Educational Administration: Theses, Dissertations, and Student Research

Educational Administration, Department of

4-21-2014

Doctoral Program Specialists in the Big Ten Conference

Eva Burns Bachman

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, ebachman1@unl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cehsedaddiss

Part of the Higher Education Administration Commons

Doctoral Program Specialists in the Big Ten Conference

by

Eva Burns Bachman

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Major: Educational Studies

(Educational Leadership and Higher Education)

Under the Supervision of Professor Marilyn Grady

Lincoln, Nebraska

May, 2014

Doctoral Program Specialists in the Big Ten Conference

Eva Burns Bachman, Ph.D.

University of Nebraska, 2014

Advisor: Marilyn Grady

An increase in non-academic personnel in higher education institutions has led to the development of specialized roles for staff members. One of these roles is the doctoral program specialist.

The purpose of the study was to explore the role of doctoral program specialists in the universities of the Big Ten conference in the U.S.

The study focused on a) the work of doctoral program specialists; b) their relationships with members of the university community involved in graduate education; and c) how the administration and work expectations have changed during the past five years. Role theory provided the theoretical framework for understanding how staff fit within the larger institutional setting.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with twenty individuals at eleven Big Ten institutions. Participants, individually or in small groups, described their positions and responsibilities. Themes that emerged from the findings were: change, work interactions, policy, and role identification.

Participants described changes in their work processes, personnel and responsibilities. Work interactions designed to support students included collaborations with administrative offices and academic departments. Work interactions with students were referred to as support and advocacy. Their work was guided by policies and the

institutions' governing boards. The participants defined their roles as being a problem-solver, a middle man or anonymous.

The findings of the study may be useful in preparing individuals for roles as doctoral program specialists and in professional development activities for these specialists

Dedication

This is dedicated to the memory of my grandmother, Velma Eva Grames, from whose name mine is derived and whose encouragement started me on this journey. Thanks for buying the books, Grandma!

It is also dedicated to my granddaughter, Maya. It doesn't matter when in life you have a dream, you can do anything you set your mind and heart to accomplish. Thanks for the hugs!

Lastly, it is dedicated to all the students who have entered my office on their journey and discovered mine. Thanks for the encouragement!

Acknowledgements

A big thank you goes to:

- Dr. Marilyn Grady and Dr. Barbara LaCost who provided encouragement, guidance and a chance to succeed with my education.

- The staff members from institutions in the Big Ten Conference who allowed me to take their valuable time during their busy days to learn more about their positions and work.

- The Graduate Studies staff at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln who picked up the slack while I was on the road doing the interviews.

- Those family and friends who offered room and board during the travels to the universities in their area. Thank you to Doug and Becky Anthony, John and Linda Tillotson, Lester and Lisa Grames, and Dr. Sarah Hall.

- My dissertation writing group, Moon Yue, Aundria Green, friends, and colleagues who helped me stay sane during the writing and editing of this document.

- My husband, Shawn, daughters, Eliza and Cassandra, and the extended family who gave up time with me and took on additional responsibilities to help get me through.

- Last, but not least, my mom, who like her mother, encouraged me, and went along for the ride on all of my interview trips.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Appendices

Chapter 1

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of doctoral program specialists within universities of the Big Ten Conference (Big Ten) in the United States.

Higher Education Administration

The culture of higher education is unique and complex. The administrative structure is distinctive to colleges and universities because no one, including academic staff and administrators, has total authority (Kuo, 2009). The American Council on Education (2004) suggests that administrative staff members are located across university structures with an increasing presence.

Because most of the student population at colleges and universities are undergraduates, the primary focus has been on serving students seeking bachelor's degrees. However, the roles within administration have significantly changed since the early 1990s due to increased awareness of graduate student needs and changes in focus on external support (Altbach, 2011; Gornitzka & Larsen, 2004; Hancock & Hellawell, 2003; Leicht & Fennell, 2008; Mills, 2012; Musselin, 2007). The diversification of the graduate student population, rate of non-completion, and graduate student development needs have driven a review of processes and support needs for graduate students (Gardner, 2009a; Lovitts, 2001; Walker, Golde, Jones, Bueschel, & Hutchings, 2008). Funding decreases and paradigm shifts within administration have caused a shift in the staffing for universities and affected the norms of the academic profession, as well as the

functions of the institution (Musselin, 2007; Robbins, 2013). The roles for faculty have become, in part, inclusive of fundraising in both the private and public sectors in order to sustain research (Musselin, 2007; Robbins, 2013).

Although the focus in the literature has been primarily on faculty, Anderson found other "constituencies" within the institution (2005, p. 41). Faculty responsibilities, once divided into two categories of teaching and research, now consist of activities that require more involvement in support of the university's broader mission (Musselin, 2007; Szekeres, 2006). The increased demands on faculty time to write grants and develop contracts along with focusing on new technology use in the classroom have prompted a diversification of tasks requiring additional staff (Musselin, 2007; Rich, 2006).

