing on the individual. This collaborative leadership maximizes the potential of the group. Dahlvig and Longman pointed to role congruity theory as a framework for understanding the discrimination that hinders women from assuming senior level roles and settling for more "socially acceptable roles" that push them into caretaker roles (2010, pp. 240-241). Women's lack of representation in leadership and senior level roles in the academy coupled with societal understandings the roles women play in organizational life contribute to the challenges and hurdles women face in higher education. Women's hurdles in leadership have been well documented in the literature, the discussion that follows provides a review of how woman experience challenges and hurdles in higher education.

Challenges for Women in Higher Education

This discussion of the literature is focused specifically on the hurdles and challenges women face in their careers in higher education. While most of the literature here is situated from the lens of faculty and senior administrators, there are themes and illustrations of the phenomenon that are helpful in understanding the experiences of women throughout the functions of college and university life.

Turner and Gonzalez identified three significant hurdles faced by women in higher education, sexism, tokenism and marginalization, and lack of professional interactions. They described the condition of many institutions with senior faculty and administrators tending to be white males, amplified by informal systems of senior leaders socializing their successors, where "white males tend to mentor white males" (2015, p. 14). Further, women experience tokenism and marginalization in the academy, characterized by fewer opportunities to be sponsored, pressure to conform to departmental or campus norms, and a sense that they were on display in the organization, with little room for making mistakes. Finally, Turner and Gonzalez discussed the lack of professional interactions offered to women in the faculty. This phenomenon was caused by fewer female faculty to offer mentoring or social support, specifically in areas such as engineer and medicine as well as in academic leadership roles. Hornsby et al.'s research found similar circumstances being faced by women among the faculty. They highlighted important findings as it related to the advancement of women faculty. Their research placed a great deal of significance on the department's culture for the retention of woman faculty, pinning the department chair as having a key role in creating and maintaining that culture. Thus, their research stressed the importance of college and universities evaluating how the select and train department chairs (Hornsby et al., 2012). Colleges and universities must take an intentional approach to preparing department leaders for the increased diversity among faculty and students. Women faculty who have left their position and campus provided the following reasons for walking away: lack of respect from leadership and colleagues, feeling like their work is trivialized, not being credited for their work, and a general lack of support (Koontz, Walters & Edkin, 2018).

Unfortunately, these experiences are not unique to women faculty. Women leaders and administrators, including presidents have experienced similar hurdles.

Women are still in the minority of college and university presidents and while there are many organizations dedicated to balancing this dynamic, today's woman president is faced with obstacles unique to her gender. White's research found that women were often reluctant to take on more demanding leadership roles because women still carried the primary family responsibilities. This reluctance was compounded by inadequate accommodations from intuitions, intensified demands, and the "likelihood to strain and sacrifice in juggling competing responsibilities" (2012, pp. 16-17). White also discussed the challenges of women presidents as it related to reporting to mostly male governing boards, concluding that many board members found it difficult to accept "women's authority on finances and strategy" (2012, p. 16). Professional organizations and institutions within the academy have realized what these hurdles are and offer many training and development programs to help prepare women for these hurdles. For example, The Ohio State University launched the President and Provost's Leadership Institute in 2005 as an effort to train and develop college and university leaders in preparation of those senior leadership roles. The chief goal of the program is to develop a pipeline of qualified candidates from historically underrepresented groups. Their approach includes encouraging "deans to appoint more women to department chair positions' as well as encouraging women to pursue formal leadership roles" and "to provide future leaders with the development they need to create a culture that is hospitable and supportive of all" (Hornsby, et al., 2012, pg. 99). While training and development programs for women and other marginalized groups in higher education has

been a strategy for many researchers, there is also a group of higher education scholars that focus on these hurdles from the framework of gender bias.

Historically, American higher education institutions were led by men for men. Much tradition and culture are still influenced by gender bias, or male-as-normative models of leadership. Traits such as decisiveness, assertiveness, and competition are still expected and rewarded in the higher education workplace. Women, on the other hand, are more likely to lead with relational, emotional, and passive qualities. "This puts women in a double bind, they must either be feminine and compromise their leadership capacity or adopt male-normative leadership characteristics, which require them to abandon their femininity" (Sulpizio, 2014, p. 102). Women in leadership balance demonstrating their confidence and asserting themselves without seeming to arrogant or harsh. Similarly, they are called to be caring but must not be perceived as emotional or soft. Women in leadership roles are constantly managing the tradeoff between leading confidently and competently but not unlikable (Sulpizio, 2014). Women are operating in a work environment that makes it very difficult to operate in their own leadership traits, personalities, and identities.

Diehl not only explored the hurdles to women's leadership in higher education, but also expanded the literature by exploring ways women can navigate the adversity presented to them in higher education careers. Diehl identified two common themes for coping with adversity, empowering one's self and reaching out to others (2014). Diehl's research described women leaders coping with workplace adversity by seeking alternative workarounds, practicing meaningful selfcare, remaining patient, and investing in other aspects of their lives. Women leaders also relied on spouses, partners, friends,

family, coworkers and colleagues, supervisors and mentors, as well as administrative support staff for support and encouragement during times of adversity. Diehl also found that while women were finding ways to manage conflicts and explore work arounds to their workplace hurdles, "many reported that their experiences had negatively impacted their self-esteem and sense of power for months and even years" (2014, p. 141). While women are able to overcome hurdles presented by a gendered higher education system, and are proving themselves resilient and flexible, it is not without cost to their personal wellbeing. Many professional associations as well as colleges and universities are organizing development programs for women in their organizations. Many of these programs address the hurdles discussed and provide programmatic interventions for those issues. The following section explores the knowledge community's literature about program design for women leaders.

Program Design for Women's Leadership Development

The greatest challenge facing women's leadership development programs, is providing women with the skill development they need to operate under current conditions while also empowering women to create positive change in their organizations. Sulpizio wrote:

> When working to develop women's leadership capacity, programs must create content that is based on traditional organizational and leadership theory while also incorporating forward thinking practice, challenging women to examine their leadership identity and giving them opportunity to practice and develop the skills and strategies that facilitate the exercise of effective leadership. (2014, p. 98)

This research captured the tension between providing women with the skills to operate from both feminine and masculine leadership approaches while also allowing them to lead as their authentic self. Sulpizio found that women leaders need to avoid the use of a feminine to masculine dichotomy of leadership traits, instead leaders should embrace an inclusive attitude the embraces both. Similarly, Johnson studied women presidents in higher education in efforts to understand how to overcome hurdles for women leaders. Johnson found that supporting and encouraging women and women of color into position such as provosts, chief academic officers, and other senior executives increases women in the pipeline to the presidency (2017). Current executive leadership, board members, senior faculty, and departmental leaders must take an active role in mentoring and encouraging women into these positions. Hornsby et al.'s work also encouraged the intentional use of departmental leadership for advancing women into senior leadership role. Hornsby et al. wrote, "our past practices of rotating reluctant faculty members into a department chair position or selecting the most productive researcher/scientist to head the department cannot continue" (2012, p. 108). Hornsby et al.'s research offered the following suggestion for higher education organizational leaders, providing an orientation for faculty that focuses on institutional values; intentionally developing all faculty as leaders, offering leadership opportunities throughout the college or university; and finally selecting institutional leaders based on their ability to lead rather than on their academic accomplishment. College and universities can have successful experiences with women's advancement programs. The literature explored here offers a few themes for consideration to college and university leaders. The advancement of women and other marginalized people must become an organizational value and priority. Many of the

efforts identified as successful were embraced at the departmental level, not just the senior leadership level. Faculty and staff must have the opportunity to develop their leadership identify and skills along their trajectory, not just at the top. Additionally, another theme discussed was the intentional placement of women on committees, in mentoring relationship, and in human resource development programs. College and universities interested in making a positive change regarding women's advancement must be strategic in placing women in hiring committees, in departmental roles, and all along the organization's structure.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to record the impact of mentoring as a staff development strategy for women in higher education. Capturing and analyzing these phenomena will provide higher education leaders a data informed framework for developing intentional workplace mentor programs that leverage the benefit of knowledge transmission from more senior members of the staff to younger, less experienced members of the staff. Specifically, this research seeks to inform higher education leaders of proven developmental methods for women staff, who make up a majority of the staff ranks. While the aim for this project is to inform staff development in higher education, the potential of this research is to create positive change across many public entities. Developing women staff is a need in all aspects of public administration. This chapter outlines the research approach for this study. Included in this chapter is a description and justification of the research setting, participant selection, data collection means, approach to data analysis, the anticipated timeline, and an explanation of the researcher's bias.

Research Design

This research was conducted as a phenomenological study. In efforts to understand the experiences of women staff in higher education, interviews were conducted that aim to capture the meaning of mentoring experiences held by these

women. Creswell described phenomenological research as a "design of inquiry coming from philosophy and psychology in which the researcher describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by participants," (2014, p. 14). This approach to research is typically recorded through the use of interviews. This approach to research utilizes the analysis of significant statements and meaning making. Women employed in staff positions in higher education were interviewed, their significant statements captured and analyzed for the purpose of answering the research question: *How does mentoring contribute to leadership and workforce development for women in higher education?*

The following sub-questions provide guidance to exploring the current literature surrounding women's mentorship in higher education but also has contributed to the development of this methodology, specifically the interview questions and the coding system used to identify themes and categories of these phenomena:

1. Do women staff in higher education view themselves as leaders?
2. Are women participating in mentor-mentee relationships?
3. Are there hurdles to women finding mentors in higher education?
4. What key functions of the mentor-mentee relationships has helped women succeed in the workplace?

Setting

This research project captured the experiences of women staff in higher education. For the purpose of this study, the setting was geographically bound to the Southeastern United States. Participants were selected from higher education institutions across the state. These institutions were organized into the following categories: four year

university, two year college, and technical college. Interviews were intended to be conducted in person; however, this research took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, thus requiring the researcher to utilize video and phone interviews to gather data from the participants. Virtual interviews provided a convenience for scheduling for both the researcher and interviewer as well as a level of comfort and anonymity for participants.

Participants

The study will focus on women staff in higher education institutions in the Southeastern United States. Both purposeful sampling and criterion sampling techniques were used. Purposeful sampling refers to the intentional selection of participants because their experiences inform the research question being studied (Creswell, 2013). Similarly, criterion sampling ensures that all participants have experienced the phenomenon being studied. This research seeks to understand how women's mentorship in higher education might contribute to staff development, thus participants were sought out for inclusion if they worked in higher education, identified as women, and were employed in a staff role. These institutions of higher education were organized into the following categories: research institutions, comprehension colleges and universities, HBCUs, and community/technical colleges. In efforts to capture a broad range of experiences, women staff from all levels of higher education organizations were interviewed. These levels of the organizations include, front line, mid-level, and executive level as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Criterion for Sample Inclusion

Type of Institution	Staff Level
Research Institutions	"Front Line-Level" (provides direct service)
Comprehensive Institutions	"Mid-Level" (experienced, manager)

Community/Technical College	"Executive-Level" (responsible for multiple units, near top of the organization structure)
Historically Black College/University	

For the purpose of this study, staff included only full-time, salaried, exempt employees. Front line staff refers to the employees responsible for delivering or providing direct services. Examples of these positions may include admissions recruiters, financial aid counselors, business officer tellers, administrative assistants, student life professionals, or residence hall coordinators. Mid-level staff refers to employees that have gained workplace experience and are managing other employees or program areas. Examples of these positions may include regional admissions managers, department managers, program managers, and residence hall directors. These staff members are responsible for the oversight of services being delivered but may also find themselves contributing to policy changes, strategic planning, and evaluation of the organization's goals and mission. Finally, executive level employees find themselves at the top of the organization. They assume the responsibility of organizational planning, are responsible for multiple units, and are held accountable for the organizational mission. The table demonstrates twelve types of women staff as defined by the parameters of this study. Therefore, twenty-four total interviews took place, two per staff-institution type.

The purpose of this research project is to be able to provide data informed guidance to higher education leaders on topics of staff development, specifically as it relates to women's development. As such, the sample for this study includes a broad range of institution types so that as patterns and themes emerge in the data of this project, findings can be more broadly applied to future staff development approaches. To that

same end, the validity of this study is enhanced by interviewing women from various levels of higher education staffing structure. The phenomenon captured from these women will represent a broader human experience and therefore can inform future program design and study.

Data Collection

Participants for this study were identified through the following recruiting efforts: direct emails to institutions' Chief of Staff and Staff Councils for hopeful distribution to staff on their campuses, state chapters of professional associations, and posts on social media groups geared toward higher education professionals. Recruitment material including emails to higher education leaders and social media posts used are included in Appendix A. An online criterion survey was utilized to evaluate a potential participant for inclusion in the study, found in Appendix B. Once participants have met the criteria for the study, one-on-one interviews by phone were scheduled with each participant. The instrument used for data collection in this study was semi-structured interviewing. These interviews provided a method for participants to share "detail, depth, and an insider's perspective, while at the same time allowing hypothesis testing and the quantitative analysis of interview responses" (Leech, 2002, p. 665). An audio recording was used to capture the significant statements, and phenomena described by participants through the course of the interview. The use of this technology allowed the researcher to focus on establishing rapport with the participants and take note of themes and categories emerging in the interviews. Leech described the importance of establishing rapport in interviewing methods, instructing the research to be genuine but not intimidating or an expert, "you do not want someone to leave something out of their interview because they

assume you know it already" (2002, pp. 665-666). A complete transcription was generated from each audio recording to capture fuller details. Creswell described the need for a well-planned observational protocol for qualitative study because, "researchers often engage in multiple observations during the course of a qualitative study" thus requiring a plan for capturing those observations (2014, p. 193). These plans are reflected in Appendix C: Observation Protocol and Appendix D: Interview Protocol. Questions are arranged from "easiest to answer" to "requires more in-depth thought" and allow for the participant to expand and share beyond the direct questions.

Participant Protection and Informed Consent.

This research project depends on rich data that offers a thorough review of a phenomenon. The risk in using such rich data, is being able to confidently and responsibly protect participant identity. Each participant was asked to disclose their name, contact information, and institution of employment. This information was used in participation selection and was gathered via the inclusion survey. Once participants were selected and scheduled for interviews, they were assigned a pseudonym and their institution an alias. Further, their position within the institution will be recorded as front line, mid-level, or executive level and their functional area described in general terms. By protecting their personal contact information, campus information, and position details, I aimed to reduce the risk of deductive disclosure and confidentiality.

Further, the data collected from participants was secured through the following measures. Interviews were recorded and transcribed on the Otter platform. This platform does not sell or distribute data collected and stored through its services. The transcriptions and recordings will be deleted from the Otter platform at the conclusion of

the research project. Access to the otter account is available to the researcher only and has been used on a personal computer that is also password protected. All data analysis also took place on this password protected computer. In addition to the computer being password protected, all files containing data collected from participants were stored in locked, password protected files. At the conclusion of this project, all participant data will be destroyed and deleted from the computer.

