AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Amanda Barrett Wittman for the degree of Master of Science in College Student Services Administration presented on April 26, 2005.
Title: Making Meaning from Mentoring: How Successful Female Student Affairs Professionals Experience Mentoring

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While there is quite a bit of research on mentoring in general, there is a gap in the Student Affairs literature about how successful Student Affairs women make meaning out of their mentoring experiences. This study examines both mentees and their mentors through a phenomenological study in order to better understand what exactly makes up a successful mentoring experience. The goal of the thesis is to extrapolate the essence of the phenonmenon of mentoring, as experienced by successful female Student Affairs administrators. A better understanding of mentoring and the meaning that women make of their mentoring experiences will inform the field of Student Affairs and help professionals devlop more successful mentoring relationships. This can aid the field in the recruitment and retention of women in the profession.

Making Meaning from Mentoring:
How Successful Female Student Affairs Professionals Experience Mentoring

by
Amanda Barrett Wittman

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Amanda Barrett Wittman, Author

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

MAKING MEANING FROM MENTORING:
HOW SUCCESSFUL FEMALE STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS
EXPERIENCE MENTORING

Introduction

People out there so often assess what you can, and more often what you cannot do. It's like she knows you below the waterline. Yes, that's it. Like I'm an iceberg and most people get to see the tip, but below the water there is this huge amount, this huge mass that is the substance of the person. That relationship that happens is below the waterline.
~Lisa, on mentoring and her mentor

Mentoring is a complex and nuanced relationship. It has many levels, but the ones that are most successful for both the mentor and the mentee are the ones that happen "below the waterline." Mentoring is a tool that can be effectively used to help all people, but particularly people in underrepresented groups, to develop as professionals and as people in a disciplinary field. However, with the varied definitions and the overwhelming resources on the subject, it is hard to make mentoring real. It is difficult to really understand the meaning that professionals make from their mentoring experiences.

I have participated in what I deemed successful mentoring relationships, and I know how they have contributed to my own success. I also know many other women who talk about the importance of mentoring in their lives. These experiences, coupled with a desire to know more about how women become successful in Student Affairs, led me to the topic of mentoring. In addition, I felt that learning about mentoring through a qualitative methodology would add something to the literature already available on the topic, particularly in the Student Affairs mentoring literature.

My research questions formed out of these interests. I really wanted to know about the meaning that successful female Student Affairs professionals make from their mentoring relationships. This was the driving research focus, though I also hoped to find

out my participants' thoughts on intentionally institutionalizing mentoring programs for Student Affairs women – was that something that could be done, did my participants consider it an important step in helping mentoring relationships grow?

I believe it is important to consider the ways that women make meaning from their mentoring relationships as it can help all Student Affairs professionals examine their relationships with others. Understanding what is important to women in their mentoring relationships will allow Student Affairs practitioners to more intentionally develop successful relationships with and for women. Knowing how to work with a woman "below the waterline" will help everyone in the profession grow. As this study shows, mentoring can bring women into the profession, help retain women in the profession, and serve as a tool to develop successful professionals.

Literature Review

Minerva led the way and Telemachus followed her.
(Homer, trans. 2003)

Mentoring finds its roots in mythical history. The great hero Odysseus entrusted his friend Mentor to "counsel and guide" his son, Telemachus, to become successful in society (Duff, 1999; Enerson, 2001). The less well known aspect of the story is that Athena (Minerva) often disguised herself as Mentor in order to impart wisdom (C. Briggs, personal communication, March 15, 2005). In *The Odyssey*, we find out that,

> either because Mentor was a man of integrity, or because he was an excellent
> friend of his friends, or because he did not deal in lies, or because he could speak
> out if necessary, or for all these reasons, or for other motives known or unknown,
> the goddess Athena assumed his shape many times in order to give counsel to
> those she wished to help. (Parada, n.d., ¶ 10)

Though the traditional story is the one that lives on, as a feminist I see the mythological roots of a distinct form of mentoring provided by women. Athena was the Goddess of wisdom, and believed that being wise also meant being just. Athena's blessings were for those who worked without sorrow and instructed that "If you always greatly honor with kindness the kindly ones, you will surely be preeminent, keeping your land and city in the straight path of justice" (Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 992). Out of these roots, a distinct form of mentoring between and among women has grown.

Today, the popular definition of mentors sees them as wise councilors, grooming the next generation of leaders. Mentoring is an approach to success that benefits from widespread popularity. A simple search of books on the topic of 'mentoring' at

Amazon.com recovers 8,216 hits. Various professions, particularly teaching and business, subscribe to the ideal that mentoring relationships can greatly help with professional growth. Higher educational research focused on faculty and academic administrators espouses the belief that mentors can be "the key to advancement within...organizations" (Johnsrud, 1990, p. 58) and this same belief is found throughout business literature on the topic. Yet the concrete definitions of "mentoring" "mentor" and "mentee" are varied and imprecise.

One of the main questions that this project hopes to answer is how female student affairs administrators define these words. However, an examination of common definitions used throughout the literature is helpful. I focused on the business and educational realms and the various aspects of mentoring in each field because "most of the literature on both mentoring and networking [in academia] is borrowed from corporate settings" (Quinlan, 1999, p. 31). In addition, concepts of mentoring used in student affairs specifically are drawn from the broad academic/educational realm (Twale & Jelinek, 1996).

From the various texts, three types of mentoring relationships emerged. The first is the traditional view of mentoring. This describes a relationship between a mentor and a protégée, where the mentor teaches, counsels, guides, and helps the protégée in his or her career path, often in an effort to train the protégée to take over when the mentor leaves. The second type of relationship delves into the personal realm, and the mentor becomes a trusted advisor and friend who the mentee can turn to for personal and professional development. The mentor is more personally involved with the mentee, and is vested in the mentees' growth. A third, and younger, less developed, notion of

mentoring comes out of the networking and peer relationship literature. This view of mentoring is one of community, rather than individualism, where a mentee can and should have more than one person seeing to the various facets of the mentees' development. Mentoring can occur from peers, colleagues, friends, and families as well as supervisors and those with more experience in the field.

Traditional Mentoring Concepts

In 1979, "Much Ado About Mentoring" (Roche) refocused the attention of the business world on the impact that mentoring has for effective and successful mangers and executives. At the same time, the business world began to focus on the fact that women and minorities were not succeeding at the same rates as their white male counterparts (Kram, 1985). To offset this trend, researchers developed new techniques to help women and minorities succeed (Collins, 1993; Kram, 1985). One of these methods was to set up structured mentoring networks that connected new professionals with older, more experienced people in the field. In this case, "mentoring" was the act where a "mentor" worked with a "protégée" to help her or him learn to navigate the treacherous system of succeeding in the business world. Often, these relationships were chosen for the mentor and the protégée and there were prescribed steps that they had to follow. Today, these formal mentoring relationships have expanded into all sectors of business life, with manuals, instruction books, and guidelines implemented to help facilitate mentoring relationships.

In both of the business and educational literatures, a significant type of literature available on the topic of mentoring are 'how-to' books on setting up mentoring programs. *The Mentor's Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships* (Zachary, 2000) and

Leaders Helping Leaders: A Practical Guide to Administrative Mentoring (Daresh, 2001)
are two examples. Working from the traditional notion of mentoring, these works
provide step-by-step instructions, worksheets, and activities aimed at helping the reader
begin or reexamine a formal, structured mentoring program.

Bringing in the Personal

The field of mentoring research quickly expanded beyond the professional realm
to examine other aspects of mentoring relationships. Kram (1985) found that "the
prototype of a mentor relationship" (p. 23) was one which fulfilled two functions: career
and psychosocial. Career functions include sponsorship, exposure-and-visibility,
coaching, protection, and giving challenging assignments. The psychosocial components
are role modeling, acceptance-and-confirmation, counseling, and friendship. Successful
mentors provided all of these aspects to their protégées, who in turn saw the mentor as
someone who could fill all of these roles.

In the educational world, especially in recent years, mentoring is seen as another
step in the teaching process. In 1994 and 2001, the New Directions for Teaching and
Learning series released journals dedicated to mentoring (Reinarz & White, 2001;
Wunsh, 1994). The earlier journal recognized that the business phenomena of structured
mentoring was infiltrating academia, but argued that "mentoring *always* existed in higher
education, particularity in the relationship between a faculty member and a student
[since] faculty easily relate to the roles of guide, patron, and counselor to students"
(Wunsh, p. 1). Mentoring relationships grow, not only between faculty and
undergraduate students, but also among and between faculty, graduate students, and new
academics who are in the process of obtaining tenure. This process speaks of a more

informal relationship that grows out of a connection of two people over similar interests. Rather than pairing up a mentor and mentee through a formulaic process, the informal mentoring method refers to the process where two individuals engage in an unstructured relationship of learning.

By 2001, the argument was made that increasing and better understanding the roles of mentors was imperative if faculty were to continue to make an impact on their more technically savvy and socially diverse students (Reinarz & White, 2001). Guiding students as they develop academically helps them "become well educated and better prepared for their futures" (Goldenburg, 2001, p. 15). Acting as a patron of students, especially women and minorities, helps those students succeed with more confidence and ease (Matlock & Scisney-Matlock, 2001). Lastly, counseling students in the various aspects of their lives, from classes to personal issues, helps connect students with professionals who have a perspective from which they can learn. Faculty who participate in these roles with undergraduate students, graduate students, and new faculty have a chance to engage in relationships which transform both themselves and their mentees.

The literature surrounding faculty to student mentoring is important in helping to define a general picture of mentor and mentee. Another source of research on the topic, which more directly relates to the topic of woman-to-woman mentoring between professionals, is found in literature relating to the development of young faculty women in academia (Biklen & Brannigan, 1980; Cohen, 1996; Hayes & Flannery, 2000; Quinlan, 1999)). Again, esources define mentoring in various ways, ranging from a klen & Brannigan) to a multi-dimensional recognition of what relationship (Hayes & Flannery). In addition to this more

specific body of knowledge, there are is a plethora of research on mentoring for graduate students, new academic faculty, and those who are advanced in their academic careers (for examples, see Hoppe & Speck, 2003; Menges & Associates, 1999). These works and others like them are important in placing mentoring in academia.

There is also a large body of literature available that focuses on the importance of mentoring for new and advancing K-12 teachers (Bey & Holmes, 1992; Boreen & Niday, 2003; Dolaz, 1996; Graham, Hudson-Ross, Adkins, McWhorter & Grogan, 2000). One such book is *Coloring Outside the Lines: Mentoring Women into School Leadership* (Gardiner, Enomoto & Grogan, 2000). While the authors focus on women in K-12 education, their vision and research guided my own research as it is a qualitative, empirical study aimed at knowing "much more about the experiences of women being mentored into educational leadership" (Gardiner, Enomoto, & Grogan, p. 2) and examines mentoring from a feminist viewpoint.

Feminism: The Personal is Professional

Feminist theory in mentoring takes the idea that personal connections are central to women's (and men's) experience to a higher level. From before the time that Athena served as a mentor, women have taught, guided, and modeled behavior as they raised children, families, and colleagues both at home and outside of the home. Women have always been role models to those younger than they. Since mentoring is generally an active process, it enables both the mentor and mentee to engage in praxis, which brings together theory and action. Praxis refers to discoveries "that cannot be purely intellectual but must involve action; nor...limited to mere activism, but must include serious reflection" (Freire, 1974, p. 52). As such, "mentoring as feminist praxis means

promoting women, people of color and others who are less favorably positioned within the academy and assisting them in negotiating the relations within the academy" (Moss, Debres, Cravey, Hyndman, Hirschboeck, & Masucci, 1999, p. 414). The authors suggest working from a woman-centered approach, aligning oneself with marginalized groups, enabling democratic access to intellectual resources, engaging in collective decision-making processes, and dismantling academic structures through letter writing, advising, and career counseling are methods of acting as a feminist mentor.

The strength of their argument is that through working from a feminist point of view, this type of action can impact all underrepresented groups in academia. In addition, mentoring with a feminist perspective focuses on (a) partnership (egalitarianism) rather than hierarchy, (b) cooperation rather than competition, (c) nurturance rather than individualism, (d) peace rather than conflict, (e) learner rather than mentor needs, (f) dialog and interpersonal skill development, (g) feedback and open communication, (h) personal qualities such as self-esteem, autonomy, and balance between work and home life (Paterson & hart-Wasekeesikaw, 1994; Schramm, 2000).

Mentoring from a feminist perspective opens great possibilities for women and other underrepresented groups in higher education. However, it is important to note that critiques of a woman-centered, essentialist feminism do exist. While research does suggest that women, specifically, have unique ways of relating to one another and gravitate towards less masculine traits (Baxter Magolda, 1992; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarulet, 1986; Gilligan, 1982), others problematize this stance asking the question "which women are being studied and written about?" Universalizing the definition of woman in ways that are Western, white, middle-class, heterosexual, and

able-bodied encourages incomplete perspectives of women's varied and diverse experiences. To better develop a more nuanced theory, bell hooks (2003) suggests that theory should "direct our attention to systems of domination and the inter-relatedness of sex, race, and class oppression" (p.56). To be truly effective, mentoring as a feminist praxis must consider these issues.

An Expanded View of Mentoring

More recently, researchers have moved beyond the "single, dyadic relationship" (Higgins & Kram, 2001, p. 264) traditionally viewed as the mentoring relationship to one which recognizes the importance of multiple individuals in a professional's development. This concept embraces the idea "that individuals receive mentoring assistance from many people at any one point in time, including senior colleagues, peers, family and community members" (p. 265). The "relationship constellation" or the "developmental network" (p. 265) will provide the foundation, I believe, for the next generation of mentoring research.

The constellation or network idea problematizes the traditional notion of mentoring as a favored relationship between two people. In breaking up the dichotomous view of mentoring as an experience between the novice and the expert, these new concepts borrow from a postmodern framework. Postmodernism is especially critical of binary oppositions in social thought. Instead it "is a way of being, thinking, and speaking [that allows] for openness, plurality, diversity, and difference" (Tong, 1998 p. 195). Rather than accommodating static notions of traditional relationships, postmodernists attempt to accommodate the fluidity and ambiguity that is part of the human experience. It is an anti-essentialist approach that calls into question objective notions of "truth." In

mentoring, a postmodernist would say that there exists no right or wrong way to form the relationship; rather the knowledge of how to build a successful mentoring relationship is based in culture, history, and political processes (Lee, personal communication, February 24, 2005). Having a network of people each working with a person on their search for truth in her own life, rather than participating in a binary would appeal to a postmodernist.