Consequences of the diversification of tasks caused specialization within roles for both faculty and staff in the higher education institutions (Musselin, 2007; Robbins, 2013). The mission of higher education institutions, especially for research-oriented programs, has shifted from internal-based influences to external motivators (Bary, 2013; Ikenberry, 2004; Robbins, 2013). This has caused increasing uncertainty about how the defined roles play a part in the mission (Musselin, 2007). According to Bennis and Nanus (2007), individuals are able to determine their roles within an organization if that organization has a clear sense of its purpose, direction, and future, which is widely shared. The individuals involved need to believe they can make a difference.

According to Max Weber (1947), an internal differentiation of roles based on authority is the distinguishing characteristic of the corporate body. In a sense, this derives from the "very nature of the orientation of coordinated action to an 'order'; the terms of

the order must be carried out and enforced, which in turn requires a responsible agency of administration and enforcement" (Weber, 1947, p. 56). As the administration within universities grew, duplicate administrative roles emerged. Merton (1968) developed role-set theory to further define the interactions and expectations of staff who are employed in comparable positions within an organization. His theory stated that the division of labor in society takes the form of interaction among heterogeneous specialized positions, which he calls roles. Many roles are imbedded within social systems allowing role concepts to be used for the analysis of complex organizations and other social forms (Biddle, 1979). Biddle (1979) further clarified positions as identities used when two or more people share one or more of the defined characteristics within a defined structural position stipulated by a defined social structure.

Administrative staff members are found from the highest administrative office to individual faculty offices, with a diverse range of work (Szekeres, 2006). Positions are divided between managerial professional and clerical rankings and can include titles such as director, researcher, specialists and advisor for similar positions (Chock, 2008). The roles filled by the non-academic support staff are further divided into technical or administrative staff. Positions are delineated even more by separating the administrative staff into two distinct categories of clerical and professional administrative lines (Gornitzka & Larsen, 2004). The broad variation of position titles and responsibilities made it difficult to categorize doctoral program specialists as one homogenous group but that does not mean the work roles are not important (Chock, 2008).

The growth in non-academic staff during the past twenty years was within non-faculty positions and involved a variety of specialist positions (Leicht & Fennell, 2008; Musselin, 2007; Rhoades & Maitland, 1998). About 60% of the employees in higher education are support staff (Chock, 2008; Szekeres, 2006). Apart from studies that address cost effectiveness in higher education, little research involving administrative personnel appears in the literature, media or research (Chock, 2008; Johnsrud, 2003; Rhoades & Maitland, 1998; Szekeres, 2006). Research has focused on the dichotomous groups of "faculty and staff" or "faculty and administration," which limited the focus to only those groups while discouraging consideration of other employee groups (Chock, 2008; Kezar, 2005; Szekeres, 2006). Some authors pointed to a faculty versus administrative staff mindset that placed one role against the other, while others viewed the administrative staff as the link between the two groups which cannot be ignored (Bensimon, 2007; Eaton, 2006; Gornitzka & Larsen, 2004; Hancock & Hellawell, 2003; Whitchurch, 2009).

Data reported by the American Council on Education (2004) and the National Education Association Higher Educational Research Center (2003) indicate that managerial professionals have experienced the most growth in their ranks since the early 1990s. In order to understand the important developments within the administrative side of universities, it is necessary to understand the nature and functions of the organization (Gornitzka & Larsen, 2004; Tierney, 1999). Some within higher education view the growth of non-academic administrators as a "leaning tower" (Leicht & Fennell, 2008, p. 89) which has gained increasing control of university life. Support staff professionals'

significant role in student improvement and success cannot be ignored in the institution's goals (Bensimon, 2007). Johnsrud (2003) stated that many are given broad responsibility in their roles with little authority. Non-academic staff members are seen as a residual portion of the employees who are responsible for the functioning of academic institutions (Gornitzka & Larsen, 2004).

Graduate School

An integral part of graduate education is to provide future societal leaders (Council of Graduate Schools, 2004). In 2008, more than1.75 million graduate students attended college in the United States. Twenty-four percent of those students were seeking doctoral degrees (Council of Graduate Schools, 2008). The interaction between students and staff impacts their experiences while at college and may affect their completion rate. Studies addressed issues that impact doctoral education related to completion rates ranging from departmental factors to mentoring (Barbuto, Story, Fritz, & Schinstock, 2011; Church, 2009; de Valero, 2001; Gardner, 2009b). There has been little discussion of the institution's administrative personnel and their relationship with graduate students or how they impact the doctoral education experience (DiPierro, 2007; Szekeres, 2006).