Finally, participants were educated on informed consent and their risk associated with this project. Included in the appendixes is a copy of the informed consent letter that participants will receive. At the time a potential participant was identified, they were sent the informed consent letter as well as the inclusion criteria survey. Once a participant was selected, they were contacted by email to schedule their interview. Before the interview began, I reviewed the content of the letter and allowed the participant the opportunity to ask any questions about how their data was to be used. It was reiterated to the participant that participation in the project was voluntary, with the ability to withdraw at any time. Further, participants were given the opportunity to review the transcription from the interview to ensure the data collected accurately reflected their experience with the phenomenon being studied.

Interview Protocol

I began each interview by asking the participant to describe their role on campus. This opening question allowed the participant to begin with an answer that was comfortable to them. It also helped me get to know the participant and provided a lens through which I was able to understand their experiences as we talked about their mentoring relationships. Using the Otter.AI technology, I recorded each interview, and a

rough transcription was generated. I then listened to the interview as I worked through the transcription, making corrections and eliminating filler words, verbal tics, and other minor digressions. By listening to the interview, I again was able to get to know the participant and observe emotions, pauses, excitements and other queues that informed the statements being captured. Getting to know the participant during the interview and again listening back to the interview recordings was the second stage in the analysis of the phenomenon being studied. As I worked through the interviews and transcripts, early patterns began to emerge and evolve as I began to understanding the meaning of each shared story. As the interview transcripts were complete, they were sent to the participant for review and input for corrections. I asked the participants to respond with any changes within two weeks. This was a strategy to reduce researcher bias from the project. Once the transcript returned from the participant, I began to reduce the data, making determinations of what was relevant to the research question and what informed the phenomenon being studied. Reviewing the interview transcripts led to the identification of significant statements. Statements that addressed the four guiding questions of this research were noted. Those questions were:

1. Do women staff in higher education view themselves as leaders?
2. Are women participating in mentor-mentee relationships?
3. Are there hurdles to women finding mentors in higher education?
4. What key functions of the mentor-mentee relationship has helped women succeed in the workplace?

Of course, participants shared experiences and offered statements that introduced new concepts that diverged from these guiding questions. Some of their experiences supported

as well as contradicted the emerging themes, these contradictions and new concepts were also noted. This analysis will provide an exploration of the participant demographics, the categories of significant statements that emerged, the themes that were developed, as well as issues, hurdles, and contradictions that were shared. Ultimately, this analysis will test the guiding questions against the data collected.

Data Analysis

Creswell describes the process of analyzing data in phenomenological studies as synthesizing data from narrow units of analysis such as significant statements to more broad themes such as meaning until, working toward a summarizing of the phenomenon individuals experience and how they experience it (2013). The goal of a phenomenological study is for the "reader to come away from the phenomenology with the feeling that they better understand the experience" (Creswell, 2013, p. 82). The following process for coding were taken:

Table 5. Steps for Coding and Analysis

Step 1.	All transcripts were reviewed, one by one. Rough ideas and themes that emerge were captured.
Step 2.	I then developed a list of significant statements.
Step 3.	From this list, I developed a list of nonrepetitive, nonoverlapping statements. This required the clustering of similar topics, listed as major, unique, and leftover topics.
Step 4.	Topics were then be abbreviated as codes and used to organize the significant statements.
Step 5.	These topics were grouped into larger themes.
Step 6.	Next, a textural description was drafted, providing a description of what the participants experience was with mentoring relationships.
Step 7.	Supporting the textural description, a structural description was drafted. This provided both the setting and context in which mentoring relationships was experienced.
Step 8.	Finally, a composite description was prepared.

(Creswell, 2013; Tesch, 1990).

This process was developed from the coding processes outlined by Creswell, 2013 and Tesch, 1990. By capturing the interviews with audio recordings, I was be able to verify applied codes and identified themes against the original transcripts of the interviews.

Data Validation and Reliability

Data validation in qualitative research begins with a strong research plan before data collection takes place. The purpose of qualitative research is to provide data informed understandings of how humans relate to each other and the world around them. There is no perfect theory of human behavior and no perfect methodology for its research. As such, qualitative research is difficult and often messy. Establishing clear criteria for data inclusion, collection, and analysis is the first step in producing reliable findings.

> The validation of data from qualitative research is directly related to the trustworthiness of its interpretations and conclusions, and these are considered to be reliable and coherent when they are internally consistent, effective, and fecund, in other words, when there is consistency of meaning. (Sousa, 2014, p. 215)

Establishing logical and pragmatic analysis across the themes present in the data provided sound results that are reliable and testable in future research.

A common strategy to strengthen the validity of phenomenology research is to return to the participants for feedback and confirmation of understanding. Sousa offers this strategy as a way to work through data that proves difficult to understand or is unclear, "the researcher may return to the subjects before beginning analysis of the data, requesting clarification about the descriptions of more detail about certain aspects" (2014, p. 224). I offered to return transcripts of the interview to the participants for their review

and verification. This strengthened the validity of the data collected prior to the analyzation taking place.

An additional strategy to strengthen the reliability of this study's findings is to triangulate the data. Triangulation is an effort to corroborate the findings by collecting data from different sources (Sousa, 2014). In effort to triangulate the data collected and analyzed in this study, participants were chosen from three different levels of the workplace organization as well as four different types of institutions. These diverse experiences provided data and insight to the phenomenon of mentoring, strengthening the validity of the findings.

This study utilized criterion sampling to identify the participants that were used for data collection. The very nature of this type of sampling lends itself to the potential negative impact of selection bias. Selection bias occurs when "the nonrandom selection of cases results in interferences, based on the resulting sample, that are not statistically representative of the population" (King et al., 1995) posing the danger of overrepresented cases of the variable being studied. In efforts to address selection bias in this research, intentional measures were taken in participant recruitment. In addition to reaching out to institutional leaders to make participant recommendations, informal spaces such as social media groups will be used to connect with potential participants. Similarly, snowball sampling allowed for greater diversification of participants. By asking participants to recommend other potential participants, greater possibility of diverse experiences in increased.

Finally, researchers must clarify the bias they bring to the project. Creswell described this essential step in a research plan, "this is an attempt to set aside the

researcher's personal experiences (which cannot be done entirely) so that the focus can be directed to the participants in the study" (2013, p. 193). My experience with the phenomenon being studied is linked to both the participant criteria as well as mentoring relationships. I have worked in higher education for the last ten years, as a staff member and identify as a woman. During my career, I have worked at both a two year community college as well as a four year university. I have served in front line positions such as admissions recruiter and student activities. I have also served as a mid-level manager, responsible for the oversight and direction of a department. I have found my career in higher education very fulfilling and attribute this success to positive mentoring relationships. However, I have also been in seasons of my career where I lacked the developmental relationship provided by a mentor or supervisor. I believe that my sense of security and accomplishment are closely related to the guidance and mentorship I did or did not receive at various stages of my career. I am passionate about this study because I have personally experienced the positive outcomes of mentoring. However, from my lived experience, I have observed that many of the staff in higher education are made up of women, many without access to such relationships. My hope for this project is to provide data informed best practice to higher education leaders, leading to the development of workplace mentoring programs for women staff.

Whittemore, Chase, and Mandle outlined four key criteria for validation in qualitative inquiry: credibility, authenticity, criticality, and integrity (2001, p. 529). This project research design as addressed each of those criteria. Credibility in qualitative research asks the question, did the research capture the participant's meaning of the phenomenon? By returning the transcripts to the participants for their review and

feedback, the credibility of this project is strengthened. This allows the opportunity for researcher bias and human error to be mitigated. Authenticity requires a diversity in the data collected, ensuring that different voices are heard. By recruiting participants from four different settings and three difference types of roles on campus, this research plan enhances the authenticity of the phenomenon being studied. The criteria of criticality requires critical review of the entire research process. The dissertation committee chair and members' constant review and feedback of this research process and design details, ensures a thoroughly vetted research plan that will meet the threshold of criticality. Finally, integrity of the research requires the researcher to be self-critical. By examining the bias brought into this study by the researcher's lived experiences, I am able to mitigate that bias and offer a research plan that upholds the integrity of valid qualitative research.

Researcher Bias Statement

This research is both inspired and informed by my lived experiences as a female staff member in higher education. As described above, over the course of my career, I have served as a graduate assistant, an admissions counselor, a manager, and a director. I have worked at both a community college and a university. Further, I have worked in student affairs, enrollment management, and most recently I serve as a generalist in higher education administration. I attribute my development and advancement to mentoring relationships, and my hurdles and frustrations to the lack thereof, in my workplace environment. Many participants, upon learning that I also serve as a staff member in higher education, indicated a genuine connection to my inquiry and expressed interest in the goal of the research to help institutions create mentoring programs for

women on campus. While many participants for this study have likely had professional experiences similar to my lived experience, the settings and positions from which the participants come allow for my role as the researcher to continue to learn about the experiences occurring in the field, thus creating a nonlinear learning experience for me as the researcher. The analysis for this research began during the interviews themselves. As I was listening and thinking about the meaning of what was being said, I was able to identify early patterns that would later be supported as themes. Such reflection upon the data being collected was described by Moustakas as a method to provide a "logical, systematic, and coherent resource for carrying out the analysis and synthesis needed to arrive at essential descriptions of experience" (1990, p. 46).

Conclusion

This purpose of this chapter is to create an intentional and clear research plan for this study. Preparing a well thought out and sound research plan produces valid and significant results about workplace mentoring that can be used to create or improve programs and inform future research. The research design, setting, participant selection as well as the data collection and analysis plan were laid out, all with the aim of answering the research question: *How does mentoring contribute to leadership and workforce development for women in higher education?*

Chapter IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The body of research on women's leadership development is rapidly growing. This project seeks to fill a gap in the literature where staff development in higher education intersects with women's leadership development and advancement. Women make up more than half of enrollments on college campuses today, and they are filling the ranks of front line and mid-level managers among the staff. Their trajectory however remains stifled as they reach the top of their organizations. Women continue to be underrepresented as executive level leaders, presidents, and board members in higher education. The chief purpose of this research project is to determine how mentoring might be used as a staff development strategy for female staff members in higher education. To best understand the phenomenon of mentoring, this research project was designed to learn from the women working as staff in higher education today.

The phenomenological approach to this research allowed for the collection of rich data that provided insight to the lived experience of twenty-four women working as staff members in higher education. The use of a semi-structured interview technique allowed the phenomenon being studied, mentorship in the workplace, to be learned and the understanding of those experiences to evolve as the research project progressed. Having shared in the experience of mentorship in the workplace, I created interview questions that served as guideposts to explore the research question: *How does mentoring*

contribute to leadership and workforce development for women in higher education? These interview questions provided a starting place for participants to share their experiences regarding mentoring but also offered space for the participants to expound as needed.

Summary of Participants

Participants for this research project were selected based on their experience with the phenomenon being studied, mentorship in the workplace. This participant selection technique, purposeful sampling, "requires access to key informants in the field who can help in identifying information-rich cases" (Suri, 2011, p. 66). Using criterion sampling technique, an inclusion survey was issued to potential participants as a method of screening for female staff members that have experienced mentoring relationships. Potential participants were recruited through outreach to institutional leaders, listservs, posts in social media groups for professional organizations, and direct email outreach to staff members found through instructional directories. In total, 93 potential participants completed the inclusion survey, and 33 interviews were conducted. Finally, 24 participants were chosen for inclusion in this analysis. The female staff members that participated in this study represented the following functional units from institutions across the Southeast United States: Admissions, Alumni Relations, Business Services, Career Services, Community Engagement, Dean of Students, Development and Giving, Dining, Financial Aid, Economic Development, Fraternity and Sorority Life, Government Relations, Grants and Research Resources, Housing, Human Resources, Leadership Development, Legal Affairs, Payroll, Student Activities, Student Support Services, Student Union, and Women's Centers. The participants worked at Research

Institutions, Comprehensive Colleges and Universities, Community and Technical Colleges, and Historically Black Colleges and Universities and worked at diverse levels across these institutions including front-line, mid-level, and executive positions.

Table 6. Participant Matrix

Institution Type	Participant Type	Mentor	Mentee
Research Institution	Front Line	Maura	Connie
Research Institution	Mid-Level	Millie	Janey
Research Institution	Executive	Cassy	Maddy
Comprehensive Colleges and Universities	Front Line	Janelle	Julie
Comprehensive Colleges and Universities	Mid-Level	Emily	Tori
Comprehensive Colleges and Universities	Executive	Lacey	Stephanie
Community and Technical Colleges	Front Line	Leigh	Avery
Community and Technical Colleges	Mid-Level	Elizabeth	Dianne
Community and Technical Colleges	Executive	Anne	Margot
Historically Black Colleges and Universities	Front Line	Ruth	Mary
Historically Black Colleges and Universities	Mid-Level	Ashley	Leslie
Historically Black Colleges and Universities	Executive	Julie	Donna

Table 6 categorizes the 24 participants into their institution types, roles on campus, and their experience as mentor or mentee in their mentoring relationships. While participants were recruited based on their experience with serving as a mentor or mentee, many revealed that they had served both as a mentor and mentee. These participants were encouraged to reflect on their entire mentoring experiences and often drew on stories during their time as both a mentor and mentee.

Participant Narratives

Creswell's approach to phenomenological analysis called for a textural description, or "a description of 'what' the participants in the study experienced with the phenomenon" (2013, p. 193). This section of the results will provide an illustration of what these women have experienced in their workplace while offering a representation of their voices. The narratives are provided in a way that is meant to convey the quintessence of their lived experience and will answer one of the guiding questions of this research: are women participating in mentor-mentee relationships?

Millie: this participant is a mid-level manager at a large state research university. She serves her campus community as the Director of Leadership and Service. Millie has had several mentoring experiences throughout her professional career. At a previous institution, a private-research university, she was invited to apply for a selective mentoring program for new professionals. This participant demonstrated a great deal of pride over being selected for this mentoring program, and I noted the confidence she experienced from the nomination. She also experienced a more organic mentoring relationship with an executive level leader at her institution. She noted about this relationship, "I don't even know that she would call herself my mentor, but I look to her in that way." As a recent new mom, Millie appreciated having this female leader to look to for an example of work-life balance while pursuing a demanding career path.

Janet: is also a participant a mid-level manager at a large state research university. Similarly, Janet has participated in both formal and informal mentoring relationships. However, this participant found the formal programs to be forced and lacked connection but was able to find valuable relationships in other professionals in the field. She remarked, "it's not a large field of women who work full-time, who are moms and then

also doctoral students … so I had a very narrow focus of the type of mentor that I wanted to partner with."