<p align="center">*Mentoring in Student Affairs*</p>

While there are many resources on mentoring in general, and this is a widely talked about phenomenon in student affairs, there seems to be a gap in the student affairs research on the topic of mentoring for professionals in the field. There is some research on mentoring for young professionals and graduate students (Cooper & Miller, 1998), but little is aimed at examining how mentoring can help women and/or minorities succeed in administrative positions in student affairs. Twale and Jelinek (1996) wrote on the mentoring experiences of women student affairs professionals, and Blackhurst (2000) published an article titled *Effects of Mentoring on the Employment Experiences and Career Satisfaction of Women Student Affairs Administrators* but these were the only articles I found that focus on this topic specifically. In addition, both of these articles used survey methodology to find their data. There is a need for more insight into precisely how professionals make meaning from their mentoring relationships, whether they act as mentor or mentee, and a need for feminist research that gives voice to women who have experienced a mentoring relationship.

The relationships that focus on personal, rather than circumscribed, relationships are the type that this study examines. While traditional mentoring relationships do exist

in academia for both students and faculty and are successful, I believe the most successful relationships are those which form from a natural progression of interaction between people. To me, successful mentoring is what Gardiner, Enomoto, and Grogan (2000) describe as "the special and favored relationship that is cultivated whereby the mentor counsels, guides, and helps the protégé to develop both professionally and personally" (p. 5). In addition, it also speaks to the professional and personal growth of the mentor. In my own experience of successful mentoring relationships, the organic process of forming that relationship goes beyond advising, coaching, counseling, or guiding of one person to incorporate all of those into a unique relationship that transforms both the mentor and the mentee.

A framework which speaks to this more transformative experience is articulated by Spore, Harrison, and Haggerson (2002) in their work on the archetype of the Good Mother in academia. Their discussion provides the closest match to the type of relationship in which I am interested and have examined. Harking back the mythological history of mentoring, the authors use the archetype of the Good Mother "to examine both the lives of those women who, at least metaphorically, are the Mothers of those of us new to the academy and the lives of those nurtured by these Mothers" (p. 8). The archetype though based in the feminine does not only pertain to women, rather it is

A feminine model, drawing upon mythic images of women's creative and life-giving powers. These Good Mother powers and their gifts are not, however, necessarily emanating from a specific female but rather a person, male or female, who fulfills this role in a less-experienced women's professional life. (p. 8)

The authors believe the Good Mother transcends the traditional mentor because "the Good Mother relationship attends to the emotional, physical, and spiritual sustenance of the persons engaged in the relationship…it seeks enlightenment and acknowledges the promise of spiritual perfection" (p. 10). In addition to their theoretical framework, the authors utilize a personal, narrative, reflective format to explain the stories of the Good Mother. This exploration into non-traditional ways of writing research is enlightening and effective, and serves as a teaching tool as I seek to find my own ways to write my research.

The Good Mother concept elevates notions of mentoring to new levels. As with other theories, however, it is necessary to critically examine the work of Spore, Harrison, and Haggerson (2002). As a critique of the Good Mother archetype, I question their fundamental usage of language as the instrument to explore the power of the Good Mother. The authors define themselves as mytho-poets who use dialectic syntax and "a narrative journey through mythology and phenomenology, which includes stories told and stories interpreted" (Spore, et. al., 2002, p. 4). Using postmodern critiques of language, I question the implied assumption that the language we currently employ will actually have the ability to explain someone's connection to her Good Mother. In the postmodern view, "language is the place where actual and possible forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet, it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is *constructed*" (Wheedon, 1987, p. 21). In other words, language not only allows us to give meaning to experiences, it also forces us to define and limit relationships between ourselves and ideas because the language itself constructs meaning. Therefore, the very language that

is used to explain the importance of the Good Mother also places limitations on the meanings that the women make of their relationships.

Another critique of the Good Mother is that this relationship pattern falls into a more traditional, dualist view of mentoring. While they do move from the hierarchy, maintaining that it is becomes a horizontal, rather than vertical, relationship, the view exists that it happens between a novice and a Good Mother in a dichotomous system. A novice learns from one Good Mother at a time. This system does not take into account peer relationships, development networks, or the relationship constellation (Higgins & Kram, 2001; Kram, 1985). Lastly, the authors assume an essentialist notion of femininity and womanhood. As I have already pointed out, universalizing women's experiences can be problematic, especially when trying to serve underrepresented women. I do not use these critiques to limit the usefulness of the Good Mother narrative paradigm; however, it is important to give a more nuanced look at a framework which serves as a basis for my discussion and reflection.

The Good Mother paradigm, which I use throughout the study as a way to frame successful mentoring relationships, reflects the feminist perspective that runs throughout my research. As a feminist, I believe that examining women's perspectives gives voice to a group which is often minimized. Allowing women to speak about their experiences, recognizing that these experiences are unique, and drawing themes from the women's stories are acts of praxis. In addition, my feminist background has molded my methodology in subtle and not-so-subtle ways.

Methodology

When our lived experience of theorizing is fundamentally linked to processes of self-discovery, of collective liberation, no gap exists between theory and practice. Indeed, what such experience makes more evident is the bond between the two - that ultimately reciprocal process wherein one enables the other.
(hooks, 1994, p. 61)

My Worldview

The first step, I believe, in beginning good research is to examine one's own worldview. I have already mentioned that I am a feminist. The theoretical and lived experience of advocating feminism is intrinsic to how I perceive the world and women's place in it. An interest in finding out ways women are successful in Student Affairs was, for me, a natural progression from my feminist outlook. From there, I also realized that a personal connection to and engagement with my research and my participants is essential to my methodological approach. In attempting to maintain my personal connection with the topic, I identified the biases that could affect this research as (a) a personal past that is filled with positive, encouraging relationships with mentors and a belief that mentoring is a positive experience, (b) a personal belief that mentoring relationships between women are unique, and (c) defining "success" as a high-ranking administrative position in Student Affairs. Reflection, journal writing, and conversations led me to these thoughts about myself and my biases.

Since I have had and continue to have positive mentoring relationships with women, my experience has framed my thoughts on mentoring. I entered my research with the belief that the women I would talk with would share this positive outlook on mentoring. I looked for the positive aspects of mentoring, and chose not to focus on the possible negative outcomes of mentoring relationships. In addition, my own experiences

with woman-to-woman mentoring leads me to know that they have been unique in my life. I entered my research with the bias that they would be unique in the experiences of my participants as well. Lastly, I recognize that my bias towards defining "success" as an upper administrative position at an institution of higher education is my own version of success. Others, including my participants, may define success in other ways that in no way relate to their career position. Recognizing my biases helped me be aware when they played into my thinking about topics that came up during the research process.

The Philosophy of Phenomenology

From my worldview and based on the research questions I desired to answer, I chose the qualitative process of phenomenology as my method. From this standpoint, I examined a variety of books that helped me come to grips with qualitative research and phenomenology (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). In addition, readings about the work of Edmund Husserel, particularly those by L. Spurling (1977) and J.P. Sartre (1966), aided my understanding of the philosophical underpinnings of phenomenological research.

After I worked through my understanding of my worldview and biases, I began to think about the philosophical underpinnings of the research methodology I chose. As early as 1765, the term "phenomenology" appeared in philosophic texts, and Kant, Descartes, Hegel and Heidegger were early proponents of using phenomena to find truth (Moustakas, 1994; Spurling, 1977). From a philosophical view, phenomenology is "knowledge as it appears to consciousness, the science of describing what one perceives, senses, and knows in one's immediate awareness and experience" (Moustakas, p. 26). For phenomenological philosophers, "knowledge based on intuition and essence precedes

empirical knowledge" (Moustakas, p. 26). In other words, the meaning of events is known intrinsically by the knower before it is proven through facts and empirical evidence. This core philosophic concept, that the knower knows the meaning of the experience without proof, is the basis for understanding phenomenological research.

Edmund Husserl is considered the father of phenomenology for his commitment to expanding the conceptual framework of the theory. He asserted that, "ultimately, all genuine and, in particular, all scientific knowledge rests on inner evidence: as far as such evidence extends, the concept of knowledge extends also" (as cited in Moustakas, 1994, p. 26). Beyond understanding the simple descriptions of consciousness and the meaning that people take from those perceptions, Husserl also saw the process as "transcendental, in that the world apprehended as human and meaningful was to be understood as constituted by consciousness" (Spurling, 1977, p. 7). Researchers would use a methodology of reduction to sift through consciousness and find the essence of the phenomenon, of the experience itself. Through the process of going "back to the things themselves," by examining events as they originally appeared to a person's consciousness, human knowledge would expand.

Husserl's theories define classical phenomenology from a philosophic viewpoint. From his work, others have expanded on various tenants of his thoughts. Philosophers Merleau-Ponty and Sartre focused less on the reductionist tendencies of Husserl. For them, "phenomenology becomes an existential phenomenology, concerned not just with the structure of the life-world, but also with man's [sic] way of existing in the life-world. Phenomenology is not conceived as a study of essences, but of the relation between the essences and facts" (Spurling, 1977, p. 9). They reject the duality inherent in a

completely reductionist approach that says 'it either is only as perceived through consciousness or is nothing at all.' Rather, as Sartre (1966) explains in his book *Being and Nothingness*, "the phenomenal being manifests itself; it manifests its essence as well as its existence, and it is nothing but the well connected series of its manifestations" (p. 5). Thus the actual phenomenon and the meaning gathered by the consciousness are connected.

Regardless of how much or how little researchers decide to be reductionist in their approach of the final methodology, there are certain expectations of how to perform phenomenological research. Intentionality and intuition on the part of both the researcher and the participants must be fostered with the intent of an "approach to studying the problem that includes entering the field of perception of participants; seeing how they live, and display the phenomenon; and looking for the meaning of the participants' experiences" (Creswell, 1998, p. 31). Husserl describes *epoche*, which is the process whereby the researcher suspends her beliefs on what is real, sets aside her prejudices, and looks at the topic with a naivety (Creswell; Moustakas, 1994). Bracketing out preconceptions allows the researcher to more clearly understand the phenomenon through the voices of the participants, without muddying the picture with the researchers "natural attitudes." This may never be truly possible, but working in a phenomenological method required that I work under the assumption that the process of bracketing allowed for reflection and a higher sense of self-awareness of myself as a researcher engaged with, not separate from, my participants and my research.

I initially chose a phenomenological approach to this study because I think it is important to "understand the meaning of events and interactions to ordinary people in

particular situations" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 34). However, with further study into the concept of epoche, I realized that I was enthralled with the "challenge of the *Epoche*...to be transparent to ourselves, to allow whatever is in consciousness to disclose itself so that we may see with new eyes in a naïve and completely open manner" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 86). I realized that not only would I examine the meaning held by my participants, but I would also make meaning from my own experience during the research process as well. This allowed me to see my participants as co-researchers, with whom I could learn as we participated together in a dialogue centered on the topic of mentoring.

Understanding the philosophical underpinnings of phenomenology was crucial for my methodology. Having a more comprehensive idea of the history of the method allowed me a fuller sense of what I was trying to accomplish. It also enabled me to place my own research into a broader context of qualitative research, and helped me recognize the importance, not just of the research, but of the learning process in which I would engage.

The Long Walk

Upon examining my worldview, my biases, and after researching phenomenology, I was able to begin. I followed protocol set up by the College Student Services Administration program and Oregon State University. In the Spring of 2004, I wrote a proposal and met with members of my committee who reviewed and approved my research. I then spent 32 days of that summer hiking through the state of Oregon. Starting in Ashland, OR and ending in Cascade Locks, OR, my partner and I walked 435 miles. Although I did not spend as much time reflecting on the big questions of life as I

thought I would (mostly because I was usually too tired to do so) I did have quite a bit of reflection time for my own thoughts. During this hike, I became more committed to my research. The time away from school-life allowed me to come back rejuvenated and excited about the research journey. The hike reminded me of an etching on a rock from Mt. Greylock Mountain in Massachusetts; a quote from Henry David Thoreau: "It were as well to be educated in the shadow of a mountain as in more classical shade. Some will remember, no doubt, not only that they went to college, but that they went to the mountain."

In my experience, the hike and the thesis are an intrinsically tied phenomenon that give and take meaning from one another. Often I found myself referring to the research and writing processes as part of "The Long Walk." Using this metaphor enabled me to gain perspective on how I was doing in the progress of my thesis. When I reached points where I had writer's block or felt that I could not continue, I would think back to Day Six of our hike, when we cleared the lava fields outside of Fish Lake after a foot-sore day and found the perfect camping spot and remember that I would be rewarded for pushing through. As I sat crying over data that made no sense, I felt like I was on Day 12 when my partner's heels were covered in blisters and he sat in pain, fuming at the unfairness of it all. Last minute corrections and thoughts that came just when I thought I had a handle on my thesis compared to falling 35 feet down the river ravine, three days from being finished. No matter how much I feel like I am in control of the situation, there is always something to remind me not to get too cocky. Yet, there were also moments of clarity that compared to standing on top of Devil's Peak and seeing peaks that were a hundred miles away. There was encouragement and support from unexpected people who I

passed on the journey. There was laughter and joy, and the same huge feeling of accomplishment at the end of both Long Walks.

Recruitment and Data Collection

After clearing my research through the Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A, B and C), I began to recruit my original participants – the mentees. I used snowball sampling to solicit names from colleagues and professors and sent an email asking 10 female Student Affairs administrators to participate. The criteria I used for the selection of participants were (a) female, (b) sees herself as active in college student affairs and is dedicated to the fundamental philosophies of the student affairs profession, (c) serves or has recently (within the past year) served as Dean or higher, depending on the nomenclature of each University, (d) must identify as someone who has been mentored, (e) able to give articulate and thoughtful responses to questions, and generate new ideas, (f) willing to act in collaboration and be actively involved in the study.

In the email I specifically asked each woman to identify others whom they thought might be willing to participate if they were not able themselves to participate. The answers I received were telling of the history of female-to-female mentoring in Student Affairs. In this initial group, six women replied and three agreed to participate, two could not identify a female mentor, and one felt she did not have enough experience in the field of Student Affairs.