Graduate School administrative offices function in multiple roles as recruiters, admissions processors, retention staff, and as a resource for student development. In each of these roles, the Graduate School assists departments to guide their graduate students to a successful completion by providing clarification about the regulations and processes as well as oversight in the students' progress toward their degree (Council of Graduate Schools, 2004; Nerad, 2009).

Because this study addresses the role of non-academic staff and their interaction with the university, graduate school, and students, the influence of graduate deans cannot be ignored. When job classifications are reviewed, the graduate deans are identified as non-academic staff because, even though they may hold a faculty position within an academic program, their primary function is not as faculty members. They must also be classified in the upper administration of the institutions because they are in positions that guide faculty actions. For this study, graduate deans are not included in non-academic staff, but rather upper administration.

Graduate deans are uniquely positioned to shape university-wide practices and policies that affect many aspects of student life from grievances to student development (Elgar & Klein, 2004). Graduate school regulations, guidelines, and structures are often alien and unknown processes to graduate students (Lovitts, 2001). Faculty and staff interpretations and development of graduate school policies or procedures impact student success (Cohen, 2007). Perceptions of the graduate school by student and faculty are based on their experiences with the graduate office.

A Council of Graduate Schools survey conducted in 2012 identified the "pressing issues" of graduate deans who were members of the Council of Graduate Schools (Council of Graduate Schools, 2012). Recruitment, admissions and enrollment topped the list followed by graduate student financial support. Included in the top five issues were program financing, budget, and student support services. General management and administration issues were ranked as the fourth highest (Council of Graduate Schools, 2012). Among the concerns noted by CGS within this category were implementing new

technology, changes to policies and procedures, and the structure of the graduate school (Council of Graduate Schools, 2012).

Influences affecting student attrition are visible, yet the pressures of administrative procedures that are incorporated into the program are not observed (McAlpine & Norton, 2006). Misinformation about administrative procedures may impact student retention. Negative perceptions are formed by students from experiences and misinformation from diverse sources (Golde & Dore, 2001). Changes to policies and procedures directly affect the work of doctoral program specialists as they guide students through Graduate School administrative requirements. Policy changes also affect interactions with other administrative offices across campus.

Staff members who guide doctoral students through graduate school processes are those classified in positions of records managers, academic advisors and program specialists. There is not a standard, unique job category for them. Depending on the institution, doctoral program specialists can be found at the professional administrative (graduate school) or clerical level (program/department). For this study, these staff members will be referred to as "doctoral program specialists." They are distinguished from faculty advisors and records and registration staff. The tasks performed by doctoral program specialists are diverse.

The middle manager has a particular role as the pivot between the more strategic interests of senior management and the specific knowledge of the front-line managers and employees (Clegg & McAuley, 2005). Middle managers are understood to be repositories of organizational knowledge and exercise gentle control through the organizational

wisdom (Clegg & McAuley, 2005). Hancock and Hellawell (2003) present middle management as a crucial role for ensuring connections with the "clientele" the institution serves. This may be viewed as a large portion of the job description for doctoral program specialists because they guide doctoral students in completing the milestones marking progress toward their degrees.

Doctoral Program Specialist is a title assigned to the group of staff members who may occupy the office/service level if they are located within a department or they may be considered managerial/professional level if within higher administrative offices. The duties of the program specialist in a graduate school setting include tasks such as monitoring graduate student progress to ensure that graduate school requirements are met, processing milestone forms, and clearing students for graduation. Other duties may be assigned as well.

Alstete (1995) proposed that "benchmarking is the process by which institutions study other institutions for best practices and comparison to set goals for improving their institutional performance" (as cited in Kezar, 2005). We can develop a deeper understanding of the complexity of issues by looking at how graduate school professional staff who are employed in similar positions within the Big Ten conference.

This study explored the role of doctoral program specialists within the Big Ten conference of universities in the United States. It enabled us to better understand and describe the situations each participant experienced.

Research Problem

The focus of a Graduate School lies in three areas – recruitment, retention and development of graduate students. Graduate School administration has continued to evolve in all areas. The emphasis on retention at the graduate program level has included working with program attempts to boost completion rates by offering support and development services that may not be available at the department level (Ehrenberg, Jakubson, Groen, So, & Price, 2007; Golde, 2005; Lovitts, 2001). Doctoral program specialists are involved in retention efforts through their work with departments, faculty, and students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of doctoral program specialists within the Big Ten conference of universities in the United States.

Doctoral program specialists commented on the roles and changes to their work at the university. Interview questions were focused on: (a) the work of doctoral program specialists; (b) their relationships with members of the university community involved in graduate education (faculty, doctoral students, department staff); and (c) how the administration and work expectations have changed during the past 5 years. Role theory provided the theoretical framework for understanding how staff fit within the larger institutional setting.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study provide insight into the role of the "doctoral program specialist." Exploring the roles of doctoral program specialists and their professional

relationships with colleagues, faculty and graduate students provides a view of their unique position. Best practices in the programmatic oversight of doctoral education are suggested by the findings of the study.