Cassy: this executive level participant also worked for a research institution and served as the Executive Director of University Housing and Auxiliaries for a large state institution. This career veteran shared that she enjoyed many mentoring relationships throughout her 40-year career and interestingly as the mentee, all of those relations evolved organically and were not matched. However, as she completed her own dissertation journey, "I made myself a promise as I finished my doctorate, I would spend the rest of my career building up and bring up younger professionals to those leader roles." True to her promise, Cassy built a program through a professional organization that focuses on mentoring female new professionals.

Maura: this participant works for a research institution as a community resource provider and is a front-line employee for her organization. She has served as a mentor to undergraduate students as they sought internship opportunities within the program she works with. Many of the students she mentors are pursuing the same degree path that Maura herself sought. She believes that her familiarity with their course work and career goals makes her suited to mentor these students and she has become quite passionate about her role in their lives: "I think that encouraging others to be better leaders has made me a more confident leader, by building people up… it makes me feel like I'm somehow honoring the people that have turned around to build me."

Connie: similarly, this participant works for a research institution, providing front line services as a research grants development specialist. Connie sought out a mentoring experience due to frustrations and work related struggles she was experiencing. This

participant was not new to grants but had recently made the transition to the higher education and remarked, “I was having trouble trying to figure out how to do a job I had been doing for a very long time in a new environment. So, I thought maybe somebody had some secret sauce somewhere and I wanted them to share.” Connie was able to participate in a formal mentoring program where she connected with professionals in similar roles at other institutions. She shared that as a result of her mentoring relationships, she became more confident in her knowledge and abilities to perform her duties and have a successful experience in higher education.

Maddie: this participant serves her research institution community as an associate vice president for student life. Maddie shared with me how mentoring has changed over the course of her career. Early in her career, she was often in the role of mentee and now, more recently, has found herself serving as the mentor. She has experienced informal and formal mentoring relationships, working with both men and women. She even supported a division wide mentoring program for new professionals. Reflecting on the very diverse experiences Maddie has had with mentoring relationships, now at the culmination of her career, she remarked, “if you want good people to stay you have to invest in them and money is not in higher education so it has to be in relationships and in how you can help them to better themselves.”

Stephanie: this participant works for a comprehensive university that is a part of a state university system. She serves her campus as a vice president of giving and alumni engagement. Much of her experience with mentorship has been driven by her professional experience, which she described: “I’ve risen quickly in administration. I would like to say it’s because I’m a great worker, but it’s actually because people higher

have moved on and given me some opportunity for advancement that I might not have had otherwise." Her newfound role in administration leadership has forced her to look for a mentoring relationship that can provide advice and feedback directly related to managing teams.

Janelle: this frontline employee works at a private comprehensive institution in career advising. This participant offers reflection on two very different mentoring experiences. As a young professional, she took advantage of the formal mentoring program offered by a professional association where she was matched with another professional, a bit more experienced. She is also in a mentoring relationship with a peer at work, where she finds herself in the mentor role. Janelle is looking forward to a career shift outside of higher education and has enjoyed using her mentoring relationship as a way to sharpen her transferable skills. She described her motivation for participation in mentoring programs: "because I was looking to do a career change, getting more of like that background and knowledge and things that I could be doing."

Julie: this participant is also a front line employee. She works at a state comprehensive institution in the grant resources department. Julie's experience with mentoring relationships also offers multiple perspectives on the phenomenon. She participates in both a formal mentoring program with colleagues that she describes as "peer mentoring" while also being in a mentoring relationship with her supervisor which she described as "we are colleagues, and she is my boss, but we're also friends, so I would say we have a good mix." Julie's experiences with mentoring also offered insight to the structure of a formal program: "we follow pretty formal protocols to get going with some resources to start initial conversations."

Tori: this participant works for a state comprehensive university as an assistant director in career services. Tori has had a very successful experience with mentoring relationships, always finding that relationship in her supervisors. She recognized her fortune: "I've been lucky to have a supervisor who was also willing to serve as a mentor." More meaningful to her has been the extent at which these relationships have grown: "some of them developed into friendships that lasted." This participant was able to link many of her career moves and advancement opportunities to these supervisors that engaged her in mentoring relationships. She was so impacted by the mentors in her career that she has developed a sense of obligation to serve as a mentor to those in her sphere of influence in her newest position.

Emily: also a women's center director, works for a state comprehensives university and also describes her experience with both workplace mentoring relationships as well as those found through professional organizations and conferences. The most impactful relationship Emily has enjoyed through her workplace was described as, "one of my mentors has become my best friend… she and I have talked about this too, that it has become a reciprocal mentoring relationship." Emily also provided insight to her experience with mentor relationship through her association with professional organizations, explaining that the organizations provided her with a strong sense of belonging because of the plethora of people to have a relationship with and that she appreciated the ability to reconnect with those mentors, even if it is only once per year.

Lacey: this executive level participant works at a state comprehensive university, leading the legal affairs department. This participant reflected fondly on a previous supervisor who she credits for her advancement into an executive role and continues to

support her although he has moved onto another institution: “he just sort of took me under his wing, and I still call him and talk to him when I have issues or questions about my career.” Lacey also spoke passionately about her sense of obligation to mentor others, explaining how it positively impacts her fulfillment in the workplace, but also how she realizes the need to be the mentor she has needed throughout her career. She shared:

> I do feel like it’s more difficult for people of color, but especially women of color, because we do not see people who look like us all the time, especially in senior leadership… It really does impact young professionals of color and their career trajectories because when you are in a space where you do not know people who are there or have been there, you do not get the same guidance, you do not get the same help… There are mentoring programs set up for faculty but when you come in as a staff member, there are not those same relationships formalized… So, while you are doing your job, you are also engaging in trying to figure things out by yourself.

Lacey has definitely put her time where her sense of responsibility lies, she volunteers with her campus’ mentoring program for students of color, has joined the leadership boards of professional organizations, and often takes informal meetings with younger professionals on her campus.

Anne: this executive level staff member served her community college as the chief development officer for the institution. While currently working at the community college in her hometown, she has previously worked for large state universities as a vice president, for land grant institutions, and even worked in the private sector. The reflections she shares of her mentoring experiences are mostly of her current institution, but the extensive experience that she brings forth allowed her to offer comparisons and contrasts to the diverse relationships she has had over her career. She offered two comments during her interview that provided such a stark difference in campus culture

and the role that mentoring relationships plays in those cultures. She remarked about a previous institution:

> My first mentor in the work world is the one that really kind of inspired me and I think she flat out told me at one point, you know it's tough for women in this field to be in leadership roles and if you are ever in one, my expectation of you is to look out for the other people as I did for you. So, she kind of set me on that path, very early on. So, I guess that in the fact that I am a first generation college student, and I know how hard I had to work to get where I am, make me very willing to be a mentor to other women.

As she reflected on the major impact this mentor played in her own development, she offered some insight to how that has informed her current approach to mentor at her current institution with a much different culture:

> it's a male dominant culture, so I guess I am inspired for different reasons…I have coworkers, colleagues on other parts of campus that now that I have been here a while, are starting to see me out…I think they seek me out because they see me as having some degree of strength to stand up to this culture here.

Dianne: this mid-level, community college based participant serves her community as a dean of students and had also experienced a positive mentoring relationship with a former supervisor. While thankful for the mentoring she received from him, Dianne spent time expressing her desire for her institution to create a formal mentoring program due to "a lack of understanding what your role is … and what the expectations are from the institution… it's not like our supervisors were in those roles…you have to learn as you go." She also expressed interest in a mentoring program for her direct reports, acknowledging the tension of having a supervisor for mentor: "there is a fine line of wanting to do what they need to do but also looking to me for career opportunities, sometimes it is easier to have a mentor that is not your supervisor."

Avery: this participant is an administrative assistant in financial aid at a technical college. When asked about her mentoring experiences, she quickly referenced the

relationship she has with her supervisor and when asked what motivates her to participate in a mentoring relationship, she commented, "I love to learn professionally, how to deal with difficult situations. My mentor is the perfect example of diplomacy and how to deal with people… so watching her as an example is the best thing for me." She finds her institution to support professional development and described personal growth as a value to the college. Avery also expressed an interest and obligation in providing a mentoring relationship with the student workers she supervisors, helping them learn life skills that they will take into their own careers.

Elizabeth: this participant serves as director of the student union at a public community college. This mid-level participant's experience is strikingly similar to that of Avery. She named her mentor as her supervisor and provides mentorship to the team reporting to her. When reflecting on the relationship with her mentor, she offered, "looking back at it now, that's how I see the relationship, she was growing me and teaching me," and when thinking about herself as a mentor, she shared, "I do see myself as a mentor to the staff that I supervise and I do try to be active in that role and try to teach them and develop them." Elizabeth believes in providing her team with work life balance and views mentorship as a means for being able to support her staff with that balance.

Leigh: this participant works for a community college as a front line staff member in student housing. A long time staff member for this institution, she has served in many roles throughout her career but always in a student support role. At this time of her interview, she was looking forward to retirement that would take place only two months later. Her experience with mentoring is strictly with students. She supports them in many

ways: “you could see that they wanted to help, that they needed someone to guide them a little bit to give them a little push, encouragement, and enthusiasm.” While she describes herself as a mentor to the students, she also recognizes the reciprocal nature of their relationships: “I have actually become smarter as time has gone by and the more I talk to different kids because they are all from different backgrounds from different social status you know.”

Margot: this participant is an executive level staff member at a community college, serving as a vice president for human resources. When asked to reflect on her experience with mentoring, she shared, “I love professional development, I love working, I am a working person and I like growing in a leadership role. At the same time, I love teaching and sharing.” This appreciation for and dedication toward learning was a central thread throughout her interview. She shared that her mentor was her long time supervisor but that she also found and valued mentoring opportunities through professional development programs and conferences. Margot also explained that her organization values succession planning, thus creating an “innate want to develop your team” and feels that mentoring helps leaders become better leaders through introspective learning of self as well as helps them develop their teams to fuller potential.

Ruth: this participant works for a historically black university as a front line employee, in the admissions office. She described herself as stumbling into a mentor relationship with an alumna of the institution that she connected with at a recruitment event. She described her motivation to reach out to this potential mentor: “I really needed a mentor, and I wasn’t provided one at most of the jobs that I have been in higher education. It’s really needed for women, especially in admissions.” Ruth’s greatest

takeaway from her relationship with her mentor has been the negating skills she has learned and applied in the workplace, as well as the confidence she has built around her performance at work.

Leslie: this participant serves as a mid-level staff member in the role of an associate director of career services at an HBCU. She offers a very diverse range of mentoring experiences, reflecting on both her experience as a mentor to students as well as being mentored through her dissertation process. Leslie also provided insight into how she used mentoring to learn and develop: "every time I reached a new milestone, I learned something new and I feel like, 'oh I have arrived,' and then there would be something else. There is constantly something new." She went on to say that her mentor provide her comfort knowing that she could call anytime she needed help navigating the new places of her learning.

Ashley: this participant also serves as a mid-level staff member at an HBCU, in the role of a career center director. She offered a unique look into mentoring through her experience with a professional organization's mentoring program. After being matched, she quickly realized that her mentor was at a similar level and had had similar experiences professionally. The relationship evolved into a peer mentoring relationship that Ashley described as: "it ended up being more of we are colleagues who bounce ideas off of each other, or to hear each other's frustrations." Ashley also spoke about using her professional skills to assist friends and colleagues in their own advancement opportunities, offering to review resumes, practice interviewing skills, and make networking connections. She found peer mentoring in this way to be very rewarding.

Donna: this participant was an executive level staff member working at an HBCU as a senior vice president for business services. Donna found mentoring to be a successful outlet for contributing to women's leadership development, something she has become very passionate about supporting in higher education. She shared:

> In this role, I have more years of just general experience. But I still feel that I have room to grow in my career. I think a lot of younger ladies gravitate to me because they feel like I kind of understand where they are. And, I am an open book, I make myself available, I intentionally do that because I feel that experience is the best teacher, and I've had a lot of experiences, working in an HBCU, in a faith based college… having to work through being a female in leadership, some of the challenges that we would submit to, how to navigate through some of those challenges.

She went on to describe her role in mentoring women in higher education as something she approaches with intentionality.

Julie: this participant is also an executive level staff member at an HBCU. She serves her community as vice president for government and community engagement. She offered a similar experience and reflections as Donna. She shared about her obligation to supporting women: "I am always trying to make sure I tell young women 'move to the next level, do not accept where you are.'" She spoke about love and passion for her work in higher education and hoped to instill that in the women she was mentoring, wanting to make room for their voices: "I tell young women, and I will even tell you, you always get to have a voice."

Mary: this participant is a front line staff member at an HBCU. She works in student activities, providing support and advisement to student events and student organizations. This seasoned student affairs professional was able to share her experiences with both positive and negative mentoring relationships. She even described one mentor as a "dictator" and was able to shape the impact she wanted to make as a

mentor herself based on the experience of this relationship. This relationship also impacted her in a way that she feels it imperative to separate personal lives from professional mentoring relationships: “I am not pouring any type of personal feelings or engaging in anything that will turn personal.” Despite her negative experience with a mentor, she described her campus community as a family setting and referred to other mentors and mentees as enormous relationships in her life.

The participants’ experience with workplace mentoring offers a diverse view into the phenomenon being studies. Many of the participants reflected fondly on their experiences and a few were willing to share the hurdles and frustrations associated with their mentoring experiences. What all participants were able to confirm is that, yes, female staff members are taking advantage of mentoring relationships in the workplace.

Composite Structural Description

This composite structural description will offer an understanding of how the participants experienced workplace mentorship as a whole, or as Moustakas described, “the composite structural description is a way of understanding how the co-researchers as a group experienced what they experienced” (1990, p. 141). Moustakas’ reference to co-researchers meant the participants. This section will examine their experiences on an aggregate level.

Of the 24 participants, 17 indicated that they had experience serving as both the mentee and mentor when participating in mentoring relationships throughout their careers and personal lives. Only three had served exclusively as a mentor and four specifically as a mentee. Participants having been both a mentor and mentee led to a significant majority of participants offering insight to both their experience as a mentor as well as their

experience as a mentee. Similarly, 13 of the participants had also been in both formal and informal mentoring relationships, while seven were in specifically informal relationships and only four were formal. More evenly distributed were the experiences with matched and unmatched relationship pairings. As 13 of the participants were matched into their mentoring relationship and 11 were not. Likewise, 13 indicated no difficulty being matched with their mentor or mentee and 10 cited difficulty in being able to match to a mentor or mentee. An overwhelming majority of the participants had been in mentoring relationships with both men and women or just women. Only one participant had been in mentoring relationships with only a male match. No participant indicated a relationship with a gender non-binary mentor or mentee. Eight of the participants described their mentoring relationships as being career focused only.