At this point, I began to work with the women who agreed to participate, and also continued to use snowball sampling until I found the five original participants. In order to achieve the goal of allowing the participants the most flexibility as they related their stories about mentoring, a semi-structured interview technique developed. Each

interview began with my asking the participant to "Tell me a bit about mentoring." Some women began with their own personal stories, others chose to elaborate on the topic of mentoring from a more general standpoint, and then (when prompted) moved into their own experiences. From there, I asked about their thoughts on woman-to-woman mentoring, the institutionalizing of mentoring, and the meaning of mentoring for them. There were no set questions; rather I incorporated these concepts in the conversation as it developed. As the interview progressed, the participants were asked to define and elaborate on their stories. At the end of the first interview, each mentee was asked if she would be willing to allow the researcher to contact a women she identified as a mentor. Each of the original five participants agreed that I could ask her mentor to participate.

Particularly in the first round of interviews, some of the original participants wanted access to some questions that would be asked. This was achieved through email and I let each person who asked know the general topics that I would cover in the interview. Others were more comfortable with being asked questions without previous knowledge of what the questions would be. I taped and transcribed these five conversations, and sent follow-up questions and clarifications via email.

Each of the identified mentors were contacted via email to see if she would agree to writing a bit about her side of the relationship. Though all five mentors did agree to participate, because of time restrictions I was only to actually interview three mentors. I expected less contact between the mentors and me, believing many of the conversations could be held over email. However, all the mentors requested a phone conversation because, I felt, they thought email was too impersonal. These conversations were also taped and transcribed, though there were no follow-up questions via email. The

conversations helped to triangulate my data, as it gave me another perspective to understand the meaning of the mentoring relationships to the original participants.

As I transcribed the interviews and continued in email conversations with my participants, I began to code the data using pseudonyms to protect each participant's identity. This process was an organic process that constituted an in-depth analysis of the transcriptions. I organized and re-organized the data, trying to find themes that most centrally spoke to how these women thought about their mentoring relationships and the impact of mentoring on their lives. I began this process keeping the two participant sets separate. However, as the coding continued, I realized that the stories of all the women make up the larger picture of the phenomenon of mentoring for each woman. It became apparent that I needed to examine the data as a complete set, looking for themes to emerge from all of the women's voices. Once I did this, themes emerged which capture the essence of mentoring as described by the women in the study.

Descriptions of Participants

Nothing is stranger than this business of humans
observing other humans in order to write about them.
(Behar, 1996)

Lisa is one of the original participants in the study. She is an Associate Dean and on the faculty at a large state institution in the Midwest. She teaches higher education and has been an administrator in both Student and Academic Affairs throughout her career. She has always worked at state institutions, and received her degrees from large state schools as well. She has a variety of publications, with a strong interest in multicultural and diversity issues. Outside of the educational realm, she loves to run and play cards. She identifies as African-American.

Marina is Lisa's mentor. She is a professor in the business school at another Midwestern research university, and they met when Marina was Lisa' boss at Lisa's undergraduate institution. Marina specializes in leadership, organizational behavior and management, and the special approaches of African-American business leaders, executives, and mangers. She is highly acclaimed for her research and teaching. Marina taught Lisa everything she knows about playing vicious card games and she is fiercely loyal to her alma mater. She identifies as African-American.

Elizabeth is an original participant. She is the Vice President for Student Affairs at a medium sized public liberal arts university in the South. She moved to her current position after serving for thirteen years as the Vice President of Student Affairs at another medium sized regional institution in the mid-Atlantic. Before that, she held the top Student Affairs position at another school. She has a varied and extensive career in student services administration. She identifies as Caucasian.

Sylvia, Elizabeth's mentor, was the President of the institution in the mid-Atlantic region where Elizabeth worked before her current position. They served concurrently, Sylvia bringing Elizabeth on board very soon after she was appointed. Today Sylvia is retired, though still active in professional development for women in higher education. She also serves on a number of boards, and travels as a speaker. She identifies as Caucasian.

Alicia, another of the original participants, is the Assistant Vice Chancellor and Director of Campus Life at a relatively elite medium sized private University in the Midwest. She has worked at a variety of state schools throughout the country. She is highly involved in professional associations associated with Student Affairs and is a recognized author in the field of Student Affairs. She identifies as Caucasian.

Alicia's mentor, Anne, was the Vice President for Student Affairs when she hired Alicia to serve as her Director of Residence Life at the medium state University where she worked. They served together in administration, and also kept close contact when Anne stepped down to become a part-time faculty member. Besides her tenure in Student Affairs administration, Anne also has a strong background in K-12 teaching and research. Today she is a professor emeritus at the same northeastern university where she worked with Alicia. She identifies as Caucasian.

Sara is an original participant. She serves as the Associate Vice President and Dean of Students at a large state University in the South that serves a large Hispanic population. Her previous experience was in California, which prepared her to work with a diverse student population. Sara places a strong emphasis on spirituality and working with students of color. She identifies as Asian-American.

Kathy, also an original participant, was the first woman I interviewed. She has served as the Vice President of Student Affairs at a prominent public research institution in the South for nine years. She is a long time administrator and has been active in Student Affairs since she did her dissertation research on residential colleges while she served as the Student Life Coordinator at another large state University. She identifies as Caucasian.

Themes

Phenomenology gives us insights into the meanings or the essences of experiences that
we may previously have been unaware of, but can recognize.
(Morse & Richards, 2002, p. 47)

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon of

mentoring, as it occurs for female Student Affairs administrators. To manage the

findings in a way that gives meaning to the essential aspects of mentoring as experienced

by those in my study, I used a thematic organizational structure. Four major themes

emerged with a variety of sub-themes. These themes and sub-themes are:

Theme One - The successful mentoring relationship is fluid.

      Sub-theme: The chain reaction

      Sub-theme: Like a braid

Theme Two - Successful mentoring relationships are reciprocal.

      Sub-theme: It's a two-way street

      Sub-theme: High trust

Theme Three - Successful mentoring relationships grow from both institutional and

personal connections.

      Sub-theme: It's a 50/50 thing

      Sub-theme: The one I want to be like

      Sub-theme: I don't get caught up in gender issues

Theme Four - Mentoring is important for the development of female student affairs

professionals.

      Sub-theme: Welcome to Student Affairs

      Sub-theme: A deliberative, purposeful process

Sub-theme: You can't learn your next job if you don't watch

Sub-theme: Skill development

Through a constant immersion with the transcripts and email correspondence I had with the participants, these themes emerged. One of the surprises of the coding process was that the participants merged from two participant pools into one. This occurred because the mentors gave meaning to their experiences as mentees, and the mentees often spoke to how they now mentored others as a result of their mentoring relationships. Rather than separate the two participant pools, I found it more useful to examine all of the participants' interactions with the larger mentoring experience. Through this change in my own perspective, I found the major themes to interact with one another in ways that never allowed them to be isolated from the larger picture of mentoring as experienced by the participants. Many of the quotes actually belong to many themes, suggesting that in the participants' experiences none of these ideas are really separate from one another.

I have somewhat arbitrarily separated ideas into themes to help give the reader a clearer understanding of the essence of the mentoring relationships as told by the women who participated in the study. These results are a product of my thinking today, at this moment. It is important to know that the reader may feel some quotes belong elsewhere, and that if I were to re-code these tomorrow, next week, next month, or next year I may code them differently. These themes are not meant to be static, rather (like a successful mentoring relationship) they are fluid and represent only the beginning of a conversation.

Theme One – Successful Mentoring Relationships are Fluid

The first theme is one that emerged from the very first interview – that a strong mentoring relationship is fluid and adaptable. It changes and evolves with the participants of the relationship, allowing both members to grow and change without losing the bond that brings them together. The fluid nature of the mentoring relationships in which my participants engaged manifested in two ways. The first is that successful mentoring starts a chain reaction. These women, who were part of a strong mentoring relationship, became mentors themselves. The second manifestation of the fluid relationship is that the relationships evolved over time into new relationships that the women no longer defined as mentoring relationships. The mentors and mentees became friends, peers, and colleagues.

The Chain Reaction

Mentoring works in cycles as the mentee is mentored by someone who had strong mentors themselves. The mentees told how they became mentors because of their experiences, and the mentors related that their experiences as a mentee helped them in their role as a mentor. This helped the mentors know what would be beneficial to their mentees. After the mentees developed into a position where they could serve as mentors, they would reach back to their experiences as mentees for guidance. Mentoring is a chain reaction that starts with a good mentoring experience and continues from mentee to mentor.

In response to my question about how she knew what questions to ask her mentee, Lisa, Marina replied,

I have some good mentors. At each level each of them, and some simultaneously,

really focused in and I knew how they asked questions, and how I benefited, and

when they stood on the banks and watched me flounder till I realized that if I just

stay still I will float...That was important – if I really would drown there was a

lifeline, but until then they would let me flounder. And when I did a good job –

how do you replicate it? Was it damn good luck, or did you do something good

you want to do again? That showed me the kinds of things that were helpful

[when I became Lisa's mentor]

Lisa, in her interview, also related how she was treated impacted her relationships with

her own mentees.

I could pick up on characteristics and behaviors of how they [her mentors] treated

other women of color. It was like a lifeline, a chain, a link. I mean if it was not

for them, then there would be no me, and I have to keep that going. They were

like a lifesaver in water. ...I do the same thing today for other women of color.

Whether women of color want me to or not, I send an email, say something, do

something because I know how much that can mean. I know my words will touch

somewhere.

Today, she can intentionally continue this cycle with students because she knows "it will

plant a seed." For example, she related how her continued involvement in her sorority

keeps this cycle alive,

I stay active with my sorority. I'm a Delta. And you know, I can't get involved

with the undergraduates – that takes too much time, it sucks you dry! But I will

send an email – say I know that Founder's Day is right around the corner, and

students don't have much money and the tickets cost $35.00. I will email and say

that I will pay for someone's ticket – I will take you out to Founder's Day. I

know that in ten, fifteen years they will do the same thing for someone else.

In addition, Lisa spoke of helping not only students, but other professional women

of color as they worked through transition times at the University,

You know I take time to have a glass of wine…there is a woman of color, a new

professor in the Education department and she is often here late and I am here late

so I will drop in and say "have you had dinner? Let's go take a walk and get

something." Because they did it for me, I do it for her.

Anne spoke about her entrance into the field of Student Affairs, relating how the

Vice President of the first institution where she worked took in all of the new

professionals as a "class" and worked with them through their first years in the

profession. This experience helped her work with new professionals when she herself

became a Vice President. Sylvia thought of the cycle from a feminist perspective of

"lifting as we climb." She wants to "make sure that women have not just the same

opportunities as men, but women understand why this is important and why this is fun to

do."

Alicia broadened the cycle to incorporate more than just the mentor and the

mentee. She related how the relationships that she has formed throughout her career

allow her to help and be helped. She believes in "six degrees of separation in Student

Affairs," that one of her roles is to advise people how to get in touch with each other

because "the relationships current and past – you never know where they will cross." Not

only will her mentoring relationships help her, but they also allow her to assist others in

the profession.

Marina summed up the importance of the cyclical relationships when she said, "this is what a good life does. A life of service. You really are proud when you see them mentor someone else, when they take the lessons you taught them and you see a chain reaction start."

Like a Braid

In addition to being a chain reaction, the participants talked about the evolutionary patterns of strong mentoring relationships. As the mentees grew into mentors, their relationships with their own mentors changed. They found this to be a natural, evolutionary process that grew over time. As Kathy said, "[my mentor] hired me, hosted me during my interview process. The relationship was not asked for, it just happened over a period of years. She is ten years older than me. So we have kept in touch for twenty two years." Marina said, "it's a decades-long relationship. You know it's easier to say two or three decades, rather than thirty years – that way we don't seem so old!" For Sara, "it just happened naturally. Not a program or something set up…a friendship just grew."

These women found that the connection they had with their mentors grew from a deeper connection that they fueled by contact and a desire to stay in touch. The power hierarchies that could have hindered the initial relationships were replaced and they began to see each other as friends and colleagues. As Lisa stated, "I guess they are no longer the ones inspiring me on to great heights. Now I can collaborate with them, talk to them about issues and concerns. We stay in touch by email, by phone. Now it's much more of a friendship – it's more collegial." Alicia told the story of how a co-presenter who she only saw once a year became someone she truly valued: "Out of those once a

year hits a profound level of trust, of respect has developed…now a good colleague who I can turn to when I need something or who I would recommend other people to talk to." Kathy is "not sure at this point I could say that we are at the stage of mentors/mentee. It is more of a collegial relationship."

Elizabeth and Sylvia had spent the weekend before the interviews together working in a way that happened because of their unique relationship,

> I am part of a woman in higher ed group here and when we were planning for our conference last spring and we needed a keynote speaker, I said, "I have a person!" Sylvia was the key note speaker and she did a great job and I got the added bonus of we spent the weekend together… Just this weekend, we got into a number of issues where… see, my still being on campus, and experiencing characteristics of undergrads, is something that is far away from her. But she still works putting together professional development programs for women in higher ed. So we talked some about putting together sets of data that would inform her boards, who are mostly 60 year old women, so they can stay current about how to attract young professionals to their development programs.

While Elizabeth spoke with great admiration for her mentor, they had grown in their relationship to a place where they could see one another as equals, professionally and personally. This type of evolution is common in strong mentoring relationships.

Lisa touched on ways that these women stayed in touch through the years. As Kathy said, "now with email you can be a virtual mentor." Emailing, phone conversations, and catching up at conferences were the way that most of the women stayed in touch with each other. It was important for these women to make time for their

continued relationships. Kathy and her mentor realized after fifteen years of "email, cell phones, seeing each other at conferences…now we make an effort to spend time with each other. We realize the relationship is precious." Elizabeth related that "I feel very comfortable, I just pick up the phone and say "here's what's going on." I think it sounds crazy, but she is easily accessible. Even more so now that she is retired, so I don't butt in on her life so much."

Talking about work life and personal life help the relationship take on new boundaries and possibilities. Anne thought that her and Alicia's relationship evolved through both personal and professional channels, "through a common professional association interest. Alicia was newly married. We all did things together on a somewhat regular basis and we got involved when they adopted children and my husband and I loved the role of being adopted grandparents."