The findings of the study fill a gap in the research literature about graduate level administrative program support staff and their roles within the university.

Summary

In every system there are checks and balances. For graduate students, the initial guidance comes from their faculty mentor and department staff. Each institution has a unique structure for ensuring the university standards for degree completion have been met. These standards are reviewed by doctoral program specialists whose professional relationship is enveloped within the institutional system under the Graduate School umbrella for service to graduate students. Although it is important to assess doctoral education through the eyes of the doctoral student (Golde & Dore, 2001) and the faculty mentors (Paglis, Green, & Bauer, 2006), there is a need to look at the role of the doctoral program specialists in order to identify factors that contribute to the success or impediments experienced by the students who are served. The administrative roles of doctoral program specialists in Graduate Schools and the interactions within those roles were the focus of this study.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

In any organization, there are roles that help define the work and promote productivity (Biddle, 1979, Merton, 1968; Weber, 1947). Although each role is important, leadership roles are discussed more often in the literature than support roles are. There are many reasons why this occurs. One explanation may be the perceived importance of the positions versus the invisibility of the staff.

Several theories help define the roles that exist in organizations. Role theory and role interaction definitions based on the work of Max Weber (1947) have been extended through the work of Biddle (1979) and Merton (1968). Their work is important to understand the nature of organizations.

Theoretical Background

Weber (1947) defined social and economic organizations into three distinct characteristics: rational-legal, traditional and charismatic. Rational-legal characteristics consist of a body of generalized rules that are consistent and theoretically pertain to all possible 'cases' of conduct within the organization. It takes the form of a bureaucratic structure in which a staff member occupies an office with specific delineated powers. The different offices are organized in a hierarchy of higher and lower levels of authority. The lower level is subject to control and supervision by the one immediately above it in the hierarchy. The second characteristic is traditional. Its structures are treated as binding and preexisting. They contain concrete rules governing the conduct of the members. A traditional system's underlying order of authority always defines a system of people who

can, by their status, legitimately exercise authority. Weber's third characteristic, charismatic, defines organizations as set up specifically in conflict with the bases of legitimacy of an established, fully institutionalized order. Its leadership quality is proved by being recognized as genuine by followers of those in the leadership roles and is generally thought of as a non-stable form of governance. Through the basis of one of the three, an organization's functions are fulfilled (Weber, 1947).

Role theory includes the three inter-related concepts of characteristic social behavior and patterns, identities that may be assumed by participants, and behavioral scripts understood by all (Biddle, 1986). The two factors of role perception and enactment enable the formation and manifestation of the role (Kipper, 1991). Role theorists suggest that expectations generate the roles, are learned through experience and people are aware of the expectations held for specific roles (Biddle, 1986; Kipper, 1991). Every role has a finite duration. Changes or challenges cause roles to shift which may be affected by the value of that role placed on it by the role taker (Kipper, 1991).

Functional role theory focuses on "characteristic behaviors of people who occupy positions within a stable social system" (Biddle, 1986, p. 67). Within functional role theory, roles are shared, normative expectations that explain and "prescribe" these behaviors (Biddle, 1986). Organizational roles are identified with social positions that are preplanned, hierarchical and task-oriented within systems (Biddle, 1986). According to Biddle, "in general, a social position is an identity that designates a commonly recognized set of persons" (Biddle, 1979, p. 6). Biddle noted that many roles are imbedded within social systems and stated that role concepts may be used to analyze

complex organizations and other social forms (1979). As a society, we associate roles with social positions or statuses. Under this concept, the idea that social positions should have roles is a powerful one. Some behaviors are associated with groups of persons, rather than with the entire society or with persons as individuals. Persons who share roles are likely to share a common identity. One explanation is that roles are induced through the sharing of expectations for role behavior and, as a consequence, roles are maintained because of the sense of accomplishment within that role (Biddle, 1979).

Merton's (1968) role-set theory describes the division of labor which forms interactions among like-specialized positions. Role-set theory, as posed by Merton, involves not a single associated role but an array of roles that imply a complement of social relationships may be involved simply because they "occupy" a particular social status (Merton, 1968, p. 42). It is within these roles that the behavior of the occupants within a specific status is oriented toward the "patterned expectations of others" (Merton, 1968, p. 41).

Higher Education Administration

Higher education administrative structures have changed throughout their institutional histories. Altbach (2011, p. 25) characterized the events that occurred in industrialized nations in the late twentieth century as a "managerial revolution" in higher education. The overall goal was to ensure accountability and efficiency in the management of academic institutions. The results were increased power of administrators and reduced faculty input (Altbach, 2011). Administrative restructuring is part of a much larger societal change where universities have to vie for resources (Rich, 2006). The key

challenge in universities and their individual departments is to balance the growth of

academic assets while assessing degree programs, resources and support services offered

and needed for a vital educational environment (Eaton, 2006; Gornitzka & Larsen, 2004;

Nyquist, 2002; Rich, 2006). Technological advances cause universities to re-assess their

recruitment and teaching strategies to make them more competitive. It also compels them

to review academic administration practices while continuing to support the core

challenges found in every university (Rich, 2006).