Figure 2. Length of Time of Mentoring Relationships.

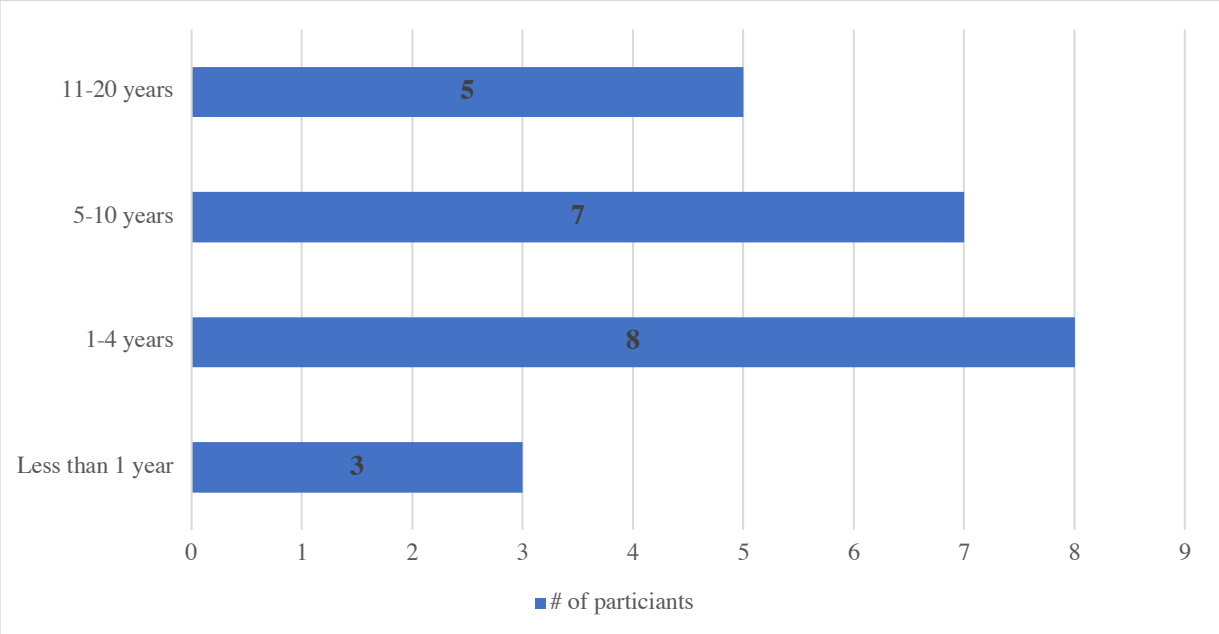


Figure 2 provides an illustration of the length of time that the participants were engaging in mentorship relationships. The majority of participants described their relationships as

lasting from one to four years. The next most common experience as it relates to the amount of time these relationships take place is five to ten years. The least oberved amount of time for these mentoring relationships was less than one year.

Figure 3. Participant Interaction in Mentoring Relationship

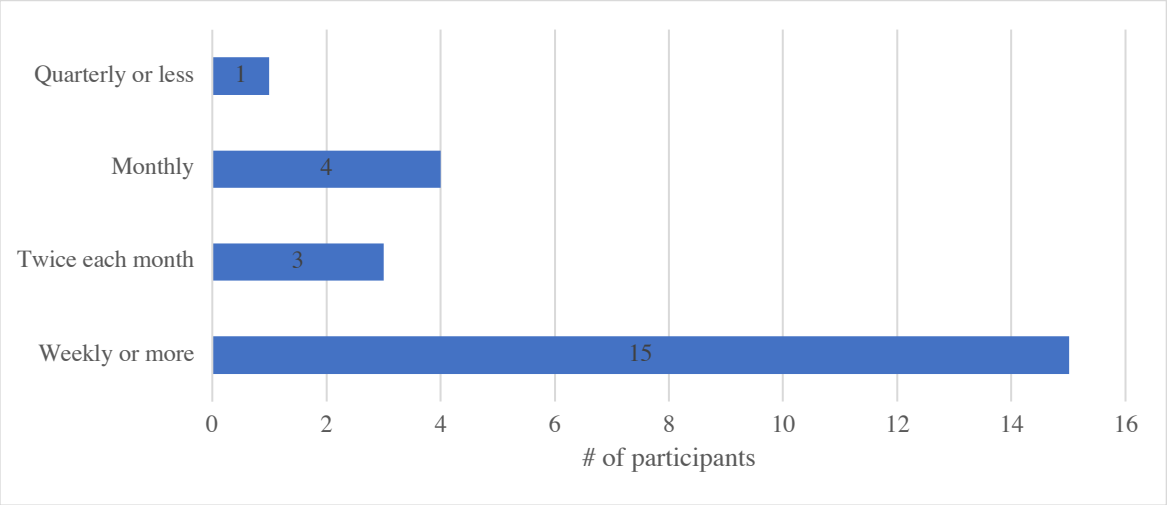


Figure 3 demonstrates how often participants were interacting in their mentoring realtionships. An overwhelming number of participants, fifteen of the twenty-four, described their relationship as interacting weekly or more often. Only one participant described their relationship interacting quarterly or less.

No participants indicated that their relationships were exclusively psychosocial. The majority of the participants, 16 of them, described their mentoring relationships as a combination of career and psychosocial in nature. The overwhelming majority of participants responded positively to experiencing or achieving notable milestones as a result of the mentoring relationships in their lives. Only two did not feel that these milestones were a result of the mentoring relationship. Of the 24 participants, 16 affirmed that hurdles had been a part of their experience with mentoring relationships, and 6 said they had not experienced any hurdles. Two of the participants were not able to confirm

that they had or had not found hurdles in their mentoring relationships. Of the 24 participants, 23 described themselves as leaders in their organization. However, of the 23 who saw themselves as leaders, only 9 answered in the affirmative without some level of validation. Fourteen of these women leaders felt the need to offer an explanation of how or why they were considered leaders, often referring to their place in the organizational chart and also noting the personal relationships there were able to influence and/or leverage in the workplace.

Emerging Themes

From the 24 interviews, 270 statements were captured and labeled as significant statements. On average, each interview produced 11.25 statements, with the smallest number of statements being four and the largest being 23. As the significant statements were highlighted and collected, 15 potential themes emerged. A nonrepetitive list of statements and possible themes were created and then each statement was evaluated and coded for possible inclusion in those 15 themes.

Table 7. Early Themes Identified from Significant Statements

Description of Theme	Number of Statements
Support and Connectedness	82
Development and Advancement	62
Learning from Others	54
Women's Leadership Development	30
Confidence Building	26
Giving Back or Paying Forward	21
Personal Fulfillment	20
Hurdles and Issues	17
Job/Workplace Satisfaction	15
Supervisor as Mentor	14

Colleagues as Mentors/Reciprocal Relationships	8
Diversity and Identity in Mentoring	8
Work Life Balance	7
Did Not Realize They/I Were Serving as Mentor	5
Participation in Professional Organizations	3

Table 7. lists all of the potential themes that emerged from the collection of significant statements. These 15 themes provided a lens through which to begin coding the significant statements. As indicated in the right column of the table, the number of times that each theme was present in the significant statements was tracked. This tracking provided a metric for combining these early themes. Table 8. lists examples of the significant statements that led to the identification of these fifteen themes.

Table 8. Examples of Significant Statements

Description of Emerging Theme	Example of Significant Statement
Support and Connectedness	It made me feel more connected, like I had a person in my corner within the organization. It absolutely increased my sense of belonging and in confidence and feeling more at home, within the organization that I was participating in.
Development and Advancement	We're trying to grow people who want to be here for their career… if you want good people to stay you have to invest in them. And obviously money is not in higher ed to invest in them so it has to be in relationships and in how you can help them to better themselves.
Learning from Others	I think it helped because I did feel like I had someone I could go and ask questions to and someone who would help me out and I felt confident in, you know, having that ability to ask questions, and also someone who had introduced me to others and was supportive of me doing things outside of the office.
Women's Leadership Development	It's so easy, especially as women, to doubt ourselves and our decision making ability when we've got all these other people and things and stuff out there that causes us to self-doubt, I think a lot more than we should.

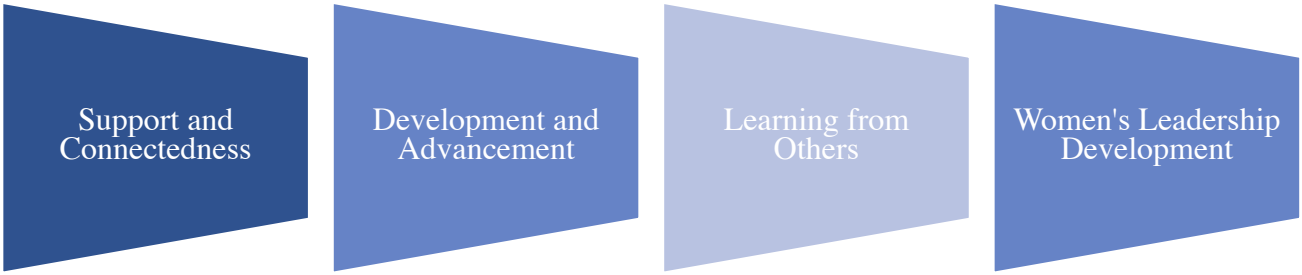
Confidence Building	It's given me confidence, giving me the confidence to actually do it. Before I had ideas and I would just have ideas in my head or written down, but actually talking to my mentor, and she helps me to formulate the right words, or just gives me that push to say, just do it. It sounds good; it's a good idea, and even if somebody else doesn't understand it, somebody, the right person will understand what you are saying.
Giving Back or Paying Forward	To give back everything I felt like I had been offered: the grace, the understanding, the challenging and support.
Personal Fulfillment	I find that my cup feels fuller when I have these meaningful dialogues and conversations with others, formally defined as mentorship or not. I think my cup was filled as a mentee in those moments of pause and reflection and deep discussion.
Hurdles and Issues	I was to the point where I was tired of investing. I think that if you, as a mentor find yourself repeating the same thing meeting after meeting or interaction after interaction, and there is no action, or there's small incremental change that then reverts back then it's pretty hard to want to stay in those relationships.
Job/Workplace Satisfaction	I think just feeling involved, and like a contributor. It totally strengthens your time to that organization. The more that you can be involved and provide ideas and input. I think just makes you more invested.
Supervisor as Mentor	I'm your mentor, but I'm also your supervisor so there is that fine line of them wanting to do what they need to do for their position, but they also can look at me for career opportunities so sometimes it is easier to have a mentor that is not your supervisor.
Colleagues as Mentors/Reciprocal Relationships	So, it ends up being just more of like we're these colleagues who bounce ideas off of each other or get to hear each other's frustrations is how that one went because it really, we were just so on the same level when it came to where we were at.
Diversity and Identity in Mentoring	I do feel like it's more difficult for people of color, but especially women of color. Because we don't see people who look like us all the time, especially in senior leadership.

Work Life Balance	I remember looking for some professional guidance about being a full time professional, as well as a mom… It's not a very large field of women who work full time, who are moms and then also doctoral students, so I had a very specific niche that I was looking for … I had a very narrow focus of the type of mentor I wanted to be able to partner with.
Did Not Realize They/I Were Serving as Mentor	There are people I would tell you very much have mentored me my entire career, who might not even realize they've mentored me.
Participation in Professional Organizations	I think that in those national organizations, sense of belonging is super strong. I get to connect with those mentors and kind of catch up and have a conversation that may only happen once per year. My sense of belonging is very strong because I feel like there's a plethora of people that I could have a relationship with.

These fifteen statements are only selected examples of the participants' descriptions of their experience with mentoring relationships. Of course, each emerging theme was experienced differently among the participants and not all themes were described by each participant. The individual experience with the phenomenon of mentoring collectively provides a structural understanding of these relationships in the workplace setting of higher education.

On average each theme was referenced 25 times and the four most commonly coded themes were identified as (1) Support and Connectedness, (2) Development and Advancement, (3) Learning from Others, and (4) Women's Leadership Development. Other themes such as personal fulfillment, job/workplace satisfaction, giving back, work life balance, and confidence were merged into the more broadly used themes.

Figure 4. Prevalent Themes



Theme 1: Support and Connectedness

The most prevalent theme that emerged from the analysis of the participant interviews was support and connectedness. This theme can best be contextualized by the most commonly occurring words and phrases from the significant statements: comfortable, safe, grace, understanding, support, connected, advocate, community, involved, contributed, valued, sense of belonging, and invested. Every participant reflected on their experience with mentoring in the workplace and offered an explanation of how the relationship made them feel connected and supported. Some also offered a comparison experience, how the loss or lack of this relationship negatively affected their sense of belonging in the workplace. Leslie described the impact mentoring had her on sense of support and connectedness, "you have somebody rooting for you, you have somebody who is expecting you to move forward and that is what propels me to keep going every single day." Avery expanded on that sense of support when she reflected on her mentor: "she makes me feel accepted, comfortable, safe, involved, and [like] a contributor. It strengthens your tie to that organization. The more that you can be involved and provide ideas and input makes you more invested." The relationship with her mentor provided a sense of security and connectedness to the institution, encouraging her to put forth ideas and to feel valued as a member of the staff. Emily leverages the

sense of connectedness and support from mentoring to work through issues and hurdles experienced in the workplace. She offered insight:

> Having mentoring relationships at the institution where I work absolutely positively contributed to a feeling of belonging at that institution, knowing that there were people that I could go to and talk with when I had difficult decisions to make or was having issues as a supervisor, just the various stuff that comes up, knowing that there were people that I could talk to about it.

Emily was not the only participant to experience hurdles in the workplace. Hurdles in the workplace were shared by multiple participants, and the way their mentor supported them through that hurdle impacted their feeling of support. Connie explained:

> I realized it's not just me, so that was very helpful. When I joined the mentor-mentee program, I truly was at a loss for what I was doing wrong. How have I been very successful in industry, and then having a hard time, a really genuinely hard time here. And so, it was good to talk to people to hear that a lot of people are having the same issues. So yes, it did help with the sense of belonging and that you know it made you feel like, okay, I'm not alone.

Similarly, comments were shared about how the lack of mentorship negatively impacted their sense of belonging. Having participated in mentoring in the past, Janet knew exactly what she was missing at her current institution and described the impact of not having a workplace mentor: "I don't have any mentors at my institution…. so it changes the dynamic of the work environment. I don't feel like I have as strong of a voice because I don't have that mentorship relationship." In addition to mentorship being a way forward for employees experiencing hardship or work-based hurdles, the impact of mentoring on staff's sense of support and connectedness also showed itself useful in staff retention. Maddie shared:

> We are trying to grow people who want to be here for their career… if you want good people to stay you have to invest in them. Obviously, money is not in higher education to invest in them so it has to be in relationships and in how you can help them to better themselves.