Often the relationship grew after the mentee left the institution where she had met her mentor. For Marina and Lisa, Marina remembers,

When she became a peer, we became peer professionals. Whenever she would run up against something, she would call or we would connect at conferences. We always made it a point to set time aside and catch up - how are things going? What's going on at your institution? Because she was at a small private, and I was at a state institution, so she taught me some of the differences in those two environments When she would run up against personnel or political issue we would process and we would test each other about models - this seemed to work, but it could have been my resources or you may be able to do something a little different. So that was how we developed the relationship. It was a natural

evolution I knew the kind of person she was, the heart and soul to serve and it

was a strong bond. Then when she got out on her own, we kept talking.

Lisa too believes that communication is central to an evolving relationship because with

"conversation, it just gets deeper and deeper and deeper. And then if you have common

threads and themes that connect you…I like to think it's all of the above."

Marina provided the best metaphor for the evolutionary nature of strong

mentoring relationships,

> You know, you are almost in a ribbon relationship – like braids. There is a single
>
> braid that goes through the middle, sometimes one thread goes under, sometimes
>
> over. Always a tightening and strengthening of the bond is there.

All of the participants spoke to the fluidity of their mentoring relationships. It

grows and changes over time, as mentees become mentors and mentees and mentors

become friends and colleagues. Strong relationships must change as the people in the

relationships change – they must be flexible and adaptable. For those involved in long-

lasting mentoring relationships this is shown in the cyclical and evolutionary nature of

the successful mentoring relationships.

Theme Two: Successful Mentoring Relationships are Reciprocal

One of the major factors in the fluid and dynamic relationships that these women

built was the realization that both the mentor and the mentee had a role in the

relationship. Successful mentoring relationships occur when the mentor and the mentee

can both learn from each other and offer one another support and encouragement

throughout their personal and professional lives. They are built on a mutual

understanding that giving, sharing, and taking are reciprocal between the mentor and

mentee. Sylvia was most adamant in her opinion of the shared nature of mentoring relationships. She said, "the thing I think is most important to say about mentoring is it has to go both ways." All of the participants touched on the idea that they gave as well as received from the other person in the relationship.

It's a Two-Way Street

Anne agreed that mentoring is a "huge mutual relationship." In order for a successful mentoring relationship to form, she said, there needs to be "a real eagerness to learn on the part of both parties." Kathy said that mentees need to be "willing to share" as much as mentors do. For Elizabeth, "I saw part of my job was to make my president [Sylvia] look good. When that's the case it's in her best interest to run things by me. And I never had a doubt that one of her goals was to make me successful." Sara believes that "she is my life coach because she likes me and is also inspired by me. Our friendship is a two way partnership." Sylvia believes that "it is a two-way street. One may be higher than the other in the hierarchy, but it doesn't work unless each person is giving something to the other person … In that kind of relationship, it's a question of mutually being able to draw on one another's strengths." In her relationship with Elizabeth,

> We had different strengths. I was on her case sometimes about timeliness of
> decision making and rewriting reports, and I obviously gave her advice with
> people reporting to her – how I might handle it, but it was her choice in the end.
> But I called her when I was about to embark on a course of action … My chief
> academic officer saw the big picture and was aggressive - was sometimes too
> aggressive. I liked that because it balanced me because I sometimes took too long

in deciding, but I found Lynn very useful to help decide when to go forward with plans.

Marina also spoke to how her mentee Lisa helped her in her own development. She said,

> You know she kids me – she got her doctorate before I did. So it was "ok, what am I doing?" The comet has become the star. "What's wrong with me?" Also, the differences. "Why don't you do this?" I didn't think I needed or wanted one, but then life circumstances happened, and I realized it was something to attain and set as a goal.

In addition, Marina learned that "a mentoring relationship can become a long friendship and some people think they are separate but we came together." She spoke to learning from Lisa how to be "focused and purposeful" and to set long term goals for herself.

> I've always been short term goal oriented. Two to three years is about as long as I like to think about. You know, I sometimes just have to get through the semester, I will worry about June or July in April or May! I have learned about the value of seeing things much further forward and work the plan to deal with that.

Lisa also helped Marina open her eyes to the importance of "having balance in your life and take care of yourself physically. That's major for Lisa and I never learned it. Then she told me 'you have to stay healthy to stay around and help folks.' Duh!" Knowing Marina's value system allowed Lisa to encourage her mentor to stay healthy, again a product of the reciprocal nature of the relationship. The conversations that occurred as their relationship developed allowed both of them to gain from one another.

> The mentors talked about the mutual nature of their relationships first, but when prompted, the mentees also spoke about what they felt they gave to their mentors. Sara

said about her life coach (the name she gives her mentor), "our spiritual base is common. That is what attracted her to me. She said, 'I really respect that about you – that you combine your spirituality at work.' So I have been sort of a role model in that area for her." Encouragement is an important aspect of the mentoring relationship for Sara, so she makes sure to encourage her life coach. Currently, "my life coach is doing a career search right now. I called her to wish her well during the interview. I am also a constant encouragement to her as well." In response to a question about the mutual nature of their relationship, Kathy replied, "yes, I believe the relationship has been reciprocal, especially now that [my mentor] has retired and is doing some consulting. I have connected her to several opportunities around the country." Interestingly, the mentees talk about what they receive when they mentor, but in general did not connect that to what they gave to their mentors until they were prompted to think about it. The mentors, on the other hand, were able to talk about what they received from the relationships with little prompting.

High Trust

For both mentors and mentees, the trust that forms through the relationship is generally a product of the shared nature of the mentoring relationship, and is often important to the development of the relationship and the individuals who made up the relationship. As Anne reported, "I think there is real good listening that goes on in a mentoring relationship. High trust develops so that then when confrontation needs to happen, you can take some really high risks to jump to a next level or encourage growth at a next level." This high level of trust encourages both professional and personal growth and is probably an important factor for the maintenance of these long-lasting relationships.

Sylvia and Elizabeth both spoke to the trust that grew from working with one another as President and Vice-President. Elizabeth stated,

> The level of trust is so important for this kind of relationship. When you've got that trust level, you seek out each others' opinions because it's expected, but also because I have such a high regard for her ability to work and she has that for me. We are not just going through the motions ... That trust enables sharing and time and attention to each other.

Sylvia saw the trust connection stemming from that fact that,

> We felt free to share personal circumstances with one another and support one another. I certainly didn't tell her my whole life story, and she didn't tell me hers, but when there were things going on in our lives personally, we felt free to say what they were and cut one another some slack.

For Lisa and Marina, trust was born out of Marina's belief that a good mentor intentionally pushes her mentee out of her comfort zone, yet does so in a supportive manner. The mentee learns to trust herself and her mentor, thus building stronger individuals and a stronger relationship. As Marina stated,

> When I push them beyond what they think they are comfortable with - so many people suffer from low expectations - so I can help them, make them believe in themselves - that they won't fail, or when you do fail, that doesn't make you a bad person. No one has believed in us, so I can say, "I know you can do this." I work though it with them. It's amazing. And it makes for teary commencement ceremonies. There's always Kleenex in my pocket, but it's a happy cry.

Lisa said that a mentor, "should have the experience to know me, to assess my abilities. The person won't push me too far beyond my abilities because she knows me, she places me in a space that is comfortable for me. I mean, it's high achieving, but not too great. She knows what I can do." Lisa indirectly spoke to the impact that Marina's philosophy had on her view of a successful mentor.

The mutual trust that builds during a successful mentoring relationship separates these from other types of relationships. Building this trust between a successful mentor and mentee is not a simple process. The women in the study realized this and focused on the importance of the give-and-take relationship needed to develop that trust. Sylvia had the best story about the complex nature of the mentoring relationship. She was at a cocktail party when "this young woman came up to me and said, 'I know all about you! I have researched you and your work. Would you be my mentor?' and I thought, 'Honey, I don't think so.'" In the interview, I interjected and said, "It's like a pick-up line!" and Sylvia laughed and said, "It's so much more than that."

Theme Three: Successful Mentoring Relationships Grow From Both

Institutional and Personal Connections

The third theme to emerge as a result from the data is that successful mentoring relationships grow between people who connect on both professional and personal levels. As Kathy mentioned, she found her supervisor to be a mentor through "luck and chemistry." The professional connection is most often important in meeting a mentor or mentee, but it is not enough – there must also be a personal link. The participants all said that this personal link can be made with either a man or a woman, though there are unique personal connections that occur with other women.

Kathy talked about the special combination of institutional and personal connections that she found needs to occur for a successful relationship to form,

> You have to have chemistry so it doesn't feel like work. I run into a ton of people every year - of students, grad students - and there are people who connect with me, who I connect with, and there are some who I don't. The chemistry isn't there. It's not that that is bad, I still am professional with them [but it is not the same]

The institutional and personal connections were both needed for these women to form lasting relationships.

It's a 50/50 Thing

All of the women connected with their mentors through the workplace, generally when they worked for a supervisor who moved into the role of mentor. As shown in the first theme, when mentees became mentors themselves this also happened in their work environments. The institutional connections between the mentors and mentees were essential to the development of successful mentoring relationships.

Often the person who became a mentor was the mentee's supervisor, so the institutional connection was immediate and pertinent. For Sara, "I think that supervisors are people's primary mentors. They know your work, they should be part of your professional development." As Alicia related,

> I got lucky and ended up with a great supervisor right after my Masters. My relationship with my supervisor is crucial for me. For many, they don't care. They can work for anyone. It's the job duties they look for. But for me from then on, after [my first supervisor], in the interview, it was important to check out the

support I would get when I made mistakes, how they would give me feedback.

And I had great supervisors every time.

Sara told how her mentor "was my first supervisor out of grad. school…I think she only supervised me for two years…[but] a friendship just grew." Elizabeth did not meet a person she considered a mentor until she was well along her career path, but when she did meet Sylvia, she was the President of the University where Elizabeth served as Vice-President of Student Affairs. Kathy was a graduate student working in residential life when she met her mentor who was then the Director of Resident Student Development. Lisa met Marina as a student when "Marina was the Director of Student Support Services and she noticed I was involved. I was active in my sorority, in orientation, in student government. She noticed how active I was." Anne, too, though seen as a mentor in this study, remembered the Associate Vice President of the first institution where she worked in Student Affairs as a mentor. The supervisor who connected personally with each mentee became the person remembered as a mentor.

While all acknowledged the importance of the work environment in developing their mentoring relationships, the participants in the study had mixed feelings about the usefulness of institutionalized mentoring programs. Some felt that organized mentoring programs could work to help foster a successful mentor/mentee relationship, while others felt that there was no way institutionalized mentoring could be successful. Anne spoke to her introduction to Student Affairs,

I was very fortunate at [my original institution] when the Associate Vice-President intentionally for all four of us who came in new – she would meet with us on a regular basis, made us all take an assertive training class, go through a

human potential workshop where we learned to do things like listen with high positive regard, express our goals and understand influences, and begin to articulate our goals. Then when she put us through that, we each led a seminar with first year entering students – largely commuter students and students we wanted to make sure had a support network…when you talk about intentional mentoring program that was a wonderfully unique program that came out of her experience and many years of working in Student Affairs and training and developing staff. That was 32 years ago in – what is that? – 1973.

In talking about the necessity of institutionalized mentoring, Lisa thought through her answer: "If we didn't do something structured - well, it's a 50/50 thing, it's 50/50. If I don't and there's no connection, then… If I do, at least there is an attempt and if one or two or three relationships are forged out of a hundred, well, that's fine. That's one or two or three that wouldn't have been formed." Lisa, Sara, and Kathy also mentioned the organizational mentoring efforts set up by NASPA, ACPA, and other professional organizations as important to the field.

Sara, though she acknowledged the importance of formal mentoring through professional organizations as important to the field, revealed that they never helped her as either a mentee or a mentor,

In LEAP (Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics) there, they did give you a mentor, but it was one of those things - she was the executive director of ACPA, but we never met, the only time we go to see each other was at conferences. As a formal mentor - I never felt what I felt with my mentor, I felt I could get better advice from her or from [my other mentor]… I mentor someone as part of

Pretty low — OK.

NASPA. I invited her to my house once or twice, we get together at conferences.

Every once in a while she emails me, but I don't spend that much time with her

and I know her director. I would say that her director is her primary mentor.

Kathy quite simply stated in response to a question about institutionalizing mentoring

programs in Student Affairs, "I don't think it can be done." For her, the personal

chemistry needed to form a strong, successful mentoring relationship could never be

found in a formal setting.

Many women fell somewhere in between, acknowledging the usefulness of an

organized process to jumpstart the relationship, but still maintaining that a truly

successful mentorship only occurs when the personal connection is present. Sylvia said,

I think that [institutionalized programs] can be useful. I don't discount that. In

lots of situations it's really useful to be told that someone will look out for you,

and you should have lunch, and call them. It may not be as deep as what we are

talking about, but it's helpful. But I really think if you are an administration and

you don't know to form relationships and watch and learn - if you don't know

that you won't be very good. And if you don't have the personality, you should

get out. Formal programs are just fine and if they give a little choice that's

helpful. Here are five people, get to know them, and then choose someone.

Lisa also saw both sides of the issue, due in part to a programming initiative she was

trying to implement at her institution. In her thinking,

There is no yes or no answer to this, it's not concrete, not black and white, there is

no yes or no answer. I think that institutionally established programs are as

important as the natural born connections. We need both. But I am biased! See,

I am attempting to create a mentoring program here for graduate students. Even if the relationship doesn't evolve into that same type of relationship, at least the graduate students will have the opportunity to talk with a faculty member above and beyond the classroom.

Anne also thought there are mixed results and thoughts about the effectiveness of intentional mentoring programs. "You always have the trust issue. There needs to be good preparation of the people who mentor. Listening skills and starting where junior staff are so you can build a trust relationship. So you can be there if they need mentoring, or if they don't, you can be there with suggestions." Elizabeth found that it is easier to think about institutional mentoring from a faculty perspective, but in Student Affairs,

It is harder for me to think how to institutionalize that to a great extent because it's a combination of both personal and professional. Certainly it's relatively easy to look at people's resumes and say here are junior and senior staff members and how is it that we can introduce one to the other in a way that it turns into a mentor relationship longer than a cocktail conversation. I am sure it's not impossible, but it's difficult.