Leicht and Fennell (2008) argued that U.S. university environments rely less on

the traditional established organizational environment due to diverse and conflicting

pressures making claims on resources. The increase of administrative personnel is a

natural result of this phenomenon and has come at the expense of faculty size (Chock,

2008; Leicht & Fennel, 2008; Rhoades, 2001; Rich, 2006; Szekeres, 2006). The ratio of

administrators to faculty and, in conjunction, the administrative costs of instruction, has

increased. The largest growth in personnel has been in support professionals, nearly 10

times faster than that of faculty (Rhoades, 2001). Diversification of staff and

administration is not new and will continue to impact academic systems across the globe.

As the types of institutions have increased so has the academic system become more

stratified and will continue to in response to pressure for professional administration

(Altbach, 2011).

An existing contradiction remains for administrative staff who remain invisible in

the educational literature (Szekeres, 2004). They are absent from the literature while the

importance of their positions has increased as universities' operational needs and foci

have expanded (Szekeres, 2006). Rhoades (2001) noted that the increased number and expanded roles and responsibilities of professional staff resulted in greater administrative discretion and growing importance in university work. Organizational changes made the work of professional staff more central to the public university's mission. Higher education professionals are confronted with ethics and behavioral norms that are not universal (Bray, 2010). The administrative responsibilities evolution has led staff to believe the generic nature of their positions in their institutions or across institutional boundaries is an opportunity to define their roles (Bray, 2010; Kezar, 2012; Szekeres, 2006). Using the traditions and parameters existing within the administrative boundaries as the knowledge base they call on, work is accomplished, problems are defined and situations addressed (Bensimon, 2007).

Although doctoral program specialists are not generally considered "middle management", their roles may reflect aspects of middle management positions. They occupy a portion of the stratified groups which enact guidelines by higher governing bodies to meet the overall agenda of the university (Clegg & McAuley, 2005). Managerial/professional employees are those whose duties are primarily managerial or professional and who are exempt from the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (University of Nebraska, 2013a).

Kezar (2005) noted studies that demonstrated the effectiveness of training sessions for employees' performance and learning, yet many staff are deterred from taking advantage of staff development. Human resource offices become important for

faculty and staff development as well as other training groups on campuses that are often marginalized and have limited support in terms of funding and priority (Kezar, 2005).

Graduate School

Graduate schools are collections of staffing units that are charged with recruiting, admitting, assisting, specifically in regards to professional development, and graduating students who seek post-baccalaureate education. They are non-degree granting, non-academic colleges that serve the graduate population of their institution. The amount of staff and administrators in each graduate school depends on the services offered to the students and the size of the graduate student body as noted in Chapter 4.

The mandate for graduate schools is to assist students to the successful completion of their graduate degrees. Much has been written about graduate students' success and impediments to degree completion for doctoral students from the student and mentor perspective (Gardner, 2010; Golde, 2005; Lovitts, 2001; Rose, 2005; Tinto, 1993). The relationships of students within their departments (Gardner, 2010), the nature of the doctoral dissertation process (Lovitts, 2001) as well as student characteristics and their socialization to graduate school (Golde 2005; Tinto, 1993) have been reported. Rose (2005) and others discussed the impact of the mentoring relationship on student success (Paglis, Green and Bauer, 2006).

The doctoral student completion rate across programs was approximately 50% in 2008. This number indicated that there are still areas for potential improvement and support (Council of Graduate Schools, 2008). Findings from Gardner (2009a) and Rose (2005) indicated the relationship between the dissertation chair or advisor and the student

is critical to student success. Although this relationship between the student and mentor is key to successful completion, more support is needed beyond what they can provide. Fundamental to the transition from classroom work to doctoral dissertation completion is the development of networks and supportive institutional programs (DiPierro, 2007; West, Gokalp, Vallejo, Fischer, & Gupton, 2011).

Staffing

As more of the issues within the doctoral student experience have been identified, graduate school administrative offices have evolved into more than just records checking offices (Nyquist, 2002). They are not student affairs offices, but their retention efforts include student development and services directly purposed to assist graduate students in completing their programs and developing skills for the job market (Chock, 2008).

The graduate dean holds primary responsibility for the proper functioning of the graduate school and articulating the mission of the office. Some deans are responsible for graduate education as well as other higher administrative roles within the institution (Augustine, 2008).