Dianne also commented on the positive impact of mentoring on her staff, noting that mentoring helped with team development and was a method for teaching decision making to members on her team. Mentoring was also used as a staff development tool when needing to counsel an employee. Leveraging the feeling of support and connectedness, Anne used her mentoring relationship with a staff member in the following way: "I had to criticize her. So, I really thought about how to say this in a way that she learns, without discouraging her enthusiasm. That's a heavy responsibility. It's a meaningful responsibility because I want to get it right." Mentoring relationships in the workplace also establish professional development as a value of the institution; Avery commented, "the staff leadership here is all about everyone's personal growth, whether it's the staff or the students. They are always very positive about personal growth and supportive of any kind of a mentor-mentee situation." Mentoring for female staff members in higher education can be leveraged as a staff development tool, positively impacting personal growth and workplace satisfaction.

Personal growth as well as workplace and job satisfaction were emerging themes form the significant statements from the participants. Both emerging themes supported the larger, more prevalent theme of support and connectedness and the coding of interviews identified that when a participant mentioned personal growth and/or workplace satisfaction, they also made statements about support and connectedness. Maura remarked, "I felt like I was fulfilling my duty to serve… gave me a sense of fulfillment just on a personal level." Millie also experienced satisfaction and fulfillment, although not from a sense of duty. She shared, "I find that my cup feels fuller when I have these meaningful dialogues and conversations with others. I think my cup was filled

as a mentee in those moments of pause and reflection and deep discussion." The positive experience with mentorship was experienced both from the perspective of mentor and mentee. In addition to personal fulfillment, the participants were able to provide insight to how mentoring affects workplace and job satisfaction. Fifteen participants offered insight to workplace satisfaction. Lacey's experience is representative of many of the experiences: "I think when you're acting as a mentor you feel like there is a purpose there. You are able to see greater purpose in what you're doing in your job, your day-to-day job." While many participants commented on the fulfillment and satisfaction offered by their mentoring experience, the experience of Leslie demonstrated the incredible impact of these relationships:

> So, with me being a mentor it solidified my status in within the community, because I recognize that I am needed, and that I am valued at my place of employment, and that definitely falls within my employment values… I need to be somewhere I feel appreciated. What I am doing is making an impact.

The participants' experience with the first theme, support and connectedness, addressed two of the guiding questions of this research. First, are there hurdles to women finding mentors in higher education. Many of the participants remarked on how the lack of a mentor affected their sense of support and connection with their workplace, indicating that these women are struggling to connect with a mentor or mentee in the workplace. It is worth noting that all participants have been in mentoring relationships at some point in their careers, so for them to acknowledge the negative impacts of not having a mentor is meaningful. The second question addressed by the analysis of this theme - What key functions of the mentor-mentee relationship has helped women success in the workplace? - was directly answered by the participants' experiences. This theme offers a sound response to this question. Through mentoring, women are experiencing support,

connectedness, fulfillment, and job satisfaction. These outcomes are helping them retain and excel in their organizations. Similarly, the second theme, development and advancement, provides an answer to this question.

Theme 2: Development and Advancement

The second theme that emerged from the participants' interviews is development and advancement. All participants acknowledged their mentoring relationships as a means to support their own or another person's career opportunities. Career advancement is a clear outcome of these relationships and was shared generally from one of two perspectives, advancement of self or advancement of others. Just as most participants had experienced both serving as a mentor and as mentee, many participants shared how they had benefitted from development and advancement had been something they benefited from as well as how they had attempted to promote for others.

The participants' experience with development and advancement through mentorship addressed training opportunities, coaching, and sponsorship. The quotes from the participants chosen to be included in this written report represent the range of experiences shared. Anne reflects on how her mentorship relationship contributed to her career advancement, "they really pushed me to take risks and they made it feel safe enough that I was not threatened by it." Ashley similarly captured her experience with her mentor supporting her professional development, "it was helpful for me to grow as a professional and to be more eager to learn things." She compared this experience with her mentor to a previous experience with a supervisor, "versus, someone who would constantly come down on you and say that you weren't doing well." Donna also felt like her mentoring relationship provided an advantage not afforded her otherwise in her

workplace: “as a result then my work was able to speak for itself; it opened more doors for opportunity, is that I think those relationships you know help in that regard.” Participants Tori and Millie spoke about preparation and the importance mentorship played in their sense of preparation. Tori shared, “I think being prepared to take on the next role when it became available, so when that supervisor left, I was trained and ready to go.” Millie reflected, “it prepared me for opportunities, building skills and competencies, building my network and learning from others.” Each of these participants directly related their mentoring relationship experience with their own development and advancement opportunities. These relationships provided coaching, learning, and networking for the benefit of the participants, thus contributing to their promotion opportunities in their work experiences.

Participants also commented on serving in the mentoring role as it relates to development and promotion. Participant Julie shared about her desire to push women to advance:

> I am always trying to make sure that I tell young women, even older women, to move to the next level. Do not accept where you are. You cannot accept where you are. The only reason you should accept where you are is if you love where you are.

Her experience as a woman staff member in higher education has motivated her to address the need to push the women around her and help champion them into advancement opportunities. Ashley shard very similar sentiments: “just that nudging them… helping them practice for interviewing, reviewing cover letters and resumes, making sure they are on the right track and matching the job description, so they will have a good chance.” As a career services professional, Ashley easily combined her skills with her desire to mentor and offered sponsorship like activities for the mentees she

worked with. Finally, Cassy described her ideal of the role a mentor should play in career advancement for mentees:

> I think that's part of it, giving confidence and opening the doors wide enough so you can see the opportunity. If you're the mentor you should be opening those doors so that they can see the opportunity and what you see in them, they don't see in themselves, because many times we don't see in ourselves, nearly what others who get to know us do. And so, I think we have to open those doors for people and that's part of the relationship. So, you gain knowledge, you gain vision, you get some good vision if you have a good mentor, and you give vision, or you help them set vision.

Much of the development, advancement, and career promotion concepts discussed directly relates to learning from others through the mentoring relationship. The third theme identified in this research is learning from others and will be discussed.

Theme 3: Learning from Others

"There is wisdom to be gained from people who have paved the path before me," Millie confirmed. Millie described a positive outcome from her mentoring relationships, realizing the value of learning from her mentor as a means of preparing for her own career path. Of the participants, those who commented on learning from others offered two general experiences with that learning, learning to avoid a difficult time, or learning for the purpose of growth. Ashley very directly described her expectations of learning from her mentors. She said, "just trying to learn, you know, from those people, what are the pitfalls that you have encountered that I can avoid." Emily describe a similar experience as it related to learning from her mentors and how she hoped to apply these lessons learned to her own career. She shared, "Some of the things I have sought out and those relationships are the ability to have a sounding board, a listening ear, and guidance in tough situations where I need to talk through how to handle this." These outcomes represented a very common experience among the participants, the desire to share ideas

for feedback and to learn how to move themselves forward in the workplace. Connie, on the other hand, offered a very specific desire to learn from her mentor:

> I was having trouble trying to figure out how to do a job that I had been doing for a very long time, but in a new environment. So, I thought maybe somebody had some secret sauce somewhere, and I wanted them to share.

Connie is not the only participant that referenced overcoming workplace hurdles as a priority for their mentoring relationships. Many participants, some becoming quite emotional during their interview, had experienced hurdles.

The second common experience as it related to learning from others is learning for the purpose of growth. Participants Avery and Janelle offer very similar examples that highlight the general sentiment of learning from the mentoring relationships. Avery stated, "My mentor is the perfect example of diplomacy and how to deal with people, so watching her as an example is really the best thing for me." Janelle also reflected upon her mentor with great respect and fondness and hoped to learn from her. She said, "When I think about learning of her experiences, I think how I can translate that to my experiences." Margot's experience demonstrated deeper insight into that learning; she shared; "He is just by nature a teacher and a mentor. Every time we do anything, he specifically is engaging me, what are your thoughts, so that you are thinking about things analytically." Margot's statement about learning from her mentor paints a picture of a mentor that very intentionally offered these learning opportunities to their mentees. The experiences of Dianne and Elizabeth also highlighted mentors that were intentionally planting seeds of learning for their mentees. Dianne reflected on her experience with her mentor: "they helped me learn the ropes a little bit more and forced me to learn things that I didn't think I needed." Elizabeth also shared, "looking back at it now, that's how I

see that relationship; she was growing me and teaching me." Finally, participant Donna connected the idea of support and learning from her mentor to how she feels about her workplace. Her comments about her mentor relationship provided understanding to how the themes are connected and support each idea. She shared:

> Just having that relationship with that level of trust where folks feel comfortable and confident enough to ask for suggestions, guidance, or wisdom. It makes you feel that you belong to the organization, that you are a part of the family, and that you are valued.

The third theme, learning from others, is supported and built together with one of the emerging themes found in the significant statements, mentoring to give back, which was also expressed as an idea of paying it forward.

As the participants shared their thoughts of mentoring for the purpose of giving back or paying the effort forward, three commonalities emerged. Some of the women were mentoring from a sense of duty to return the favor shared with them. Millie explained, "I was eager to give back to those that were coming after me because I have benefited from that type of relationship." Maddie expanded, "It's a whole concept of somebody did it for you and now you need to do it for someone else, for me it's about growing leaders, growing people." These participants were able to point to the positive outcomes they have experienced with mentoring as the reason why they will continue in these relationships, to benefit someone in the same way they were helped along by their mentors. Janet very passionately shared, "To give back everything I felt like I had been offered: the grace, the understanding, the challenge, and the support." The other common experience shared about mentoring for the purpose of giving back was elaborated on by participant Cassy. She explained:

> How do we give back, how do we share women how they can do this because we were able to do it? And how do we make it easier for them than it was for us, because you can imagine, it's been a process.

Cassy's explanation of her sense of duty to pay it forward was not linked directly to one mentoring experience; rather, she believed the collective experience of women who had earned a successful career should pave the way for future women leaders in higher education. She felt that her hard work should offer dividends to the women coming along behind her. Finally, the third commonality of paying forward the learning from mentoring can be described as the sense of reward for making a difference in the lives of others. Ashley spoke about this sense of reward:

> I feel like it is rewarding as a mentor to be able to help somebody in their come-up and to help them navigate different things in the field, especially if they are coming into higher education, then I love to be able to help them navigate the terrain and avoid any pitfall that maybe I saw, encountered, or even saw in other professionals.

Participant Julie offered a similar attitude toward her desire to mentor: "I am one person doing something for you, sometimes makes a big difference in your life. I just hope I can make a difference in their lives." Together, the third theme, learning from others, and the subtheme, giving back, provide a sound understanding of how women are experiencing mentoring and the positive outcomes they are gaining from these relationships.

Theme 4: Women's Leadership Development

The fourth and final theme found in this research is women's leadership development and is further discussed through the subthemes that emerged, work life balance as well as confidence building. Women's leadership as it relates to the mentoring experience was expressed by the participants in concepts such as responsibility to other women, admiration of women mentors' examples in the workplace, and the importance

of representation. While their perspectives on women's leadership development through mentoring were all shaped by their unique lived experiences, one participant shared a thought that illustrated the sentiment of the participants as a whole. Anne said, "I think women tend to form very deep relationships especially in mentor-mentee relationships." This idea about how women mentor informs the following discussions about their experiences.

When reflecting on their mentoring experiences, experiences were described that were rooted in the idea that women had a responsibly to develop other women. Maddie said very directly, "I feel like my responsibility is greater to women." Participant Donna shared her experience both as a mentee and mentor and was impassioned about the importance of women helping each other learn for the purpose of growth. She expounded:

> We as women, should be really intentional about helping each other advance. It is experiences that we share with others so they can learn, and I am always open and willing to hear the experiences of those who have gone before me, so that I can learn and follow the tracks that worked for them and to avoid the ones that may have been pitfalls. It is just a great opportunity for growth.

Anne felt similarly and was shaped by the advice given to her by her own mentor. She shared,

> My mentor flat out told me at one point, 'You know, it's tough for women in this field to be in leadership roles and if you are ever in one, my expectation for you is to look out for other people as I did for you.' So, she kind of sent me on that path, very early on.

Women supporting women out of obligation of bringing other women along in the workplace was clearly significant to many of the participants. For some, it was brought out by their own personal experience with hurdles in the workplace based, on their gender and for others, it was a value taught to them by their mentors. The idea of

advancing women was also demonstrated in the way the participants reflected on the example set for them by their mentor. An admiration for their mentor's leadership example was shared by participants, such as Stephanie. She said of her mentor, "she is well respected; she is very calm, very cool. She is definitely a leader, but as the same time she has also maintained her femininity. She is very classy and stylish, and I really admire her for that." Emily also offered an admiration for the way women lead and mentor in the workplace, though her appreciation was expressed in the aggregate rather than about a single mentoring experience. She explained, "Where the feminist leadership style that we try to enact is rubbing up against the bureaucratic systems that we are in, mentoring has been a huge piece of being able to stay centered in that tension." This participant's view on women mentoring in the workplace lends itself to the final description of women's leadership development, the importance of representation. The idea of representation is that developing women leaders need someone who looks like them throughout the organizational chart, especially at the top of that organization. Lacey, a senior leader for her university, remarked, "I do feel like it is more difficult for people of color, especially women of color because we do not see people who look like us all the time, especially in senior leadership." This participation spoke about her motivation to mentor, that it was rooted in wanting to show other women of color that a path to the top is possible and she is willing to share all that she has learned along the way. Participant Anne found herself in a challenging work environment with male dominated senior leadership. She too was motivated to use her position and experience to create a pathway for other women's success. She shared, "The culture has made me feel even more strongly about the importance of helping other women in this kind of

environment." Her senior position as well as the length of time she had spent in her career provided her the circumstances to support other women as they navigated the culture of the institution. Similarly, participant Donna found herself in the place in her career to use the hurdles she had experienced to develop the women around her. She offered, "being a female in leadership, working against some of the things, some of the challenges, and submitting to the ladies on how to navigate through some of those challenges." This staff member was committed to simultaneously pushing back on the institutional challenges for women, while also using those hurdles to teach and develop. This is not the only example of a graceful balancing act in women's leadership. The following demonstrates how work life balance contributes to women's leadership development and is explored through the lens of mentoring.