She does suggest a way to solve the dilemma, and relates,

The closest I have come to figuring that out or taking steps that lead to positive relationships is to do staff development programs that pull together, for example, senior women who talk about their lives, decisions they made along the way. Through those conversations women and men in the division open up information sources that help staff members say "gee, this is someone I would like to call for

lunch, and ask her about what happened at [her institution], because it sounds like she was asking questions that I am asking myself right now."

The mixed review on the effectiveness of institutional mentoring relationships does not discount the importance of institutional connections for successful relationships. It does suggest, however, that women utilize their institutional connections in a variety of ways to find mentors and mentees.

The One I Want To Be Like

Connecting with a mentor at a personal level allowed the mentees to separate their mentor relationships from regular supervisor/worker relationships. Elizabeth recalled,

For me, until I went to [the University where I met Sylvia] I worked in an almost exclusively male environment. Especially the higher positions that I had - that was the case. I always thought that when I got the position I was supposed to know it all, that seeking information from others was a sign of weakness. I have gotten way over that! Working in an all male environment, and working for people who were good supervisors - but I didn't connect with them personally. It wasn't 'til my first VP job, and worked for a president who is a woman, but more importantly she has a set of values and a work style that is similar to mine, so I could see a connection right away. The term mentor didn't come up, but here is a woman I can learn so much from and I did! Everyday that I worked for her.

The mentors echo this idea, claiming that with their mentees, they experienced a different relationship. Sylvia said about Elizabeth, "she was in my office three or four times a week so we formed a personal relationship – not out of the office – but we saw so much of each other that it was personal." Marina said of Lisa, "when Lisa was an undergrad, I

knew she was special. I was a young professional and I was looking for someone and you find people..." The personal bond between the mentor and mentee separates it from non-mentorship relationships.

For Sara, the personal bond was developed through her mentors' encouragement and ability to see potential in her,

> She really motivated me. So, I will try something new, be asked to speak and she will tell me, "I think you are motivating, I would come listen to you!" Or I sometimes dream of writing a book and she tells me, "If you write a book, I will be your personal assistant – you know, the person who reads it" ... Talking to her is a big motivator. She always tells me how awesome I am, how good I'm doing. Like, most people at work don't really tell you that, unless they are a really good friend ... I think without encouragement and someone believing in me, I don't think I would be where I am today.

For Sara, the encouragement came from her mentors who saw what she could be professionally and had the personal relationship with her to tell her so. She said, "almost all of my positions (except for this one) were because mentors or friends said 'you should apply for this one.' I am content to stay at the level I am – they encourage and push."

> Marina spoke to how that personal relationship grows,
>
> It comes when you can share activities and you know the kinds of things people like and their other interests. And I wouldn't say Lisa and I share interests - she is an athlete and I just am not, but she ran the Boston Marathon and things like that. So it would be, "You are my hero! I can't do things like that, I haven't figured out how to ignite that passion in me!" For us there are things we share like a good

game of cards or our deep unabiding love for [the University where we met].

Crazy but true.

Kathy also talked about the growth of the personal relationship, saying "it's an informal process. It's about timing, luck chemistry, how people related to each other. The informal comes up with staff meetings, seeing each other, having coffee, those kinds of things." The professional relationship frames the interactions, but there needs to be a personal chemistry if the relationship is to grow into a successful mentoring relationship

Other women, particularly women of color, talked about how their personal connections grew because they saw in their mentors a person to emulate. For Lisa, "it's important for me to see that I could be like them." Sara said that,

I never really had that many Asian American role models. There are just not that many to choose from! So when I went to training and saw presidents, vice presidents, deans who were all Asian and it was just amazing. I remember sitting around the table, and you could just be yourself. There was this sense of humor, like people don't think Asians have a sense of humor, but we do and there was a feeling of family, a familiarity of communication styles, our values, and we could talk about how other people perceive our leadership.

For these women of color, personal connections with other people of color, particularly women, were an essential aspect of their mentoring relationships. Lisa touched on this idea when she said,

I attended a predominantly white university, and when I was in class all day with white students and didn't see any other African American female students. And I was taught all day by white males. I was a product of the 1970s and there just

weren't professors of color – not that it's much better now – but it was difficult to envision yourself as president or vice-president or a faculty member because you only aspire yourself as far as they predict you can go. So, to see women of color – to see my future in front of me.

The personal connections, born out of encouragement, the ability to see potential, common interests, and chemistry allow the professional relationship to blossom into something deeper and recognizable as a mentoring relationship.

I Don't Get Caught Up in Gender Issues

One of my main research objectives was to find out if my participants thought there to be anything special about the personal connections made through woman-to-woman mentoring relationships. There was not a strong case made to show that the participants found huge gender differences. Sara and Lisa both spoke specifically to how male mentors have been important in their lives, and Kathy found that "I have had both women and men as mentors and that's been ok too." Sylvia had mentored men and said,

I don't know if there was any big difference! Nor do I know that when I was a mentee and learning, there was a big difference. I worked for a woman and over time I approached her more directly about particular advice, but I also learned a ton from men. My gut tells me 'yes, same gender mentoring is a big difference' but I think it can work both ways.

For the women who had found a difference in mentoring between women, relationship differences and communication styles were the reasons the relationships were different than those they had with men. In addition, almost everyone who spoke about a gender

difference placed a caveat on their thought, making sure to include (or at least not exclude) males. Alicia said,

> I will make this statement and go 'now that's not true!' but with the two women I have worked with – it's a more intense relationship. The idea of women talking and jumping from topic to topic – the stuff Belenky and others talk about. We do not think in so linear ways, its more global conversations. But it doesn't minimize in any ways the males…In a male dominated group, you would wait to give [information] up, be much more specific and get to the point. I was no less valued or respected, I just knew how to use my time better.

Kathy found woman-to-woman mentoring to be "a nice thing, a comfort thing. I do not believe it's been important, as a focus. It's nice, wonderful, you can talk about some issues more easily but…I don't get caught up in gender issues." Sylvia thought that "same gendered relationships are easier because communication styles are more similar, but certainly not always." Anne's response to the gender questions was,

> Well, I think women really, in my experience – relationships are incredibly important. They are important for men too, but I think with women more reassurance is often needed or they may or may not have been privy to – the way I want to say this is: mentoring women can be more nurturing or that tends to be a way of working in those relationships. I was certainly aware of ways in which I saw guys working that worked for them, but wouldn't have worked for me, and I needed to be aware of that and be available to sort out those issues with women.

Elizabeth remembers

now in retrospect, when I first took that job [with Sylvia] my friends said "you

must be so excited, this is the first time that you have worked for a woman." I

would nod politely and think, "yes it is, but is this a good thing?" As I think back,

it's hard to sort out how much difference it does or does not make that she is a

woman. The qualities she spelled out are things we have in common and I

wonder if she were a man if things would have been different.

The participants in the study, while recognizing that working with women may be

different than working with men, made personal and professional connections with both

men and women that led to successful mentoring relationships. All identified important

women in their lives, yet most were hesitant to elaborate upon significantly "feminine"

traits in their mentoring relationships.

Theme Four: Mentoring is Important for the Development of Female

Student Affairs Professionals

As the mentees in the study progressed through their professional careers, their

mentors and the mentoring relationships they were in had a great impact on their

development. Professional development was seen in many ways, and covered everything

from initiation to the field of Student Affairs to skill development to career counseling.

Mentees often learned important lessons from observing, while mentors tried hard to be

intentional as they thought about the development of their mentees. Marina spoke

eloquently to this important aspect of the mentoring relationship,

You know that the mentor will take a holistic, good, bad, and ugly perspective in

any aspect of life you want them to. Friends are good, you can be honest, but for

a friendship – either they may not know your industry or the contacts you need.

Many of my friends are not in higher education so we have different perspectives

and challenges. So mentors know your field, the kinds of things that are

important to advance in a career path. Mentors are up on what's happening and

what will make you more valuable in the career path. The specialness is that the

mentor should have networks and resources they can guide the protégées' way –

actively or passively, third handedly, be silent, but it happens in the wind. The

protégée gets it, but the mentor has managed that opportunity. Mentors can do

this in a way that works for the protégées' benefits.

Welcome to Student Affairs

Many of the women talked about how they were introduced to the field of Student

Affairs through mentors, or how important mentors were to their continuance in the

profession. Sara explained that Student Affairs was actually a second career for her and

that she found out about the field through a Rec. Sports internship,

So I had this internship in campus recreation. So we had heard about [the school

where I would do my internship] and how it has a great campus rec. program and

I called and said can I do internship and she said "sure, come on up" So I guess

she was my first mentor ... I would just follow her around and I followed her to a

leadership workshop, then a selection committee, and I would sit in on staff

meetings and one day I asked her "What did you go to school for?" What is this

masters in Student Affairs? "So you went to school to study how to work on

campus?"

Then, after she had done everything that wanted to do in rec. sports and was ready to go

back to school for a master's degree,

I remembered four to five years later that she had said something about student affairs. So I called and I set up a meeting - it was like a secret meeting, she didn't know who it was! I would meet her for a secret meeting in the Union. What was that major? I didn't care what the Masters was, it could have been public administration, or an MBA, so she told me about Masters in SA and told me about internships and introduced me to one of my mentors, because he is Asian and he had gotten his masters at Michigan State and I sat down to talk to him. Now I always call him, we see each other, do programs together. But [they both] had gone to Michigan State, so I ended up going to Michigan State! No logic to that.

Sara admits that, "I was never an RA, or in student government, or an orientation leader. In college all my time was spent on recreation, so I didn't know what I was getting into." However, having a mentor introduce her to Student Affairs helped her find a field that she would stay with for many, many years.

Kathy, in a less complicated story, related how she was thinking about going into an MBA program and her mentor "sat down with me and talked to me about staying in the field." She was glad for the advice, because in her experience, "Student Affairs is not a career people run about the country talking about. It has to be marketed through experience." Lisa said that Marina noticed her involvement on campus and "was the one who told me 'there is a field that does this, you can have a career in this.'" For Alicia, "if I didn't have [my mentor] and it wasn't a good experience, I still wouldn't be here in the field." The first contact with the field, mediated by intentional and aware mentors, helps women want to enter and continue in Student Affairs.

For other women, their mentors helped them with their career moves within the field of student affairs. Anne "tried to entice Alicia to apply for that position [Director of Residence Life] based upon her previous experiences and talents and skills." Sara attributes several of her jobs to her mentor because her mentor would encourage her to apply, even if Sara was hesitant. She told Sara "your name is written all over this. I loved where I was, but I guess she felt it was time for me to move on! I wasn't really interested, but because she said 'I think this is perfect.' That was encouragement, you know, someone else believed in me." Marina remembers Lisa working through the adjustment to administration and how they "talked through that too - her decisions, how much classroom versus how much administration. Transitions - we tried to talk through it as we went through." Professional and career decisions are ones that mentors can play a large part in for their mentees.

A Deliberative, Purposeful Process

Intentional mentoring on the part of the mentors greatly aided the development of the mentees. Marina recognized Lisa's potential and developed it,

> You give them something to do and they do it so well, they do it better than you expected, they do it better than you, then you give them more. Then it becomes a more deliberative, purposeful process of giving them assignments. You need budgeting – let's do this - we know you can do counseling, we know you can plan an event. Let's see what else. To see the bubble of interested energy that was there. When I realized that Lisa wanted to make her career in Student Affairs it became more purposeful.

Lisa remembers distinctly the impact of Marina's careful management of their relationship,

> My junior year, she said a quote to me. I will never forget it and I share it with
> my students. I went in – I was excited because I was getting my bachelor's
> degree, I was getting out of [the city], I was doing so well. She said, "Lisa, you're
> good, you are a good student, you have good skills. Why don't you go to
> graduate school?" Well, that just took my breath away. She said, "the only thing
> BA stands for is begin again." She that "when you get your master's, your will
> get your PhD." Those words – they meant so much to me. She planted a seed.

Anne, too, was deliberate in her development for Alicia,

> I would often have folks to the house for dinner and making sure that they were
> people Jill (or her husband) had not met previously - these were important
> contacts. That was important for me...good contacts. Also, it was important to
> me to get her in visible positions at the University so folks would recognize the
> contributions she would make. We had a major strategic planning process and
> she was our representative for our department at that committee.

Marina also talked about how building situations for women of color helps her, her mentee, and the rest of the community. She said that when she gets called to serve on a committee or speak at a function as a woman of color, she will often give out the name of one of her mentees. This frees her up, and with her help "it helps them gain confidence and it helps other people see that what talent looks like isn't always what they think it looks like." Building partnerships on campus for mentees is a large part of being an intentional mentor.

You Can't Learn Your Next Job If You Don't Watch

While mentors tried hard to arrange situations where the mentee can develop, it was also important for the mentee to observe and watch for situations where they can show their capabilities and learn passively from their mentors. Lisa articulated this concept the best, starting with stories about how important her first mentor, her kindergarten teacher, was and that she "learned from observing her care and compassion. I learned to love all people in the classroom." Watching and learning from her teacher "is why as I grew up I had an openness towards diverse people, because of how she treated all of us." She went on to talk about observing Marina, "I watched my mentor. And I mean, the mentor knows that he or she is being watched. I see it when people observe me. But observation helps." She related how "I watched her run the Special Support Services Office and observing her gave me inspiration to become an administrator. There were no other Black female leaders/administrators at [my school] so it was a joy to watch her handle the day-to-day operations of the office and assist me with my career path." In her experience, simply being around and watching other women of color helped her to develop as a person and a professional. She said "even if these women had never said a word to me, I still would have seen them. I would have observed them and that is important." Today, "now I get to hire undergraduate workers and I hire students of color because it helps for them to see me everyday doing what I do. I may not talk to them one-on-one, or meet with them one-on-one, but I know it will plant a seed."

Sara, another woman of color, also sees the importance of observation. She related,

What I have noticed is that as an Asian American, sometimes I don't have to do anything. I am just me in my position and I am a role model to someone younger. They just tell me "wow!" I am probably mentoring a lot of people without knowing it. That's uncomfortable for me to say because it's bragging. But we learned that in LEAP – you are a mentor and it's part of your responsibility to encourage other Asian Americans in the field. It's not an option. Be visible, get involved so others can see you.