Literature on the role of graduate deans and student retention and program quality exists (Augustine, 2008; Elgar & Klein, 2004). The graduate dean must be the one who has the vision for the graduate programs for the institution and work with departments to maintain high quality programs (Cohen, 2007). Bray (2010) defined academic deans' roles as the "linchpins of the universities as they become the middle managers of the institution where they must balance the culture of the administration with the culture of the faculty" (Bray, 2010, p. 285). This is accomplished in an environment with ever-

changing roles and needs within their positions (Bray, 2010). The graduate dean adds a layer to the bureaucracy by also connecting to the students, academic deans and upper-level administration.

A dean does not function alone in the graduate school. There is a deficit in the literature concerning graduate school support staff. The support services offered by the graduate school's staff members are essential to the work of the office. The evolution of graduate school administrative offices has caused roles to be redefined and work flow to be re-assessed to continue to meet the needs of graduate students (Chock, 2008). Each role within the school has a unique purpose to recruit and retain graduate students, yet the limited discussions about graduate schools restrict topics to those of the umbrella institutions, the key funding agencies, the departments, faculty or students (Kuo, 2009; Nyquist & Woodford, 2000).

Summary

Role theory was defined in the 1940s and expanded throughout the late 1970s. Because doctoral program specialists' roles within the graduate schools and the larger institution have been absent from the research literature, it is difficult to discern the nature of the specialist's role. The diversity in position titles and job descriptions among institutions, reflected in the brief job descriptions found on Big Ten institutions' websites, suggested the lack of uniformity within roles of these staff members. The purpose of this study was to explore the role of doctoral program specialists within the Big Ten Conference of universities in the United States.

Chapter 3

Research Methods

Qualitative research provides the opportunity to learn about individuals within an area of study relying on human perception and understanding (Stake, 2010). In a qualitative study, all voices are heard, not just those of the majority.

Hatch (2002) described the objects of study in qualitative research as "the lived experiences of real people in real settings" (p. 6). Creswell (2007) determined that qualitative researchers use an emerging approach to inquiry and data collection. The design includes "the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, and a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and it extends the literature or signals a call for action" (Creswell, 2007, p. 37).

A case study is a type of qualitative research involving a "bounded system" with the focus being either on a case or an issue that is explained by the case (Stake, 1995). The purpose of this study was to explore the role of doctoral program specialists within the Big Ten Conference of universities in the United States.

Researcher Bias

Creswell (2007) noted that personal views can never be kept separate from interpretations of data. It is important to "recognize the belief systems and biases of the researcher in order to minimize the effects they will have on the research" (Stake, 2010, p. 166). As a program specialist employed in a graduate administrative office at a university as well as a doctoral student, my experiences influence my research.

Because of my professional position and the fact that I personally interviewed doctoral program specialists, I am an ideal person to reflect upon and extract meaning from the data I collect. I acknowledge the following biases:

1. I am a program specialist who interacts daily with doctoral students and oversees the documentation of their progress toward their degree. My responsibility is to see that graduate administrative procedures are completed by doctoral students and their advisors or committees from appointment of supervisory committee through graduation.

2. Because of my professional position, rapport with participants may be established easily. I needed to carefully monitor my biases throughout the research process (Seidman, 2006).

Reflecting on the research using my work experiences and knowledge helped in the understanding of the data presented (Stake, 1995). Acknowledging my biases and personal interpretations through that process allowed me to keep the analysis process more objective.

Case Studies

The qualitative approach includes case study research in which the researcher "explores a bounded system" through in-depth data collection using multiple sources of data (Creswell, 2007). The boundaries for case studies may include time, space or interrelated parts that form a whole picture and are a way of understanding one case or issue, emphasizing the case itself (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995). Through observations, interviews, documents and reports the researcher describes the case and the themes

discovered. The boundaries of this case study were established because all interviews were conducted within a two-year period of time, 2012-2013, with institutions who are members of the Big Ten conference. A further boundary was established when participants were asked about changes within their position and office that occurred in the past five years so that it would reflect recent changes and not historical ones. A multi-site case study can be designed with the representation of a small sample as its basis (Stake, 1995). The stories from the interviews and information from the documents found on the web sites of the universities or given by participants helped develop a collective story about the work experiences of doctoral program specialists in the Big Ten universities (Creswell, 2007).

Sampling

Demographics. The Big Ten conference consists of twelve universities across the United States whose total student body populations as of the 2013 reporting period ranged from 17,072 at Northwestern to 63,964 at Ohio State (Northwestern, 2013; Ohio State, 2013)**.** Graduate and professional student populations within the Big Ten institutions were from 5,069 at Nebraska to 16,672 at the University of Minnesota (University of Minnesota, 2014; University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2014). The campuses were diverse. Three universities were housed on one campus. Another university had 26 campuses.