The work life balance subtheme emerged from the significant statements and was often referenced as participants reflected on the way their female mentors led in the workplace. The positive qualities observed addressed the way these leaders managed their family lives with career demands as well as the mentors' ability to demonstrate balance and wellness. As a mentor, Cassy acknowledged the tension women leaders are faced with: "it is a tough profession to be a mom, to be a wife, to be all the things that we think our identities tell us we have to be." Both participants, Millie and Janet reflected on how their mentor demonstrated work life balance and the impact it made on them professionally to observe this balance. Millie reflected, "I think what I loved about that mentor was that she was a mom of three kids, young kids, so I got to see her doing this difficult, high demanding job while juggling a family." Janet also desired to be able to

learn from working mothers that had experience managing the demands of a career. She shared:

> I remember looking for some professional guidance about being a full time professional, as well as a mom. It is not a very large field of women who work full time, who are moms and then also are doctoral students, so I had a very specific niche that I was looking for. I had a very narrow focus of the type of mentor I wanted to be able to partner with.

Being able to model the behaviors of a successful career for women in higher education was important to these participants. In addition to balancing the demands of family life, they were also seeking guidance on overall balance and wellness. Avery found that balance in her mentor and sought to learn from it. She said, "I would love to be a mentor like my mentor is: calm, sane, practical, intelligent, diplomatic, and I see her juggle her personal life with her professional life, and I really admire that." Elizabeth, who had experience as both a mentor and a mentee shared her expectation for modeling work life balance, she stated:

> I think part of being a good supervisor is knowing what is going on in their lives, what difficulties they may be having so that I can adjust things on their side. Because we all just want to be healthy and happy and grow and be able to move forward.

As a mentor, this participant placed value on understanding the whole life of a mentee and acknowledging the impact of outside of work stresses on work performance and happiness. By maintaining an attitude of awareness, work life balance and wellness could be demonstrated as a value.

The last subtheme that emerged from the significant statements and that support the larger theme of women's leadership development is confidence. Participants that served as both mentors and mentees were able to point to confidence building as a positive outcome from their mentoring relationships. This confidence building subtheme

emerged from two main ideas, belief in self and ability to lead. Four participants shared their experience with mentoring as it related to confidence building and described positive outcomes that impacted their belief in self and reduced their self-doubt. Participant Julie shared, "that confidence building has led me to actually believe in my leadership skills. I've always had leadership qualities." Ruth also experienced a realization about her ability as a result of the confidence gained through her mentoring relationships:

> It has given me the confidence to actually do it. Before, I had ideas and I would just have ideas in my head or written down, but actually talking to my mentor helps me to formulate the right words and gives me the push to just do it. She will say, "It sounds like a good idea, it is a good idea, and even if somebody else does not understand it, the right person will understand what you are saying".

Emily was another participant to experience a change of thought as a result of her mentoring relationship, citing confidence building as the change in attitude toward her skills, abilities, and specifically her ability to make sound decisions. She reflected on her experience:

> It is so easy, especially as women, to doubt ourselves and our decision making ability when we have all of these other people and things that causes us to self-doubt, a lot more than we should. My mentor helped me learn that it is okay for me to trust my gut on things. I am a very intuitive person and so often in decision making, I cannot give you a specific reason why I make a decision, that gut level decision is being informed by this other stuff that I know. And it is okay to trust that.

Finally, Avery demonstrated how the mentoring relationship she experienced with her supervisor has influenced her confidence building, which can led to a happier, more fulfilled employees. She said, "It makes me feel very solid, confident. I love to learn, anything that I can learn makes me feel good about myself and secure in my job. I know that I do a good job and that my boss appreciates me." Not only does confidence building

increase a mentee's belief in self, but also their ability to lead and work with others. Tori provided an example of this experience: "giving me the confidence to work with others and to help coworkers and become a mentor myself and give me knowledge to excel in a field that I did not have a background with, to allow me to ask those questions." Participants linked their confidence building experiences with their own ability to lead and work with others. Donna shared, about her mentor's effort to build her up, "encouraging me to speak up, encouraging me to be confident in what I have to say and giving me an opportunity to show my leadership skills." She was able to demonstrate a direct relationship between the mentoring relationship, her confidence building, and her leadership development. Finally, Maura said, "I think that encouraging others to be better leaders has made me a more confident leader, because by building up people, it makes me feel like I am somehow honoring the people that have turned around to build me."

The four themes that emerged from the interviews with the participants were able to answer the following guidepost research question: *What key functions of the mentor-mentee relationship have helped women succeed in the workplace?* Each of the four themes addressed this question, providing insight to the central research question of the project: *How does mentoring contribute to leadership and workforce development for women in higher education?* The key functions of mentoring are the four themes identified. Those functions are support and connectedness, development and advancement, learning from others, and women's leadership development.

Validating Leadership Roles

While not classified as a theme for the purpose of identifying the functions of mentoring for women staff in higher education, the overwhelming majority of the

participants did share a common experience that provides insight to one of the guiding questions of the research project. That question was, *Do women staff in higher education view themselves as leaders?* When asked directly, "Would you describe yourself as a leader in your organization?" 23 of the 24 participants affirmed that they did view themselves as leaders. This provided a clear answer that, yes, women staff in higher education do view themselves as leaders. However, an interesting pattern evolved with this direct, yes/no question. Of the 23 women that remarked, "yes," 14 of them did so with a validating statement. These 14 participants viewed themselves as a leader but felt the need to qualify their answer, validating to me why they were a leader. The 14 women that responded in this way represented every participant type in this study. They came from all institution types, and served at all levels, front-line, midlevel, and senior leadership. The following two statements from participants, Julie and Emily provide a view into the types of validating statements that were shared by the participants. Julie is a senior level leader at an HBCU and when asked if she were a leader, she responded in the affirmative and provided the following justification for her response: "that's kind of difficult. Well, the title infers. I hear the same thing over and over, 'You will get it worked out.'" Several of the participants used their work ethic and ability to "get it worked out" as a reason for them being viewed as a leader. Emily, a midlevel manager from a comprehensive university shared:

> I'd like to think so. That has waxed and waned. I feel like I am a leader positionally for sure, like my title of director dictates. I try not to be just a positional leader but also somebody that folks want to seek out the advice from or want to seek counsel and guidance from. And to me, those more informal leadership kinds of things, that's more important than having the title of director. I think leadership is a lot more than just having a title that I kind of really struggle sometimes with people who are like, "I'm the leader, listen to me"; no you have

> to earn that. So, I try to earn it, and try to be somebody that you know whether it's in my department or across campus, that folks can come to.

The experience of Emily is also shared by many participants. She felt the need to explain how she had earned her stance of leader and did not wish for her title alone to be the reason she is viewed by leader. Many of the participants shared that "others come to them" and that being in that supportive role justified their experience as a leader.

Women staff members in higher education do view themselves as leaders in their organizations, and many of them feel the need to justify or validate how that is true. Of the participants that offered validating statements, it is clear that the support they offer to others is what makes them feel confident in their position as a leader in the workplace. Women leaders in higher education are others-focused and define their leadership by their ability to offer help.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the participants' experience with mentoring, both individually and collectively. The findings were explored through the lens of answering the research question: *How does mentoring contribute to leadership and workforce development for women in higher education?* To organize the rich data collected from the semi-structured interviews, significant statements were identified, emerging themes were labeled, and coding was used to identify the four themes of the research project. Those themes are: *support and connectedness, development and advancement, learning from others, and women's leadership development*. The lived experience of the participants were able to answer the guiding questions and principal research question of the phenomenon being studied. Yes, women staff in higher education do view themselves as leaders. Yes, women staff in higher education are

participating in mentoring relationships. Yes, women staff in higher education do experience hurdles finding mentors. Finally, yes, there are key functions to the mentor-mentee relationship that have helped women succeed in the workplace. Those functions are represented by the four themes explored: support and connectedness, development and advancement, learning from others, and women's leadership development.

Chapter V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand the experiences of women staff in higher education as they relate to mentoring relationships. This insight will inform industry leaders on the positive effects of mentoring in personnel development for the ultimate purpose of providing women with leadership development opportunities. This chapter includes a discussion of the project's findings and the relationship to the literature explored: mentorship in the workplace, staff development in higher education, and women's leadership development in higher education. This chapter will also provide implications for practice, fulfilling the goal of the researcher, to offer data informed best practice for developing mentoring programs in higher education for the purpose of advancing women. Topics for future research will also be discussed and a brief summary will be provided.

Interpretations of the Findings

This discussion is centered on the project's research question: *How does mentoring contribute to leadership and workforce development for women in higher education?* A model was developed that provided a theoretical framework for compiling the literature review, designing the methodology, and conducting the research. The model supported the notion that women staff will develop skills and confidence as a result of their mentoring relationships. This confidence and skill development will then translate

into positive impacts being made in higher education. The outcomes of this research project will be discussed from the lens of this model. The data collected through semi-structured interviews with the 24 participants demonstrated that women staff in higher education, despite their assignment in the organization chart, are participating in mentoring relationships. These mentoring relationships produce positive outcomes for employees' growth, such as support, connectedness, work-life balance, confidence building, wellness, learning from others, advancement opportunities, and leadership development. This research also demonstrated that women staff members in higher education view themselves as leaders, both positionally and informally, and value being someone that others on campus turn to for support and assistance.

The first theme explored in the findings was *support and connectedness*. As an outcome from mentoring relationships, women staff feel supported in the workplace as well as connected to the people around them and even to the organization. These feelings of support contributed a sense of safety and job security. While Potter and Tolson's research was meant to understand the experiences of junior nursing faculty, the phenomenon observed in this research project uphold their conclusion about mentoring. They held, "for successful mentoring to take place, the senior faculty as well as junior faculty must understand the importance of an ongoing nurturing environment; an environment that allows for freedom of respectful expression and openness to each other" (2014, p. 720). The women that participated in this study overwhelmingly expressed a sense of gratitude to their mentor for this very outcome. Many of them spoke of the need to share ideas and concerns, a place to brainstorm or to practice sharing their thoughts and proposals, as well as a place to vent frustrations and validate their concerns. One

participant's experience demonstrates how this sense of ongoing nurturing environment is tied directly to the mentoring relationship, as she provides the contrast of her work environment when her mentor leaves the institution. Maura shared,

> You know, having mentoring relationships at the institution where I work, absolutely positively contributed to a feeling of belonging at that institution, knowing that they were people that I could go and talk with when I had difficult decisions to make or was having issues as a supervisor, just the various stuff that comes up, knowing that there were people that I could talk to about that. And then, conversely, as some of the people have left or shifted roles, I can also tell that has contributed to my having less of a feeling of belonging at my institution now than I did a couple of years ago.

This participant was able to mark a stark difference in her feelings of support and connectedness when she had a mentor on campus and then when she did not. This theme also revealed connections to the unique way women handle workplace hurdles. This research found that women replied on their support networks, including their mentors, for encouragement during times of adversity (Diehl, 2014). While women are persistent and resilient, it is not without cost, as demonstrated by the experience of Maura. However, mentoring relationships have the capacity to absorb some of the impact of those hardships because of the support and connectedness experienced by the mentee as a result of the relationship. Finally, this theme affirmed Kram's (1985) continuum of mentor-mentee relationship functions. Support and connectedness align with her explanation of psychosocial functions, which includes role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, counseling, and friendship. The participants in this study absolutely benefited from the psychosocial outcomes of mentoring and they applied those outcomes to their workplace experience.

The second theme explored in the findings was development and advancement. The women participating in mentoring relationships considered their professional and

personal development as well as the advancement opportunities afforded to them to be major positive outcomes of the relationships. This theme represents the other end of Kram's (1985) continuum, career functions. Career functions are intended to help the mentee learn to navigate the organization for the purpose of advancement opportunities and depend on the mentor's position and influence in the workplace. Congruent with the literature regarding mentoring in the workplace, the phenomenon studied by this research found that the women staff are experiencing development and advancement through their mentoring relationships and from training opportunities, networking, coaching, and sponsorship. The experience of Millie captures the phenomenon well; she said "it prepared me for opportunities, building skills and competencies, building my network and learning from others." The women that noted these positive outcomes directly related the experiences to their potential for advancement opportunities in the workplace. Miller and Byham's (2015) research supports these outcomes and directly connects the positive benefit of them to the organization. They found in addition to the transfer of knowledge, mentoring was a successful tool in employee retention and the growth of long term employees. They championed mentor-led professional development as a means for companies to benefit from productivity and retention gains. Margot demonstrated how this phenomenon exists inside an organization. As a senior level administrator for a statewide community college, she has experience both as a mentor and a mentee. She gave her mentor much credit for her advancement opportunity and reflected on how he invested in her for the purpose of succession planning. The value of developing the mentees coming behind was instilled in her. She reflected on how her mentor shaped her attitude toward her work life: "I love professional development, I really love working, I

am a working person. And I like growing in a leadership role, and at the same time I love teaching and sharing." Margot's experience with a supervisor as a mentor was shared by many of the women in the study. The literature also addressed the difference between supervisor and mentor. Scandura and Pellegrini (2007) explained that supervision produced short term outcomes, things that might be captured in an employee appraisal. In contrast, mentoring produced long term outcomes such as promotion and development. While many of the participants viewed their supervisor as a mentor, they experienced the outcomes more closely aligned with the mentor as described by Scandura and Pellegrini. The learning experienced by mentees for the purpose of development, promotion, and advancement is explored in the next theme.

The third theme found in the findings of this research is learning from others. As the mentoring relationships have the capacity to provide professional development, advancement and employee retention, it accomplishes these positive outcomes through workplace learning. The participant's experience with learning from others is congruent with the social learning theory that contributes to the research model of this project. Bandura's (1977) social learning theory provides an understanding of how learning can take place in observation and reflection. Mentoring relationships are the perfect setting for the mentees to observe successful and unappealing characteristics of the mentor and how those characteristics were received in the organization. By observing the mentor, mentees have the ability to advance their learning beyond their own personal experience. Janelle demonstrated her desire to participate in social learning. She said, "I think just learning about her experiences, how I can translate that to some of my experiences," and Millie shared, "there is wisdom to be gained from people who have paved the path before

me." Learning from others, as a positive outcome of mentoring, is further supported by the literature, as Ruben and De Lisi wrote, "to be successful, leadership educational programs and interventions must leverage the learning that occurs within the ongoing everyday environment" (2017, p 359). This research found that not only are participants taking pace in ongoing learning through their workplace mentoring relationships, but they are also experiencing job satisfaction, confidence, and personal growth as a result of this learning. Further, the literature introduced the idea that mentoring and the learning that takes place within that relationship can be reciprocal. The participants in this study also demonstrated their experience as both mentor and mentee, teacher and learner. Potter and Tolson wrote about this knowledge sharing, "the outcome of successful mentorship is that the learning process is reciprocal" (2014, p. 731). Mazerolle, Nottingham, and Coleman expanded on this reciprocal learning, emphasizing the importance of the sense of community. Their research showed, "the mentoring relationship is grounded by transfer of knowledge as well as the development of community among individuals with shared passion and areas of interest, a description that implies the underpinnings of social relationships and growth among like-minded individuals" (2018, p. 260). The idea of a colleague as a mentor, groups of colleagues participating as peer mentors, and even a truly reciprocal mentoring relationship was demonstrated in the experience of the participants. For example, Ashley described her experience with peer mentoring: "It ends up being more like we are these colleagues who bounce ideas off of each other or hear each other's frustrations, we were just on the same level when it came to where we were at." Further, Julie's experience demonstrates the natural evolution of a mentor-mentee relationship, highlighting how it becomes reciprocal. She shared,

> I needed some professional development in this area and so it made sense for me to join my professional organization, and then get into a mentoring relationship so I would have somebody to ask specific questions to… I started out that way initially as a mentee to get some guidance and form relationships outside my university in the field, and then it kind of progressed into me wanting to give back. And once I felt more confident in my role and felt more confident in my field, I wanted to share and learn from others. I really learned that mentoring is much more of a mutually reciprocal sort of relationship and less of like that mentoring telling the mentee information. And so, I really fell in love with this process.