Sylvia believes that "in my own development, you are successful when you keep your eyes open and watch people around and higher than you. You can't learn how to do your next job if you don't watch." In her relationship with Elizabeth, she believes that Elizabeth "learned a lot from me about being a senior manager, but it was never conscious." She passed this faith in observation on to Elizabeth, who found that "It was the individual meetings, cabinet meetings - watching her do her job, being in her work circle that allowed me to learn so much from her." Kathy benefited from her mentors' ability and willingness to share her experiences and passion. Kathy told how impressed she was by

> seeing someone else's passions. I always tell my students that once you are out in the real world, you have to do it every day, so you better make sure you like it. You have to get up, get excited. My career – I look back and I have just been thrilled. That's the point. [My mentor] could communicate passions."

Kathy simply needed to watch her to understand how meaningful that passion was in her life. For both mentors and mentees, being observant is an important part of the mentoring relationship.

Helping Understand the Pieces of the Puzzles

One area of development that all the women were able to speak to was the skill development that occurred as a result of being a part of the mentoring relationship. These skills developed through interaction, observation, and the ability of the mentors to set up situations where the mentees could safely try new skills. Support and challenge were both a part of successful skill development, and the mentees spoke appreciatively of the skills they learned from their mentors.

Alicia, while speaking about why she admired Anne, talked about the skills that she learned from Anne,

> She was a very direct person, and she would force me to question the other side of the coin, for me to look at the opposite side. Like, if a student needed to be expelled, I should look at the other side. Like, take in all the information, information is power and it needs to be shared, and involve others. Also, she was involved in ACPA and she showed me to give back.

Anne spoke to the actual occasion where Alicia might have learned about looking at the other side of the coin.

> Alicia was being very firm about a position that she had taken on a student matter that wasn't helpful to the institution. And she resisted that I told her so, and I must have raised my voice in that one a little bit and her reaction was so startling to me. She said… "if I don't have the support of the person I am working with, then I would leave." I said "this isn't about loss of support" and "this is about reframing how we help the institution in this case." And both of us were near tears and feeling crummy.

Anne taught her mentee that "we all wore multiple hats - you wear a hat for the particular role you play in your office or department, but you have to understand the institutional hat and that may change the way you think about a particular issue." This skill was developed in the referenced situation, and the trust that had been built between the two helped them work through the situation in such a way that Alicia could come back and say "I can stand it when you raise your voice, and that was important for me to learn." Anne also helped to develop Alicia because she "would always bring in the Assistant VPs and the other staff in the central offices, and major directors – which was what Alicia was – whenever we tried to conceptualize where we were heading so we knew what our strategies were." For both of them, the mentor relationship was a time for development, even though Anne said "Alicia was very experienced when I hired her. I didn't think a whole lot about mentoring and that was our relationship. That happened, but in my view I didn't know I had that much - I knew there were some things I could give her, but I never thought of it too much."

Elizabeth admired Sylvia's openness and found she developed because "she [Sylvia] was a gifted administrator and someone who was willing to talk freely and openly about decisions she made, why she did one thing and not another. I didn't have to guess what was on her mind." Kathy found that her mentor's style helped her to see other ways of looking at situations. "I am more low-key, she is a cheerleader, high energy, very charming" and so she can do professional development in a different way than Kathy can. Kathy had her mentor come to her current campus and do a full day for young professionals because she knew that her own skills were better used in other ways. Sylvia believes that Kathy learned

crispness in decision making – the answer to the question "What are you going to

do here? and when?" and Kathy improved enormously as a public speaker and

that was something I valued and something she learned [and] she had the best

ability to think across all the divisions of what unattended consequences might be.

I encouraged her to step up and pull us back. She really played that role in the

cabinet, and I don't think she had done that before

For Lisa and Marina, Lisa acknowledged that she learned how to be an administrator

from Marina, but Marina elaborated on what she tried to teach Lisa,

It came to a point where I could clearly talk to her or she would ask me, "you are

involved in this – how does that relate to you personally and professionally?" I

would help her understand the pieces of the puzzles. I would talk with her and

debrief her experiences. "How do you feel?" "Any talents or skills you weren't

able to use and should have used?" or "I gave a hole I need to fix." Particularly

when she became a director. The key pieces with people who are so competent –

"How are you delegating?" Making sure you aren't spending time and talent that

you hire people to do. "How are you supervising or mentoring?" and "Planning

for succession?" You don't want to become seemingly indispensable because

people don't see you in any other role, then you can't advance.

These skills were ones that Marina's mentors had taught her, so she knew how important

they would be in Lisa's development as a successful administrator.

Mentoring is about developing professionals in the field, whether they are new to

the field or at a new place in their career. Successful mentors see where they can be

intentional in the development of their mentees, and mentees can learn much from simple

observation. While there is a wide range of development that occurs in successful mentoring relationships, all the women spoke to practical skill development as an inherent part of the relationship. Having a mentor recognize where the mentee can develop is an essential part of the mentoring relationship.

Discussion

Surround yourself with people who are going to lift you higher.
~ Oprah

The Phenomenon of Mentoring

The themes indicate that mentoring relationships for the women in this study are dynamic and vibrant relationships that, when effectively managed, can result in great growth for both the mentors and the mentees. I believe that the experiences these women talk about in terms of mentoring is actually something stronger and deeper. The connection between the personal and the professional, combined with the duration of these relationships and the reciprocal development of both the mentors and the mentees are traits of a relationship that goes beyond mentoring.

The mentoring relationships in which the participants are engaged completely skip over the proscribed, hierarchical systems of mentoring. These relationships speak to the combination of professional and personal development that has occurred as a result of being both a mentee and a mentor. Lisa spoke to this when she told about a more recent mentor who "taught me how to age gracefully and start thinking about my future as a productive scholar well into retirement." In Lisa's words, there is not a distinct separation between her personal and professional growth, as they are intrinsically tied with one another. The results support Kram's (1985) theory that true mentoring goes beyond professional boundaries. Kram believed that good mentoring filled both career and psychosocial needs for the mentee. The results certainly show that the fulfillment of both of these functions is important to successful mentoring relationships. Yet, the results also reveal a more nuanced look at mentoring, showing that career and

psychosocial needs are met by *both* the mentors and mentees, and that mentors receive just as much as the mentees from the relationship.

Much has been made in the education literature about the personal nature of mentoring relationships. The language of teaching and learning is central to this personal perspective of mentoring because, I think, it connotes a connection between the trusted counselor and his or her novice. This is helpful particularly when talking about helping someone through promotion and tenure which is certainly a process where someone who has gone before can be extremely helpful. Though Sylvia did speak about one of her mentors who "played a more active teaching role" and Kathy mentioned that a mentor is someone who is "older and gone through some things," the women in general did not use the same teaching and learning language that was present in the literature. It was obvious that the mentors and mentees learned from each other and the relationship, but that is not how they framed the meaning of their relationships.

This may be due, in part, to the fact that, in general, the Student Affairs profession looks at teaching and learning from a different angle than academics. Rather than focusing on what is taught and ways to teach specific topics, Student Affairs professionals tend to look at learning as a holistic process that encompasses multiple aspects of life. This same mentality may be carried over to mentoring relationships between female Student Affairs professionals.

While focusing on personal and holistic connections in the mentoring relationship, the results show that most women in this study did not verbalize overt feminist notions about their woman-to-woman relationships. This was a surprising find for me, as I thought there would be a more direct connection between the facts that these

women had experienced successful mentoring relationships, and that these relationships were with other women. However, as a prospective participant pointed out to me when she had to say no to participating in the study because she had never had a female mentor, it is much harder to find female mentors in the field because there are fewer in the upper administrative levels. In addition, while many of the relationship and communication connections may be easier made with other women, it is not impossible for men and women to maintain a relationship that fits the needs of both the mentee and the mentor

In addition, even if most of the women did not identify feminist practices in their experiences, these relationships can still be seen from a feminist perspective. Looking at the work of Moss, et. al (1999), Paterson & hart-Wasekeesikaw (1994) and Schramm, (2000) who emphasize the nature of feminist praxis in woman-to-woman mentoring, feminist values are evident in these relationships. Of the suggestions given by Moss, et. al. about how to act as a feminist mentor, many of the stories from my participants demonstrate aspects of working from a woman-centered approach, aligning oneself with marginalized groups, enabling democratic access to intellectual resources, and engaging in collective decision-making processes.

Also demonstrated is the important fact that not all women are the same. The mentoring relationships represented in this study are as diverse as the mentees and mentors. Thus, while it is possible to draw themes from the stories the participants told, it is also important to recognize that the diversity among the women and how they make meaning from their relationships. Looking at these mentoring relationships from a feminist perspective enables me to see how woman-to-woman mentoring really can be a

form of feminist praxis, and reminds me to celebrate the myriad ways women form and keep relationships.

The women in the study only touched on the importance of peers or development networks, as discussed by Higgins & Kram (2002), Kram (1985), Parker & Kram (1993), and Quinlan (1999), due mostly to the fact that this was not an area I chose to examine and develop. However, these constellations of support do provide support for many Student Affairs administrators. This is particularity true for women and women of color, since they are still the minority in the field and not all have access to the traditional mentors. In addition, because they are the minority, there are not as many mentors available to work with mentees. Helping women understand that peer relationships, friends, family, and even students or junior staff can be useful to their development will enable them to utilize these relationships more effectively.

In addition, connections made through professional means, such as at conferences and in professional organizations can be significant. As Alicia said, "the connectedness to something larger than the [my] students and [the university where I work] ... when times are difficult, being connected to something larger - being a contributor and receiver for new knowledge – is important." Developing ways to encourage relationships such as these in both formal and informal ways will aid women student affairs professionals in their personal and professional lives.

The participants also discussed, though not labeled per se, a concept similar to that of the Good Mother as referenced by Spore, Harrison, and Haggerson (2002). The results reflect their three themes of empowerment, spirituality, and transformation. Both mentees and mentors are empowered through their mentoring relationships, by their

Good Mothers. This may result in career development, as was often the case for Sara who found that her mentor saw so much potential in her that she took on new and more difficult jobs. The participants also found personal empowerment through their relationships. For example, Lisa ran the Boston Marathon because of the support of her mentors. These women stayed in touch and grew to be friends and colleagues because their Good Mothers empowered them so that, as Marina said, "the comet has become the star." In addition, as was also the case for Marina and Elizabeth, the mentors were often empowered by their mentees to grow and develop.

Spirituality, as defined by Spore, Harrison and Haggerson (2002) was also evident in these relationships. If, as they claim, "spirituality is evidenced in the intimacy and holistic caring between the Good Mother and the novice…[and] there is a spirit that is essential…the spirit of kindness, caring, and understanding [that] pervades the relationship" (p. 157) these relationships were spiritual in nature. Marina put it most simply when she said, "you know that the mentor will take a holistic, good, bad and ugly perspective in any aspect of life you want them to." This type of caring results in the trust levels about which the women spoke. It is essential to the maintenance of the relationship when the mentors had to push the mentees in professional and personal ways. Spirituality "leads to acquiring knowledge, integrating the knowledge into your being, then…you become…a Good Mother" (p. 157). The results clearly demonstrate this aspect of spirituality. All of the women learned from their mentors as mentees and used those lessons to become successful mentors themselves.

This aspect of spirituality leads into the third theme of the Good Mother, that of transformation. Though few of the women spoke directly to a sense of transformation

through their relationships, these women would not be who they are without the presence of their mentor of mentee in their lives. Mentees learned, watched and observed how to be successful Student Affairs administrators because of their mentors. Sara thought that "without encouragement and someone believing in me, I don't think I would be where I am today." Mentors gained personal satisfaction, a professional connection, and a friend and colleague. For Marina, mentoring is "very satisfying. There's an African proverb - you make my neck long. You stand with that sense of pride, with your head up high. When [Lisa] got her doctorate. Or the deanship. You get the sense of 'wow this is absolutely fabulous.'" These relationships were successful mentoring relationships because they transformed the women involved in them.

In general, this study does not support the "traditional" notion of mentoring. For the women involved, mentoring is not a hierarchical, proscribed relationship between a superior and a subordinate. It often comes about between women who work for each other, but it is a fluid and dynamic process that results in a very satisfying, long lasting experience for both the mentor and mentee. The professional and personal development that occurs is inseparable, and the hierarchy melts away as the participants come to trust one another as friends, peers, and colleagues. Through mentoring, a deeper relationship is born.

These deeper relationships are more congruent with the paradigm of the Good Mother. They are empowering, spiritual, and transformative. Incorporating a feminist framework, this paradigm speaks to the uniqueness of relationships among women, but it does not deny that Good Mothers can be men. In the mentoring relationships of the women in this study, development occurred at multiple levels, leaving the women

involved different than before they knew their mentor or mentee. The phenomenon of mentoring, as described by the women in this study, is actually more than mentoring. They describe an experience that has its roots in the Good Mother paradigm, in the Mentor/Athena myth, in the lived experience of all women who have taught others before them.

Limitations

There are always some limitations imposed on a study in order to make it manageable for the reason it is performed. This research may have been limited by a shallow definition of success, the fact that only traditional one-on-one mentoring relationships were studied, and I did not have as much contact with the participants as I would have liked. It is important to note these limitations to underscore the idea that this study is just a part of a conversation about mentoring, and that often more questions are raised than are answered through the process.

This study was limited to women who I deemed "successful" in a shallow sense of the word – they are Deans of Students and Vice-Presidents of Student Affairs. This may or may not reflect each participant's own sense of success, and certainly is a limited definition of success from my point of view. However, limiting the participant pool in this way enabled me to more easily find, contact, and engage with each participant. Secondly, I only focused on one-on-one mentoring relationships, partly I think, because that has been my own experience, and partly because that is the most commonly known type of mentoring. Though participants did mention multiple mentors, or a network concept, I did not follow up on these topics, preferring to focus on one type of mentoring relationship. Lastly, I wish I could have spent more time with each participant. Though I

believe I have enough data for saturation to occur, I would like to know more about the participants' lives, personal histories, connections with mentors, and their experience teaching and learning in the field.

In addition, it is important to note that I am the filter through which the reader learns about the participants and the meaning they make from their mentoring relationships. While I tried hard to bracket my assumptions and engage in the challenge of the *epoche* (Moustakas, 1994), I still placed my own meanings of the words of the participants. If, as poststructuralist thought maintains, we do not speak a language capable of capturing meaning, only one which creates meaning, then my thoughts, ideas, and opinions are interwoven throughout the results. I do not see this as a limitation; however, I do feel it is essential to recognize the extra layer of meaning that I place on the participants' stories.