This dissertation focused on one campus in each system. These campuses were University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign, Indiana University (Bloomington), University of Iowa (Iowa City), Michigan State University (East Lansing), University of Michigan

(Ann Arbor), University of Minnesota (Twin Cities), Northwestern University

(Evanston), Ohio State University (Columbus), Pennsylvania State University (State

College), Purdue University (West Lafayette), University of Wisconsin-Madison. The

twelfth institution, University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), was my home institution and

was not included in the study. The University of Maryland and Rutgers were not included

in the study because they joined the Big Ten conference after my study was completed.

Sampling method. A purposeful sampling method was used to select participants

from the 11 institutions. I used each Big Ten institution's website and staff list to identify

potential participants. Contact was made with the identified staff members to verify that

they were the individuals who matched the criteria for participation in the study. If they

were not, I was referred to the staff member or members in positions with responsibilities

for doctoral program administrative oversight.

All participants met the specific study criteria. First, all participants were

employed in a doctoral program specialist equivalent position in a Big Ten conference

member institution. The institutions within the Big Ten have a wide range of programs,

staff members and doctoral students enrolled in their programs. Because of the

uniqueness of these institutions, each office provided a variety of perspectives on

doctoral program oversight.

Second, participants' positions included program oversight for the doctoral

students at the institutions. The focus was on the doctoral program specialist position.

The length of time for completion of the doctoral degree and the unique requirements for

the doctoral degree were of interest in the study. Two of the institutions referred me to

departments in the university outside of the graduate school because of doctoral program oversight was decentralized in these institutions. This provided additional perspectives to the study. Sixteen of the participants were also responsible for masters students' program oversight.

Twenty participants were interviewed. Seventeen were female. Five of these females were employed at the department level. One of the three male participants worked at the department level.

Ages of the participants were not sought. Years of experience in the program specialist position were provided by the participants during the interviews. The average for years of experience for all twenty participants was eleven years.

Table 1. Doctoral Program Specialist Years of Service

Gender	No. In Study	Shortest Service	Longest Service	Avg.Yrs.
Female	17	1	28	12
Male	3	2	13	7

Interviews

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of doctoral program specialists within the Big Ten Conference of universities in the United States.

I received permission from the Institutional Review Board to conduct the study. The staff member who met the study criteria was contacted via email to arrange an interview at a location convenient for them. Some participants sought the approval of their dean prior to participation. To protect anonymity, no identifying terms were added to any quotes included in the study.

Data collection. A description of the study was provided to participants when they were asked to participate. A letter of consent was given to each participant for signature prior to the interview. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions before the interviews were conducted.

Qualitative researchers collect data at the site where participants are in their "natural setting" (Creswell, 2007). The interviews were conducted at each of the individual institutions so that the participant or participants would feel comfortable. The participant's office or nearby conference room was used to provide privacy during the interview. This provided an opportunity to observe non-verbal cues, behavior and get a sense of the surroundings in which they worked.

Five of the interviews were conducted with two or more people present at the same time. Three of the institutions had more than one person interviewed, but the interviews were not conducted simultaneously.

Information about each institution is reported in Chapter Four. The information includes the size of the student population as well as the type of setting of the institution and its administrative structure. Prior to the interviews, the physical surroundings and setting for the work were noted.

Using Weber's (1947) definitions for roles within social and economic structures, semi-structured questions were developed to guide the interview procedure (see Appendix A). Weber found there were general rules to govern conduct and create hierarchy within an organization. The rules defined the expected and acceptable behavior

for those in the program specialist positions (Biddle, 1986). The questions were there to provoke ideas in a guided manner so that the interview remained focused (Stake, 1995).

The length of each interview was flexible so that the participants would feel free to participate as their schedules allowed. A handheld digital audio recorder was used to record the interviews. This allowed me to concentrate on the content of the interview as well as the context during the interview. I transcribed the audio recordings.

After introductions, the interview consisted of eight open-ended questions about responsibilities and roles within the respective offices. Through questions that provoked stories, I explored the descriptions of the position within the graduate school or the university. It was important to hear the stories. The interview closed by giving each participant an opportunity to make any closing remarks not addressed or that had been alluded to in the interview. The participant was encouraged to ask questions at any time during the interview. Each interview was approximately 60 minutes in duration. Rich, thick descriptions from participants' interviews were extracted to allow understanding of the settings and participants' views.

The study focused on: (a) the work of the doctoral program specialists; (b) their relationships with other members of the university community with particular emphasis on those involved in graduate education (faculty, doctoral students, department support staff); and (c) how the administration and work has changed during the past five years.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data was analyzed through an interpretive process which allowed for personal assessments (Creswell, 2007). I coded each transcript searching for phrases or

terms that were repeated throughout the interview. The themes emerged from these

phrases. Themes emerged as data was analyzed and coded (Creswell, 2007). The codes

were typed onto a separate text document and reviewed. The separate text document

allowed the identification of code duplications. I organized the data into significant

statements and identified and verified common themes (Stake, 1995). The themes were

used to discover the primary roles, work-related relationships and changes experienced

by the doctoral program specialists.