Learning from others is a resource rich professional development opportunity that creates the sharing of knowledge, which in turn provides continuity to the organization. Further it contributes to the retainment of employees. Just as Julie demonstrated, one decision to become involved in mentoring allowed her to learn more about her field, ignited a desire to give back, built her confidence, all supporting a happy employee that appreciated her work environment. The literature regarding the positive benefit of learning from others through mentoring relationships has been affirmed in the results of this study.

The fourth and final theme that emerged from the data is women's leadership development. This term captures the experiences of the participants that are unique to women's experiences in the workplace. There are three concepts explored in the literature that were upheld and illustrated in this research. The first is an exploration of how women lead inherently from a place of community that is relationally oriented. In listening to the participants share about their mentors, supervisors, and coworkers, there was a clear appreciation for this feminine leadership style and often a frustration when it was lacking. Lowe wrote about the ability of women's leadership styles to maximize the potential of the group they are leading. Lowe explains this potential, "because of their ability to integrate networks and relationships, women benefit organizations more because of the higher value they place on relationships" (2010, p. 127 and p. 132). The following quotes

from participants Anne and Donna demonstrate the communal and relational nature of their mentoring experience. Anne shared, "I think there was a very strong culture of teamwork, and we are in this together, and so it came naturally." Donna shared, "We have a very large sense of community. We are very family oriented and very supportive of each other." Finally, Maura's comment sheds light on the importance women put on the relational nature of how women lead and interact. She said, "it's about the way you interact with people, the way that you guide people, the way you make decisions, and your transparency." Additionally, the women's leadership development theme explored the work-life balance of the participants, which upheld the conclusions found in the literature. White found that women were hesitant to take on more demanding roles in their organizations because women still held the major family obligations. This hurdle is inflated by inadequate support from institutions, increasing demands, and the "likelihood to strain and sacrifice in juggling competing responsibilities" (2012, pp. 16-17). While this research did not observe participants stepping back or turning down advancement opportunities, they were keenly aware of the tension between work demands and homelife. Cassy said, "it is a tough profession to be a mom, to be a wife, to be all the things that we think our identities tell us we have to be" and Elizabeth reflected on her responsibility as a supervisor:

> I think part of being a good supervisor is knowing what is going on in their lives, what difficulties they may be having so that I can adjust things on their side. Because we all just want to be healthy and happy and grow and be able to move forward.

Finally, the literature's exploration of the important of representation was demonstrated in the findings of this project. Turner and Gonzalez wrote of women's experiences with tokenizing and marginalization and described mentoring tendencies at most institutions as

"white males tend to mentor white males" (2015, p. 14). This approach results in fewer opportunities for women to be sponsored, and an expectation for them to conform to departmental or campus norms. This sense was also demonstrated in the participant interviews. Cassy said, "I feel like that my career as a female, and for most of that career I was doing facilities work, so I was dealing with men. I was the only female in the room for many years." Lacey's experience echoed the sentiment of Cassy but also introduced the intersection of race with gender as it relates to mentoring. She shared,

> I do feel like it's more difficult for people of color, but especially women of color, because we do not see people who look like us all the time, especially in senior leadership … It really does impact young professionals of color and their career trajectories because when you are in a space where you do not know people who are there or have been there, you do not get the same guidance, you do not get the same help … There are mentoring programs set up for faculty but when you come in as a staff member, there are not those same relationships formalized … So, while you are doing your job, you are also engaging in trying to figure things out by yourself.

While the findings of this research project are unique to the women staff in higher education. It is clear that this project upholds the findings of the literature and provided a unique setting to test those findings. This project also demonstrated that the mentoring, staff development, and women's leadership best practice can be applied in higher education. The next section of this chapter is dedicated to exploring how these finding can be applied in the workforce of higher education.

Implications for Practice

The chief goal of this research project is to better understand how women can be supported in the workplace for the purpose of their development and advancement. Mentoring provided a platform to study potential best practices for this development in a field that lacked strategic human resource development practices. My desire to

understand more about staff development and women's leadership in the setting of higher education was a product of my own observation in the workforce. However, both the literature and the findings of this study suggested that my observation is a common phenomenon in higher education. Blackwell and Blackmore discussed the lack of standards and professional code despite the fact that higher education employees are highlighted as educated teachers and researchers (2003). The participants also noticed this lack of intentional development for staff. Lacey said, "faculty come in, they have mentoring program but when you come in as a staff member, you do not necessarily have those same relationships." Dianne also realized the lack of programmatic development for staff. She shared,

> It's different than on the faculty side where you are an adjunct and then a professor and then you move up to department chair, then dean. You kind of know these steps along the way and you have mentors throughout that process, who also went through that process.

This mid-level manager went on to describe her promotion experience as a labyrinth, in which she was dependent on other employees leaving the institution and at the complete discretion of her supervisor. She also shared that once promoted, she found herself in a role that neither she nor her supervisor had experience in and needed to find a mentor for support. This section is dedicated to offering how the findings of the research can inform higher education leaders to leverage mentoring relationships in the workforce for positive outcomes that impact the employee and the employer.

This research upheld the literature's conclusion that organizations should formalize mentoring in the workplace. Scandura and Pellegrini wrote, "organizations are increasingly recognizing the value of mentoring relationships and attempt to reap the advantages through launching formal mentoring programs as part of their career

development initiatives" (2007, p. 8). By formalizing mentoring as a staff development tool, the workplace is alleviating of the major hurdles to mentoring, making a match. The majority of the participants in this study indicated that being matched to a mentor or mentee was difficult. A formalized program creates intentional opportunities for senior staff members to connect with freshman staff or mid-level staff that are looking for opportunities to grow in their current roles within the organization. As some participants from formalized programs and were matched through a third party found the matches to be stiff and awkward, program designers should consider creating opportunities for networking and intentional interaction, allowing for matches to occur more organically and to likely be more successful in forming a meaningful relationship. Anne had benefited from non-matched mentoring relationships but acknowledged the need for assistance with finding mentors. She shared, "we see more and more women in higher education, they need to feel like this is a path where they can grow. While most of my relationships have been informal, I would love to see more formality in this process." While it is clear that higher education organization would benefit from formalized programs that offer intentional opportunities for potential mentees to meet mentors, these programs should also consider how to support the relationships when one partner moves to another institution or changes roles in a significant way. Most of the mentoring relationships studied in this project lasted more than one year. It is clear that these relationships are ongoing and lasting beyond the lifetime of a professional development program. Participants that had experience with these long term relationships spoke of the hurdles associated with mentors taking new jobs, leaving their institution, or even becoming a peer as the mentee advances. In a formalized mentoring program, training

and awareness regarding the stages and evolution of mentoring would help prepare mentors and mentees for this reality and even provide them with a skill set to navigate the change.

Another finding that should inform practice is the motivation to participate in mentoring relationships that was demonstrated by the participants in this study. In general, there were two motivating positions. The women wanted advancement opportunities, including leadership development, and the ability to learn from others. The other motivation came from a sense of obligation to give back or to repay what had been done for them. These outcomes should inform higher education leaders that staff are motivated to participate in these relationships, which affords organizations the opportunity to provide professional development opportunities to staff at all levels in a very affordable and accessible method. As such, participation in mentoring can be used as a development tool for staff. This can easily be incorporated into employee improvement plans, annual goal setting, and evaluation programs. Similarly, for the staff that are interested in mentoring as a way to return what has been done for them, participation in mentoring relationships should be rewarded by the organization. Higher education leaders might consider providing stipends or bonuses to mentors or providing recognition for their contribution through employee awards and application programs at the institution.

The goal of this section was to create a meaningful case for workplace mentoring in the field of higher education. The participants of this study demonstrated consistently how those relationships generate positive outcomes that in turn create positive outcomes for the organization. It is my sincerest hope that higher education leaders can glean from

this discussion an appreciation for mentoring as well as an awareness for the key programmatic needs of this approach to staff development.

Recommendations for Further Research

As indicated in the literature review and as upheld in this research, there is a gap in the literature at the intersection of higher education administration, strategic staff development, and human resource management. This study explored said gap and hopefully offered an additional point of view that will help mature the scientific study of mentoring in the workplace. As stated by Bozeman and Feeney, "mentoring research adds up to less than the sum of its parts; although there is incremental progress in a variety of new and relevant subject domains, there has been too little attention to core concepts and theory" (2007, p. 719). This section is dedicated to sharing concepts for future research based on my experience and observations with this study.

The methodology of this project, specifically the semi-structured interviews, allowed for rich data to be collected. These data offered insights to the experiences of 24 participants across 4 different settings and 3 different organizational levels. The themes that emerged from this study not only provided response to the research question of the study, but also offered several launch points for further study. Specifically, I offer and recommend a deep and specific investigation into the following concepts. First, a more thorough examination of how mentoring directly affects the promotion of women in higher education would be warranted. A longitudinal study tracking a cohort of mentees to determine if and how their mentoring experience contributes to their trajectory in the workplace would provide invaluable insight to the field of research around workplace mentoring. This type of study would also be able to contribute to the knowledge

community by providing a detailed account of how mentoring changes over time and how the relationship is or is not sustained through job changes, relocations, and eventually the advancement of the mentee. This type of study would be very resource intensive and require years of dedication from the researcher but would provide invaluable findings.

The second area of future study to better understand the topics discussed in this project is a deeper dive into the learning outcomes associated with mentoring. A mixed methods research project testing measurable learning outcomes for those participating in mentor relationships would also further mentorship research. The quantifiable data provided by this type of study would help organizations better understand exactly how their employees are or are not benefitting from the relationship. The qualitative data produced by this type of study would offer context through which the quantitative data could best be understood. The methods used for this type of project would be very valuable to an organization interested in developing a mentoring program, offering them a framework for evaluation.

One of the most interesting surprises produced by this project was how many participants identified themselves as leaders in the workplace, only to offer a validating reason for why they were so. An exploration of why women in the workplace feel they must validate their place as a leader in the organization is warranted and arguably necessary. The participants in this study were all eager to learn and grow and demonstrated passion for their work. As an observer, I never had the sense that these women did not feel as if they had a place in the organization, so why the need to validate their role as a leader? Future study on this phenomenon would provide critical insight for

the knowledge community dedicated to women's leadership development and advancement.

Finally, the last concept for future study is related to the mode through which these relationships are taking place. At the time this study began, there were few mentions of virtual mentoring in the literature, it was clear that this way of interacting was only beginning to develop. Then, in early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic became a household term and thrust virtual or at-a-distance relationships into immediate demand. Many of the participants commented on how COVID-19, working from home, and virtual interactions had changed their mentoring relationships. Like all things in our society, COVID-19 created immediate change and will likely have a lasting impact on the way we connect with our mentors. Future study on that impact and what organizations can do to maintain the quality of these relationships would be of incredible benefit to the knowledge community.

Conclusion

The lack of women at the top ranks of higher education coupled with the deficient research around staff development in higher education provided this project an opportunity to contribute to positive change in a meaningful way. Mentoring provides numerous positive outcomes for both the employee and the employer. Developed intentionally, with best practice, and data-led decision making in mind, these programs can be impactful and accessible for any member of the organization. Mentoring provides a positive outlet for employees to grow, learn, develop, express frustration, experience gratitude, receive feedback, and enjoy job satisfaction. This project demonstrates that women staff in higher education are participating in mentoring relationships; they view

themselves as leaders; they are experiencing positive outcomes as a result of the relations; and despite the fact that they do experience hurdles in the relationships, women staff members are learning, being developed, and advancing their careers as a result of mentoring relationships. Mentorship is a sound method for staff development and women's advancement in the field of higher education.

Higher education today is experiencing change at a rate very few leaders anticipated. They are receiving less public funding than ever, campuses are under immense pressure to deliver course content and student life experiences in a COVID-19 conscious and healthy way, and a social reckoning about race, gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic disparity is playing out on America's campuses. This is a critical time in higher education to create a culture of care and support. Mentoring is a powerful way for employees to experience that support and connectedness to the organization. It is also a meaningful way for employees to learn from each other, especially during a time when learning from one another has the potential to create stability in our turbulent culture.

REFERENCES

Allen, T., & Eby, L. (2004). Factors related to mentor reports of mentoring functions provided: gender and relational characteristics. *Sex Roles*, *50*(1–2*),* 129–139.

Allen, T., Eby, L., Poteet, M., Lentz, E., & Lima, L. (2004). Career benefits associated with mentoring for proteges: a meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *89*(1), 127-136.

Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory*. New York: General Learning Press.

Blackwell, R. (2003). Developing departments. In Blackwell, R. & Blackmore, P. (2003). *Towards Strategic Staff Development in Higher Education*. (pp. 119-130). Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: McGraw Hill.

Blackwell, R., & Blackmore, P. (2003). *Towards Strategic Staff Development in Higher Education*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: McGraw Hill.

Bozeman, B., & Feeney, M. (2007). Toward a useful theory of mentoring: a conceptual analysis and critique. *Administration and Society, 39*(6)*,* 719-739.

Clawson, J., & Kram, K. (1984) Managing cross-gender mentoring. *Business Horizons, 27*(3)*,* 22-32.

Cook, E., Heppner, M., & O'Brien, K. (2002). career development of women of color and white women: assumptions, conceptualizations, and interventions form an ecological perspective. *The Career Development Quarterly, 50,* 291-305.

Creswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. (2104). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Dahlvig, J., & Longman, K. (2010). women's leadership development: a study of defining moments. *Christian Higher Education, 9,* 238-258.

Diehl, A. (2014). Approaches of women leaders in higher education. In Longman, K. & Madsen S. (Eds.), *Women & Leadership in Higher Education* (pp. 97-114). Charlotte, North Carolina: Information Age Publishing.

Dunn, D., Gerlach, J., & Hyle, A. (2014). Gender and leadership: reactions of women in higher education administration. *International Journal of Leadership and Change*, *2*(1), 9-18.

Eagly, A., & Carli, L. (2007). *Through the Labyrinth*. Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business School Publishing.