Implications for Student Affairs and Further Areas of Study

Our investigations have always contributed more to our amusement
than they have to knowledge
~ Will Rogers

Future Research Topics

Like most research, this study does not answer all the questions, and most likely

brings up more than it answers. However, as my research is only conceived to be a part

of the larger mentoring literature, there is value in unanswered questions. Though it may

bring up further areas of research, even in its current state it has implications for the field

of Student Affairs.

According to the results of this study, the more women are mentored, the more

they will mentor, because professionals who are mentored become mentors later. As

such, there is a need to examine what characteristics are needed for someone to transfer

successfully from mentee to mentor. While the mentees spoke to how their own

relationships with their mentors evolved, further study could examine how mentees

become practicing mentors. What are the steps that women go through to become

mentors? How do their own mentoring experiences play into that role expansion? Are

there common experiences from which we can learn about how women become mentors?

These can be answered through further research.

To continue the metaphor used by Spore, Harrison, and Haggerson (2002) Good

Mothers need Good Daughters. Since the results show that mentoring is a two-way

street, are there learned traits to being a good mentee? If being a Good Mother is

something that can be learned, can one learn to act as a better mentee? Examining this

concept would help women learn how to give their best to the relationship so they can get the most out of it.

Further study into the paradigm of the Good Mother and its usefulness as a paradigm for Student Affairs is warranted. While I found it useful in framing this work, I think there are questions and research topics available in the larger topic of the Good Mother that could be explored with a Student Affairs focus. How can the Good Mother help with promotion if tenure is not a part of the process? Is there already a sense of the Good Mother in Student Affairs since it is commonly seen as a helping profession? How can male Student Affairs professionals become Good Mothers?

The mixed results on institutionalizing mentoring programs show that, while there are a few who adamantly deny the validity of these types of programs, on the whole most women believed that they could be useful. How can we use this information? How do we develop formal programs that do not step on the organic process? Can the systems set up for female faculty members guide us in this search? These types of questions were ones I hoped to answer with my research, but I now realize that it can be a research topic itself.

It will be important to engage with the literature on other forms of mentoring relationships. I believe these may have a great impact on women in Student Affairs, as they learn how to make the most out of relationships with peers, friends, and other colleagues who may not fit the traditional mentor role. What types of relationships do these entail? How do they impact Student Affairs professionals? What can institutions do to support them? These are all questions that should be answered as research in mentoring continues to grow.

The varied questions which still remain would make excellent areas of further study. Mentoring, as shown, is a diverse and nuanced topic. There are still many areas which will greatly contribute to the literature on the topic.

Implications for Student Affairs

Intentionality and training both need to happen so the mentors can be at their best with the mentees. In addition, while many mentor as a part of their normal lives, it still is an extra responsibility that is time consuming. As Alicia stated, "I have a husband and kids. I don't have much time. When I think of how much a mentor I am – I have a full plate, but I try to do some as well … some moments I juggle that well, sometimes yes, sometimes no." Mentoring must be rewarded in Student Affairs, and seen as something worth the devotion of resources. Recognizing the importance of and learning how to successfully develop constellation networks may help relieve the burden of those placed in traditional mentoring roles.

Marina spoke to the burden that being a woman of color in particular, but a woman in general, can be when she said "I can't be everywhere and someone glums on and says 'you have to serve on this committee' and 'you have to be on this board' and 'you need to do this.' No, you don't. There are other people out there, you just haven't met them yet, you haven't seen them yet." This burden can be magnified when mentoring is forced upon a woman. Remembering the importance of the organic growth of the personal relationship to a successful mentoring relationship, institutional programs must allow for that to occur naturally. In addition, the weak case made for the importance of same gender mentoring relationships should not be used to deny the fact

that women's mentoring of other women is vitally important to the development of successful women in Student Affairs.

Lastly, mentoring is not the only type of development needed to help women succeed in Student Affairs, or in any field. A continued study of how women develop to be successful is necessary. Research on professional development, which can include mentoring, needs to be expanded so that practitioners have a better understanding of what successfully engages women to develop as leaders. On this topic, Sylvia commented,

> I think higher education thinks less about the professional development of its leaders, and spends less on it than any other enterprise in society. And I think that is outrageous! So if I could wave my magic wand, I would have higher ed think much more systematically and directly about the next generation of leaders. Mentoring is part of that, but it is not all.

A more thorough examination of what can be done to help develop the next generation of both female and male leaders is required as Student Affairs grows as a profession.

Thoughtful Considerations

...one cannot hope to tell the truth. One can only show how one came to hold whatever opinion one does hold. One can only give one's audience the chance of drawing their own conclusions as they observe the limitations, the prejudices, the idiosyncrasies of the speaker.
~Virginia Woolf

I am not sure if I have truly found the essence of the mentoring relationship, though I feel that I have heard what the participants have had to say about the meaning that they make from their mentoring relationships. Thus, I am hesitant to name this section the traditional "conclusion." I do not see this as the end of my own, or the field's, understanding of how mentoring impacts the lives of women. Rather, I see it as an interlude to reflect upon the ways this study is a step in the search of knowledge about the personal and professional development of women, as well as a time to reflect on my own personal and professional development.

Perhaps the essence of mentoring lies in that fact that the relationship is a highly personal, highly variable relationship, one with many layers and many definitions. Being aware of a more nuanced view of mentoring will allow mentors and mentees to be more fluid in their own perceptions of how relationships should form, or what framework to use while participating in a mentoring relationship. The essence may also lay in the fact that truly successful mentoring relationship is one that gives to all members of the relationship. Remembering that mentoring does not have to be a one-on-one situation and that constellations of support can be utilized, we can embrace new ways of mentoring that are more reciprocal and fulfilling for everyone involved. Mentoring may be essential to development, but only if it is a relationship that works for mentees and mentors.

I agree with Sylvia in her assessment that people in higher education do not think enough about the development of future leaders in the field. There seems to be a pervading sense, particularly in the academic side of higher education, that if a person is smart enough he or she will succeed. Recognizing and acting to correct this fallacy is a place where Student Affairs can lead the broad higher education field. This has been one of the unexpected lessons that I learned from this thesis, and one which I can act upon as I continue my career.

I also learned lessons through the research process. Throughout this process, I had to be comfortable with the idea that my worldview concerning research, theory and mentoring could change *because of* the research process. Reflecting on my personal progress through this project, I do not think that my worldview has changed in any radical ways. Feminism still informs my life, and I believe that my work with poststructuralist thought has deepened and given new layers to my thoughts on feminist theory. I still believe that a personal connection to both the research topic and participants encourages a meaningful research experience. I do have a more concrete realization of how this occurs, which I believe will lead to a more practical understanding of future research I undertake. My head is no longer in the theoretical clouds about how research progresses. However, I am still firm in my commitment to the idea that humanity is central to the process.

Recognizing my biases aided me as I worked through my methodology. I found it easier to explain and defend to my participants what the purpose of my research is and I was more clearly able to articulate my own position in the research. Though at times I lost focus because I was swimming in data, I think knowing my own biases helped me

recognize that the work I was doing was important and relevant. It also helped as I coded data and came up with my conclusions.

Another important realization that I came to is the recognition that this study in its current form is a snapshot of myself and my participants at a certain moment in time. That is the beauty of a qualitative study – it can change and evolve in "real" time, transforming to reveal new truths and meanings as we know more about ourselves and our experiences. As I go forward, I will continue to learn more about this phenomenon called mentoring and take the lessons learned in this thesis with me to new programs and places in my life.

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APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF THE OSU INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
(IRB) FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS

**Making Meaning from Mentoring: How Female Student Affairs Professionals
Experience Mentoring**

Principal Investiagor: Jessica White   **Email**: jessica.white@oregonstate.edu
Department: CSSA/School of Education   **Telephone**: 737-8576
Project Title: Making Meaning from Mentoring
Type of Project: Student Thesis
Student Researcher: Amanda Wittman
Type of Review Requested: Expedited
Project Start Date: Nov. 1, 2004

Signed: _____   **Date**: _____
        Principal Investigator

1. Brief Description

Mentoring is a helpful tool in giving women the keys to succeed in a variety of
professions. With this realization, it is important to begin to look into how mentoring has
helped females in student affairs succeed in administrative positions. This research
project looks to investigate, in a qualitative way, how successful female student affairs
professionals engage with mentors, specifically other women, throughout their lives.
While most professionals have multiple mentors, both male and female, throughout their
career, this research is designed to specifically look at how women can influence other
women in the student affairs profession. It is important to give women the chance to
speak about the unique ways woman-to-woman relationships can shape their
development so that we can begin to look at ways to validate and perpetuate these
relationships. The aim is to examine women's experiences as they relate them and find
connecting threads of the impact of mentoring.

There exists a gap in the student affairs research on the topic of mentoring for
professionals in the field. There is some research on mentoring for young professionals
and graduate students, but little is aimed at examining how mentoring can help women
and/or minorities succeed in administrative positions in student affairs (Blackhurst,
2000). Also, there seems to be room for more insight into precisely how professionals
make meaning from their mentoring relationships, whether they act as mentor or mentee.
Few researchers (Duff, 1999; Gardiner, Enomoto & Grogan, 2000) use qualitative
research to back up the author's claim that mentoring can be a transforming experience. I
believe that since much of the focus on mentoring has occurred in the business world,
where the focus is usually on a more quantitative process, this research will give voice to
those who have experienced a mentoring relationship in student affairs.

Data collected from this research will be used to expound on mentoring programs currently set up in student affairs and higher education. It will help inform professionals in these areas on ways that mentoring can be effectively used to cultivate new female professionals. Publications and presentations will be developed to disseminate the knowledge found during this project.

2. Participant Population

There will be 12-20 participants in this study. There will be six to ten female, senior level administrators in student affairs departments throughout the country, and possibly six to ten more women who the original participants identify as their mentors. The researcher wants to keep the number of participants limited so that the data produced can be thorough and complete. The researcher understands the limitations of this type of study in terms of generalizability, but feels that the rich data collected will be more meaningful to the study.

The researcher does not plan to limit the sample of participants based on age, race, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, or geographical location, though the researcher does understand that these factors may play into the data collected. The decision to only work with female participants is based upon the researcher's interest in finding out why and how women have succeeded in student affairs and learning what role mentoring has had in their success.

The original participants will be found through snowball sampling. The researcher will obtain names of student affairs professionals who may be willing to help through contact with senior level administrators at Oregon State University. These recruits will be contacted if they meet the following criteria:
- Female
- Sees herself as active in college student affairs and is dedicated to the fundamental philosophies of the student affairs profession
- Serves or has recently (within the past year) served as Dean or higher, depending on the nomenclature of each University
- Must identify as someone who has been mentored
- Able to give articulate and thoughtful responses to questions, and generate new ideas
- Willing to act as in collaboration and be actively involved in the study

From conversations with these women, it is the hope of the researcher to get the names of women who served as mentors for the original participants and conduct interviews with the mentors. These mentors will be chosen if they meet the following criteria:
- Female
- Identified by an original participant as a mentor
- Willing to participate with openness about her relationship with the mentee
- Able to give articulate and thoughtful responses to questions, and generate new ideas
- Willing to act as a co-researcher and be actively involved in the study

3. Methods and Procedures

The researcher chose a phenomenological methodology for this research. This allows for the data collected to explore the meanings of everyday lived experiences of the participants. This process allows both the researcher and the participants to gain a deeper understanding of events that initially seem shallow and without meaning (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). This qualitative method aims to intimately describe how a few subjects describe their experience, thereby recognizing the importance of allowing individuals an undiluted voice in research.

Once participants have been mentioned from the snowball sample mentioned above, contact will be made through email to recruit them to the project. Once participants have agreed to help, a semi-structured interview process will begin. This will start with the participants engaging in a written activity to prepare them to think about their mentoring relationships. Next, interviews will occur with the women in order to gain information about how they perceive mentoring in their lives. The researcher plans to have two or three conversations with each woman. These interviews will occur in person when possible, otherwise they will be conducted over the phone. All interviews will be tape recorded, though confidentiality will be assured as far as possible. There will also be email contact with the participants.

If original participants feel comfortable in allowing me to contact their mentors, and their mentors agree to participate, the researcher will arrange an interview with the mentor. Again, these will be conducted in person if possible, or by phone. The interviews will be tape recorded, and again email contact is likely.

In addition to the data that is collected through personal interactions and interviews with the original participants, the researcher would also like to use an aspect of ethnographic research and photograph objects that they identify as having meaning to their mentoring relationships. Humans, particularly women, often place meaning on objects, and allowing them to include and describe how an object is significant to a mentoring relationship will allow for a fuller picture of the relationship, thus adding depth to the data. In addition, speaking with the women who the original participants identify as mentors will enable the researcher to incorporate more data into a comprehensive picture of each participant.

The original participants will be asked to spend at least an hour with the researcher in interviews, though more would be preferred, and will be notified that the conversations may take place over the time span of three months, in hopes that continual interaction between the researcher and participant will allow for a greater depth of detail and richer data for analysis. The mentor participants will be asked for one hour long interview.

The combined collection of this data should enable the researcher to analyze and construct an essence of what the mentoring relationship means to female student affairs administrators. The intent of the researcher is to ensure the rigor of the findings through

triangulation of research, validating the trustworthiness of the data analysis, and working to produce meaning from the findings.

A timeline for the research follows:
- (end of September through October, 2004) IRB application process will occur for feedback and approval
- (November, 2004) The recruitment of the original six to ten participants will occur through snowball sampling. Those who agree to participate will be notified of the time commitment, asked to review the informed consent document, and discuss her understanding of the project. Each participant will sign her copy if she decides to participate, and will understand that her commitment is voluntary, she may decide to leave the study at any time, she may decline to answer any or all questions, and that her confidentiality will be maintained.
- (November, 2004-January 2005) Written logs from each participant, dialogues with each person, and photographs of meaningful objects will be collected as data for the study. At this time, conversations with the mentor participants will also occur. Each mentor participant will also sign her copy of the informed consent document, and will understand that her commitment is voluntary, she may decide to leave the study at any time, she may decline to answer any or all questions, and that her confidentiality will be maintained. Data collection and analysis will be ongoing throughout this time by the researcher.
- (January-April, 2005) Final data will be collected and analyzed by the researcher. Final publications and presentations will be written and presented.
- (May, 2005) Final copy of the thesis will be submitted to Oregon State University

There will be no formal survey for this study. The written part of the research collected will be open-response to the prompt: Reflect on your mentoring relationsip(s) with other women. How have they been important to you?