Eby, L., & Allen, T. (2002). Further investigation of protégés' negative mentoring experiences: patterns and outcomes. *Group and Organizational Management*. *27*(4), 456-479.

Gangone, L., & Lennon, T. (2014). Benchmarking women's leadership in academia and beyond. In Longman, K. & Madsen S. (Eds.), *Women & Leadership in Higher Education* (pp. 3-22). Charlotte, North Carolina: Information Age Publishing.

Gilbert, L., & Rossman, K. (1992). Gender and the mentoring process for women: implications for professional development. *Professional Psychology: Research and Review*. *23*(3), 233-238.

Grogan, M. (1996). *Voices of women aspiring to the super intendency*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Hornsby, E., Morrow-Jones, H., & Ballam, D. (2012). Leadership development for faculty women at the ohio state university: the president and provost's leadership institute. *Advances in Developing Human Resources, 14*(1), 96-112.

Janssen, S., Vuuren, M., & Jong, M. D. T. (2016). Informal mentoring at work: a review and suggestions for future research. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, *18*(4), 498–517.

Johnson, H. (2017). *Pipelines, Pathways, and Institutional Leadership: An Update on the Status of Women in Higher Education*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

King, G., Keohane, R., & Verba, S. (1995). Translating quantitative methods for qualitative researchers: The Case of Selection Bias. *The American Political Science Review, 89*(2), 461-466.

Koontz, A., Walters, L., & Edkin, S. (2018). Positively supporting women faculty in the academy through novel mentoring community model. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education, 11*(1), 102-117.

Kram, K. (1983). Phases of the mentor relationship. *Academy of Management Journal, 26*(4), 608-625.

Kram, K. E. (1985). *Mentoring at work: Developmental relationships in organizational life*. Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman.

Labin, J. (2017). *Mentoring Programs that Work*. Alexandria, Virginia: ATD Press.

Lawrence, R. (2017). Understanding collaborative leadership in theory and practice. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 156,* 89-96.

Leech, B. (2002). Asking questions: techniques for semistructured interviews. *Political Science and Politics, 35*(4)*,* 665-668.

Lowe, M. (2010). Breaking the stained glass ceiling: collaborative leadership theory as a model for women in theological higher education. *Journal of Women in Educational Leadership, 8*(3)*,* 123-141.

Mazerolle, S., Nottingham, S., & Coleman, K. (2018). Faculty mentorship in higher education: the value of institutional and professional mentors. *Athletic Training Educational Journal, 13*(3)*,* 259-267.

McDonald, J., & Westphal, J. (2013). Access denied: low mentoring of women and minority first-time directors and its negative effects on appointments to additional boards. *Academy of Management Journal, 56*(4)*,* 1169-1198.

Miller, L., & Byham, T. (2015). Ladies you need a mentor. *Chief Learning Officer,* 48-51.

Moustakas, C. (1990). Heuristic Research: Design, methodology, and applications. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2019). *The Condition of Education - Postsecondary Education - Undergraduate Enrollment - Indicator May 2019*. Retrieved from: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cha.asp.

Otter Voice Meeting Notes. otter.ai/.

Page, M., & Margolis, R. (2017). Cocreating collaborative leadership learning environments: using adult learning principles and a coach approach. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 156,* 77-87.

Potter, D., & Tolson, D. (2014). A mentoring guide for nursing faculty in higher education. *International Journal of Caring Sciences, 7*(3), 727-732.

Ruben, B. D., & De Lisi, R. (2017). *A Guide for Leaders in Higher Education: Core Concepts, Competencies, and Tools*. Sterling, Virginia. Stylus Publishing.

Scandura, T. (1998) Dysfunctional mentoring relationships and outcomes. *Journal of Management, 24*(3), 449-467.

Scandura, T. & Pellegrini, E. (2007). Workplace mentoring: theoretical approaches and methodological issues. In Allen T., Eby, L. (Eds.) *Handbook of Mentoring: A Multiple Perspective Guide* (pp. 4-41). Malden, MA. Blackwell.

Sorenson, R., Folker, C., & Brigham, K. (2008). The collaborative network orientation: achieving business success through collaborative relationships. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, 32*(4), 615–634.

Sousa, D. (2014). Validation of qualitative research: general aspects and specificities of the descriptive phenomenological method. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 11*, 221-227.

Srivastava, S. (2015). Networking intervention: assessing the effects of formal mentoring on workplace networks. *Social Forces, 94*(1), 427-452.

Sullivan, K., & Mahalik, J. (2002) Increasing career self-efficacy for women: evaluating a group intervention. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 78*, 54-62.

Sulpizio. (2014). Developing women's leadership: an innovative and unique approach to raising leadership capacity. In Longman, K. & Madsen S. (Eds.), *Women & Leadership in Higher Education* (pp. 97-114). Charlotte, North Carolina: Information Age Publishing.

Suri, H. (2011). Purposeful sampling in qualitative research synthesis. *Qualitative Research Journal*, *11*(2), 63–75.

Tesch, R. (1990). Qualitiative Research: Analysis Types and Software Tools. New York: Falmer.

The White House Project. (2009). *Benchmarking Women's Leadership*. New York, NY: The White House Project. Retrieved from https://www.in.gov/icw/files/benchmark_wom_leadership.pdf

Thurston, P., D'Abate, C., & Eddy, E. (2012). Mentoring as an hrd approach: effects on employee attitudes and contributions independent of core self-evaluation. *Human Resource Development Quarterly, 23*(2), 139-165.

Tolar, M. (2012). Mentoring experiences in high-achieving women. *Advances in Developing Human Resources, 14*(2), 172-187.

Turner, C., & Gonzalez, J. (2015). *Mentoring Across Race/Ethnicity and Gender*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

White, J. (2012). HERS Institutes: Curriculum for advancing women leaders in higher education. *Advances in Developing Human Resources, 14*(1), 11-27.

Whittemore, R., Chase, S., & Mandle, C. (2001). Validity in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Health Research, 11(4),* 522-537.

Appendix A:

Participant Recruitment Materials

I. Email to Institutional Vice Presidents

Subject: Participant Recruitment for Higher Education Staff Development Research Study
Dear <insert name>, My name is Tiffany Bayne and I am a doctoral student of Public Administration at Valdosta State University. I am recruiting participants for my dissertation research on I am emailing you today in hopes that you can connect me with staff on your campus that would be interested in participating in this study. I am eager to connect with staff from all levels and functional units of your organization that are monthly, salaried, exempt employees. I have provided a criteria survey for participant inclusion here. If selected, participants will join in a one-on-one semi-structured phone interview. This interview will take approximately 60 minutes and will be scheduled at a time that is convenient for the employee and not a distraction from workplace expectations. Please consider passing this opportunity along to the members of your staff. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to let me know. Warmly, Tiffany Bayne tcbayne@valdosta.edu 478-363-2557

II. Email to Institutional Staff Council Leaders

Subject: Participant Recruitment for Higher Education Staff Development Research Study
Dear <insert name>, My name is Tiffany Bayne and I am a doctoral student of Public Administration at Valdosta State University. I am recruiting participants for my dissertation research on *staff development through mentorship for women in higher education*.

I am emailing you today in hopes that you can connect me with staff on your campus that would be interested in participating in this study. I am eager to connect with staff from all levels and functional units of your organization that are monthly, salaries, exempt employees.

I have provided a criteria survey for participant inclusion here. If selected, participants will join in a one-on-one semi-structured phone interview. This interview will take approximately 60 minutes and will be scheduled at a time that is convenient for the employee and not a distraction from workplace expectations.

Please consider passing this opportunity along to the members of your staff.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Warmly,
Tiffany Bayne
tcbayne@valdosta.edu
478-363-2557

III. Social Media Post on Professional Group Pages

Appendix B:

Participant Criteria Survey for Inclusion

Name:	**Email Address:**
Phone Number:	**Preferred Method of Communication:** Phone Email Text
Type of Institution: Research Institution Comprehensive College/University Community/Technical College Historically Black College/University	**Name of Institution:**
Please describe your role on your campus:	

Eby and Allen offered the following definition of workplace mentorship: "mentoring in an intense long-term relationship between a senior, more experienced individual (the mentor) and a more junior, less experienced individual (the protégé)" (p. 456). This is only one understanding of mentoring in the workplace, mentoring relationships differ from organization to organization and relationship to relationship.

Have you served as a mentor?
Yes No Unsure

Have you been a mentee?
Yes No Unsure

Do you provide direct service/programs to students and/or internal customers?
Direct service refers to delivering, providing for, or meeting the needs of students and internal customers. For example: collecting student's payment, processing transcripts, answering calls or questions from students.
Yes No Unsure

Do you provide supervision to any other staff?
Yes No Unsure

Are you responsible for strategic goal setting on your campus?
Yes No Unsure

Do you supervise/provide leadership to multiple functional units?
Yes No Unsure

Appendix C:

Observation Protocol

Date:	
Time:	
1. *Thank the participant for their time and agreeing to contribute to the study.* 2. *Review the informed consent letter sent to the participant. Ensure the participant signed the letter and understands that they may withdraw from the study at any time.* 3. *Ask the participant to confirm their understanding of the study and their voluntary participation.* 4. *Start audio recording device.*	
Descriptive Notes: *(reconstruction of dialogue, accounts of events)*	**Reflective Notes:** *(researcher's personal thoughts, speculations, feelings, ideas, hunches, impressions, and prejudices)*

Appendix D:

Interview Protocol

Interviewer:
Interviewee:
Date:
Time:
Script: **INTRODUCTION (10 minutes)** **Thank you** - Thank you for your participation in this interview. **Introduce Interviewer**- My name is Tiffany Bayne and I am a doctoral student at Valdosta State University in the Public Administration Program. I am also a staff member in higher education, working at Georgia Military College. **Purpose** – The purpose of today's interview is to learn how mentoring is used to development women staff in higher education. **Informed Consent** – Your participation in today's study is completely voluntary. You can withdraw at any time. Your name and the name of your institution will not be included in the final report of this research project. All personal information collected from you will be stored on a password protected hard drive and will be destroyed at the conclusion of this study. I see that you reviewed and signed the informed consent letter I provide you. Did you have any questions about informed consent or what this letter means? **Data Collection Procedure** – Today, we are going to work through a series questions, please feel free to respond to those questions or to add any additional information. I will be audio recording this interview as an aid to capture the information you share today. **Interview Guidelines** You are being interviewed because your experiences with mentoring relationships as a woman staff member in higher education is valuable and has the potential to contribute to informed best practices for staff development. There are no correct or incorrect responses to the questions we will discuss today, so please share as you feel comfortable. Please do not hesitate to let me know if you need a question clarified. **Do you have any questions at this time?**

Let's get started!

INTERVIEW (45 minutes)

Question Set for "Mentor" Participants:

Previous experience in mentoring relationship(s):
Have you participated in a mentor relationship?
Have you been a mentor?
Would you describe your mentor relationship as formal or informal?
Was your mentorship relationship matched or paired by a 3rd party (part of a program)?
Was it difficult to find or be matched with a mentee?
What motivated you to participate in a mentor-mentee relationship?
What was the gender of your mentee?

Depth/quality of the mentoring relationship:
What was/has been the length of time that your mentorship relationships has taken place?
Would you describe the nature of the mentorship relationship to be focused on career outcomes such as promotion and performance or psychosocial such as confidence, sense of belonging, friendship, etc. OR both?
What organizational characteristics influenced your participation in a mentor relationship (or lack thereof)?
How often do/did you interact with your mentee?
Were there/have there been any hurdles in the relationship?

Outcomes of the mentorship relationship:
How did your mentor relationship affect your sense of belonging in your organization?
Did you achieve any sort of notable milestones that you feel were positively influenced by your mentor relationship?
What is an example of a positive outcome that you gained from the mentoring relationship?
What is something you will take from the mentoring relationship that you would like to pass forward to a future mentee?
Would you describe yourself as a leader in your organization?
How has the mentoring relationship contributed to your leadership experience?

Question Set for "Mentee" Participants:

Previous experience in mentoring relationship(s):
Have you participated in a mentor relationship?
Have you been a mentee?
Would you describe your mentor relationship as formal or informal?

Was your mentorship relationship matched or paired by a 3rd party (part of a program)?
Was it difficult to find or be matched with a mentor?
What motivated you to participate in a mentor-mentee relationship?
What was the gender of your mentor?

Depth/quality of the mentoring relationship:
What was/has been the length of time that your mentorship relationships has taken place?
Would you describe the nature of the mentorship relationship to be focused on career outcomes such as promotion and performance or psychosocial such as confidence, sense of belonging, friendship, etc. OR both?
What organizational characteristics influenced your participation in a mentor relationship (or lack thereof)?
How often do/did you interact with your mentor?
Were there/have there been any hurdles in the relationship?

Outcomes of the mentorship relationship:
How did your mentor relationship affect your sense of belonging in your organization?
Did you achieve any sort of notable milestones that you feel were positively influenced by your mentor relationship?
What is an example of a positive outcome that you gained from the mentoring relationship?
What is something you will take from the mentoring relationship that you would like to pass forward to a future mentee?
Would you describe yourself as a leader in your organization?
How has the mentoring relationship contributed to your leadership experience?

POST INTERVIEW
That wraps up the questions I have prepared for you, is there anything you would like to share that I did not ask about specifically?
In the event that I need clarity on the information you have shared today, would it be okay for me to reach out by email with a few follow up questions?
Do you have any questions for me?
Thank them for their time.

Appendix E:

IRB Approval Letter

Institutional Review Board (IRB)
For the Protection of Human Research Participants

PROTOCOL EXEMPTION REPORT

Protocol Number: 04049-2020 **Responsible Researcher:** Tiffany Bayne

Supervising Faculty: Dr. Jamie Workman

Project Title: *Mentorship for Women in Higher Education: An Approach to Workforce Development.*

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DETERMINATION:

This research protocol is **Exempt** from Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight under Exemption **Category 2.** Your research study may begin immediately. If the nature of the research project changes such that exemption criteria may no longer apply, please consult with the IRB Administrator (irb@valdosta.edu) before continuing your research.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- *Upon completion of this research study all data (email correspondence, survey data, participant name lists, etc.) must be securely maintained (locked file cabinet, password protected computer, etc.) and accessible only by the researcher for a minimum of 3 years.*
- *The Research Statement must be read aloud to each interview participant at the start if the recorded interview session.*

☒ ***If this box is checked, please submit any documents you revise to the IRB Administrator at irb@valdosta.edu to ensure an updated record of your exemption.***

Elizabeth Ann Olphie *07.14.2020*
Elizabeth Ann Olphie, IRB Administrator

Thank you for submitting an IRB application.
Please direct questions to irb@valdosta.edu or 229-253-2947.

Revised: 06.02.16