Questions for the interviews will be in response to each individual's answers. However, the ideas the researcher would like to find out more about are:
1. Have women been good mentors for you?
2. Have mentors played a role in your success?
3. How would you describe your mentoring relationship? Would it be different with a male mentor?
4. How have your mentors helped you?
5. How could mentoring be institutionalized? Should it be institutionalized?

For the interviews conducted with those identified as mentors, the open-response prompt will remain the same. Again, questions for the interviews will be in response to each individual's answers. From the mentors, the researcher would like to find out more about:
1. If and how do you see yourself as a mentor?
2. How did the relationship between you and the mentee form and grow?
3. What do you perceive to be important about being a mentor?
4. How do you know if you were effective?

5. How do you think mentoring can help women become successful?

4. Risks

Since participants will be asked to reflect on personal relationships, they may recall some problematic situations from the past. However, since mentoring relationships are generally defined as positive, it is expected that risks will be minimal.

5. Benefits

Participants will be encouraged to review the findings and take an active role in this research. As such, they may come to better understandings of their own mentoring relationships. Also, this research will better equip student affairs and higher education professionals to think about mentoring as a way to help women succeed in these fields.

6. Compensations

There will be no compensation offered for participating in this study.

7. Informed Consent Process

Each participant will be sent an informed consent document (see attached) and will be asked to review and sign the document. It will be reviewed with each participant to ensure she understands the content.

8. Anonymity or Confidentiality

Since this is very personal research, conducted with women in high positions throughout the country, the identity of each participant will not be revealed in the publications or presentations of the research. Though women will be found through the snowball sampling technique, enough names will be collected that the providers will not know who actually agrees to serve as a participant. Each participant will be asked to create a pseudonym that will be used in transcripts and all written and oral presentations of the study. In addition, other identifying factors, such as school, school size, and school location will be disguised or admitted so that confidentiality can be maintained. Each participant will be allowed to review her own transcripts for content clarity and confirmation, and she will be able to omit any information that she may feel could compromise her confidentiality. The interviews will be tape-recorded, but only the transcriber and researcher will listen to the tapes. All tapes will be kept locked up by the researcher when not being transcribed or otherwise used for analysis. All tapes, transcripts, email conversations, and written documents will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project.

9. Attachments

Attachment A: Recruitment materials

Attachment B: Informed Consent Document for original participants
Attachment C: Informed Consent Document for mentor participants

References

Blackhurst, A. (2000). Effects of Mentoring on the Employment Experiences and Career Satisfaction of Women Student Affairs Administrators. *NASPA Journal, 37*, 573-586.

Creswell, J.C. (1998). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Duff, C. (1999). *Learning from Other Women: How to Benefit from the Knowledge, Wisdom, and Experience of Female Mentors.* New York: American Management Association.

Gardiner, M.E., Enomoto, E. & Grogan, M. (2000). *Coloring Outside the Lines: Mentoring Women into School Leadership.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological Research Methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

APPENDIX B

Recruitment Materials

The following script will be read or emailed to potential original participants for this study.

Researcher:

"My name is Amanda Wittman, and I am a Master's student at Oregon State University. I will be conducting my thesis research on the impact that mentoring has had on successful female student affairs professionals. Your name was given to me by a colleague as someone who might be willing and able to help with this study.

My research is a qualitative study, designed to get at the meaning you place on your lived experience as someone who was mentored. You would be asked to write an open-ended response to a prompt about mentoring, participate in 2-3 conversations with me, and hopefully provide some photographic evidence of your mentoring relationship over the next 3 months. If possible, I would also like permission to contact your mentor and dialogue with her about your relationship. All of our conversations will be audio taped, but your confidentiality will be assured as much as possible.

You will be provided with the option to review your own transcripts for the purposes of clarity and confirmation and so that you may omit any information that you feel may compromise your confidentiality. I want to encourage you to take an active role in this research. I hope it will provide new knowledge for both of us.

If you have time and inclination, I hope you will consider participating. This will be innovative research on the topic of how women succeed in student affairs. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you"

The following script will be read or emailed to potential secondary participants, those who have been identified as mentors.

Researcher:

"My name is Amanda Wittman, and I am a Master's student at Oregon State University. I will be conducting my thesis research on the impact that mentoring has had on successful female student affairs professionals. Your name was given to me by a colleague as someone who might be willing and able to help with this study.

My research is a qualitative study, designed to get at the meaning female senior student affairs administrators place on their lived experiences as someone who was mentored. You have been identified as a mentor by one of my original participants, and I would like to hear your perspective about being in that mentoring relationship. You would be asked to write an open-ended response to a prompt about mentoring and participate in an hour long conversation with me. Our conversation would be audio taped, but your confidentiality will be assured as much as possible.

You will be provided with the option to review your own transcripts for the purposes of clarity and confirmation and so that you may omit any information that you feel may compromise your confidentiality. I want to encourage you to take an active role in this research. I hope it will provide new knowledge for both of us.

If you have time and inclination, I hope you will consider participating. This will be innovative research on the topic of how women succeed in student affairs. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you"

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent Documents

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT FOR ORIGINAL PARTICIPANTS

Project Title: **Making Meaning from Mentoring: How Female Student Affairs
                Professionals Experience Mentoring**
Principal Investigator: **Jessica White, College Student Services Administration**
Student Investigator: **Amanda Wittman, College Student Services Administration**

PURPOSE

This is a research study. The purpose of this research study is to begin to look into how mentoring has helped females in student affairs succeed in administrative positions. This research project looks to investigate, in a qualitative way, how successful female student affairs professionals engage with mentors, specifically other women, throughout their lives. The aim is to examine women's experiences as they relate them and find connecting threads of the impact of mentoring.

Data collected from this research will be used to expound on mentoring programs currently set up in student affairs and higher education. It will help inform professionals in these areas on ways that mentoring can be effectively used to cultivate new female professionals. Publications and presentations will be developed to disseminate the knowledge found during this project.

The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether to be in the study or not. Please read the form carefully. You may ask any questions about the research, what you will be asked to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear. When all of your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in this study or not. This process is called "informed consent". You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

I am inviting you to participate in this research study because:
- you are a female student affairs professional
- you see yourself as active in college student affairs and are dedicated to the fundamental philosophies of the student affairs profession
- you serve or have recently (within the past year) served as Dean or higher
- you identify as currently being involved with or have been involved in a mentoring relationship with another woman, or you identify as never having had a mentor,
- you are able to give articulate and thoughtful responses to questions, and generate new ideas,
- you are willing to collaborate and be actively involved in the study

PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate, your involvement will last for at least one hour, and may last longer, depending on the length of interviews, and the time you take to write a response to an open-ended question, and photograph an object of meaning.

The following procedures are involved in this study.

- (November, 2004) The recruitment of the original six to ten participants will occur through snowball sampling. Those who agree to participate will be notified of the time commitment, asked to review the informed consent document, and discuss her understanding of the project. Each participant will sign her copy if she decides to participate, and will understand that her commitment is voluntary, she may decide to leave the study at any time, she may decline to answer any or all questions, and that her confidentiality will be maintained.
- (December, 2004-February 2005) Written logs from each participant, dialogues with each person, and photographs of meaningful objects will be collected as data for the study. At this time, participants will also be asked to identify female mentor(s), and the researcher will attempt to contact these mentor(s) so that further data can be collected about the mentoring process. Each mentor participant will also sign her copy of the informed consent document, and will understand that her commitment is voluntary, she may decide to leave the study at any time, she may decline to answer any or all questions, and that her confidentiality will be maintained. Data collection and analysis will be ongoing throughout this time by the researcher.
- (January-April, 2005) Final data will be collected and analyzed by the researcher. Final publications and presentations will be written and presented.
- (May, 2005) Final copy of the thesis will be submitted to Oregon State University

RISKS

The possible risks associated with participating in this research project are as follows. Since participants will be asked to reflect on personal relationships, they may recall some problematic situations from the past. However, since mentoring relationships are generally defined as positive, it is expected that risks will be minimal.

BENEFITS

The potential personal benefits that may occur as a result of your participation in this study are that participants will be encouraged to review the findings and take an active role in this research. As such, they may come to better understandings of their own mentoring relationships. The researcher anticipates that society may benefit from this study because this research will better equip student affairs and higher education professionals to think about mentoring as a way to help women succeed in these fields

COSTS AND COMPENSATION

You will not be compensated for participating in this research project.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Records of participation in this research project will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. However, federal government regulatory agencies and the Oregon State University Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies involving human subjects) may inspect and copy records pertaining to this research. It is possible that these records could contain information that personally identifies you.

In the event of any report or publication from this study, your identity will not be disclosed. Results will be reported in a summarized manner in such a way that you cannot be identified.

AUDIO OR VISUAL RECORDING

By initialing in the space provided, you verify that you have been told that audio recordings will be generated during the course of this study. Tape-recordings are made for convenience and to ensure accuracy. However, only the researcher and transcribers will listen to the tapes. Though participants will be referred to by name on the tapes, each participant will be asked to create a pseudonym that will be used in all written and oral presentations of the study. The interviews will be tape-recorded, but only the transcriber and researcher will listen to the tapes. All tapes will be kept locked up by the researcher when not being transcribed or otherwise used for analysis. All tapes will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project.

_____ Participant's initials

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Taking part in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you agree to participate in this study, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to take part, or if you stop participating at any time, your decision will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you may otherwise be entitled. Any data which was collected prior to your withdrawal will be destroyed and not included in the study.

QUESTIONS

Questions are encouraged. If you have any questions about this research project, please contact: Amanda Wittman, 541-908-2503, wittmana@wou.edu or Dr. Jessica White, 541-737-8576, Jessica.white@oregonstate.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a

participant, please contact the Oregon State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Human Protections Administrator, at (541) 737-3437 or by e-mail at IRB@oregonstate.edu.

Your signature indicates that this research study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in this study. You will receive a copy of this form.

Participant's Name (printed): _____

_____   _____
(Signature of Participant)   (Date)

RESEARCHER STATEMENT

I have discussed the above points with the participant or, where appropriate, with the participant's legally authorized representative, using a translator when necessary. It is my opinion that the participant understands the risks, benefits, and procedures involved with participation in this research study.

_____   _____
(Signature of Researcher)   (Date)

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT FOR MENTOR PARTICIPANTS

Project Title: **Making Meaning from Mentoring: How Female Student Affairs
                 Professionals Experience Mentoring**
Principal Investigator: **Jessica White, College Student Services Administration**
Student Investigator: **Amanda Wittman, College Student Services Administration**

PURPOSE

This is a research study. The purpose of this research study is to begin to look into how
mentoring has helped females in student affairs succeed in administrative positions. This
research project looks to investigate, in a qualitative way, how successful female student
affairs professionals engage with mentors, specifically other women, throughout their
lives. The aim is to examine women's experiences as they relate them and find
connecting threads of the impact of mentoring.

Data collected from this research will be used to expound on mentoring programs
currently set up in student affairs and higher education. It will help inform professionals
in these areas on ways that mentoring can be effectively used to cultivate new female
professionals. Publications and presentations will be developed to disseminate the
knowledge found during this project.

The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you
decide whether to be in the study or not. Please read the form carefully. You may ask any
questions about the research, what you will be asked to do, the possible risks and benefits,
your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear.
When all of your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in this
study or not. This process is called "informed consent". You will be given a copy of this
form for your records.

I am inviting you to participate in this research study because:
- you have been identified as a female mentor who is willing to participate with
  openness about your relationship with your mentee
- are able to give articulate and thoughtful responses to questions, and generate new
  ideas
- you are willing to collaborate and be actively involved in the study.

PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate, your involvement will consist of an hour long interview that will
be tape recorded. However, your confidentiality is assured, as detailed below.

The following procedures are involved in this study.

- (November, 2004) The recruitment of the original six to ten participants will
  occur through snowball sampling.

- (December, 2004-February 2005) Each original participant will be asked to identify those women who have served as mentors to her. The researcher will attempt to contact the mentor participant group and ask if they are willing to participate through an hour long interview with the researcher. If a mentor participant agrees, she will sign her copy of the informed consent document, and will understand that her commitment is voluntary, she may decide to leave the study at any time, she may decline to answer any or all questions, and that her confidentiality will be maintained. Data collection and analysis will be ongoing throughout this time by the researcher.
- (January-April, 2005) Final data will be collected and analyzed by the researcher. Final publications and presentations will be written and presented.
- (May, 2005) Final copy of the thesis will be submitted to Oregon State University

RISKS

The possible risks associated with participating in this research project are as follows. Since participants will be asked to reflect on personal relationships, they may recall some problematic situations from the past. However, since mentoring relationships are generally defined as positive, it is expected that risks will be minimal.

BENEFITS

The potential personal benefits that may occur as a result of your participation in this study are that participants will be encouraged to review the findings and take an active role in this research. As such, they may come to better understandings of their own mentoring relationships. The researcher anticipates that society may benefit from this study because this research will better equip student affairs and higher education professionals to think about mentoring as a way to help women succeed in these fields

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In the event of any report or publication from this study, your identity will not be disclosed. Results will be reported in a summarized manner in such a way that you cannot be identified.

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_____ Participant's initials

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Taking part in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you agree to participate in this study, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to take part, or if you stop participating at any time, your decision will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you may otherwise be entitled. Any data which was collected prior to your withdrawal will be destroyed and not included in the study.

QUESTIONS

Questions are encouraged. If you have any questions about this research project, please contact: Amanda Wittman, 541-908-2503, wittmana@wou.edu or Dr. Jessica White, 541-737-8576, Jessica.white@oregonstate.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, please contact the Oregon State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Human Protections Administrator, at (541) 737-3437 or by e-mail at IRB@oregonstate.edu.

Your signature indicates that this research study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in this study. You will receive a copy of this form.

Participant's Name (printed): _____

_____   _____
(Signature of Participant)   (Date)

RESEARCHER STATEMENT

I have discussed the above points with the participant or, where appropriate, with the participant's legally authorized representative, using a translator when necessary. It is my opinion that the participant understands the risks, benefits, and procedures involved with participation in this research study.

_____   _____
(Signature of Researcher)   (Date)