Validation

Validation means understanding "one's own understanding of the topic"

(Creswell, 2007, p. 206), those derived from other sources and the documenting of the

process**.** Member checking was used to validate the information gathered. The transcript

for each interview was given to the participants for verification of the content.

Participants were encouraged to add clarifications or other comments to the transcripts.

Triangulation was performed using the stories from the interviews, information located

on the institutions' website or documents provided by the participants at the time of the

interview.

Chapter 4

The Big Ten, College Campuses and Doctoral Program Specialists Vignettes

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of doctoral program specialists in the Big Ten Conference of universities in the United States. Using the web sites of each institution, I researched the Big Ten institutions' graduate staff and identified the participant from each campus.

After each participant was identified, I developed an interview schedule to visit all the campuses. For ease of access to the campuses and minimize travel time, the campuses were clustered into three different groups. A visit early in the day was scheduled for one campus per day to allow me to interview more than one individual, as was the case for two of the universities. The scheduling allowed me to be referred to another person or freedom to adjust schedules with the participant if I had the opportunity to do so. I gave each of the participants my contact information so they could adjust the time at the last minute if needed. For one of the interviews, this was the case. Travel time was included in each day.

At my invitation, my mother joined me on all of the trips for travel companionship, assistance in navigation – after learning how to read Google map printouts, driving relief, and the chance to debrief when each interview was over. Neither of us had been to 10 of the campuses previous to the interviews. We became very adept at navigating in new cities and finding buildings on campuses.

Mom accompanied me to the interview sites and waited, with her stitching, in an area convenient for us to meet after the interviews were completed. For nine of the

interviews, the available location was in department office waiting areas. For one interview, because of the lack of parking space, she waited in the car so she could move it if needed. For another, she stayed at the hotel's waiting area until I finished the interview and walked to meet her.

We were able to stay in homes of friends and relatives near six of the campuses which helped reduce the cost of the trips. I booked hotels close to the campuses for the rest of the visits to reduce travel time to the campus prior to the interviews.

The first trip in the Fall of 2012 included visits to the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the University of Minnesota, Northwestern University and the University of Iowa. The second trip in late May of 2013 included the University of Illinois-Champaign-Urbana, Indiana University, the University of Michigan and Michigan State University. The final trip, in the early summer of 2013, included visits to Purdue University, The Ohio State University and Pennsylvania State University.

It is important to know the context of the administrative and physical settings of the institutions in the Big Ten. The following descriptions are presented as an overview of the Big Ten Conference, the campuses and graduate school for each campus, and the program specialist staff.

The Big Ten Conference

The Big Ten Conference includes twelve academic institutions that share a common mission of research, graduate, professional and undergraduate teaching and public service (Big Ten Conference, 2013). Since 1958, the conference has provided

leadership in academics when it established the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (Committee on Institutional Cooperation, 2014).

The Big Ten institutions share practices and policies that prioritize academics and emphasize the strong values in all aspects of its student-athletes' lives. The Big Ten institutions, along with the University of Chicago, are members of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) (University of Nebraska, 2013b).

The CIC leverages personnel, facilities, ideas, and funding to help its member institutions compete and succeed. The consortium's focus is on a variety of issues important to all campuses including library collections, technology, development for faculty and staff, and course-sharing within the institutions (University of Nebraska, 2013b). The individual campuses function independently and collectively for the benefit of graduate students from all the institutions.

Campus and Graduate School Settings

Research on each of the institutions websites provided background for the physical settings for the interviews. The campus settings of the graduate schools were noted once I arrived on campus. Staffing descriptions were obtained from the graduate school websites for each institution or from the participants. Descriptions of the institutions visited, listed in order of my visits, follow: University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Minnesota, Northwestern University, University of Iowa, University of Illinois-Champaign-Urbana, Indiana University, the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, Purdue University, The Ohio State University and Pennsylvania State University.

The oldest of the campuses was founded in 1817 in Michigan (University of Michigan, 2014). The physical placement of most graduate offices was external to any academic college and not included with other non-related administrative offices. The offices were in older, sometimes repurposed buildings that spoke of the history of the campus. As is the case with older buildings, sometimes the location was not always the most accessible for students. Descriptions for the individual campuses are included here.

University of Wisconsin-Madison. University of Wisconsin-Madison's Graduate School offers more than 140 programs to a graduate and professional student population of approximately 12,000 students (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2014). The campus is in the second largest city in Wisconsin, Madison, with a population 240,213 (U.S. Census, 2013m). As is the case with most of the universities visited, the main office is in one of the older buildings on campus. The feel of the building is of a classic structure used to house multiple groups of offices. Part of the staff is housed in a neighboring building due to space limitations in the main building.

The University's Graduate School offers services in Admissions, Academic Assessment, Academic Services, Diversity Resources, Fellowships and Funding, Human Resources, Industrial Partnerships, Professional Development and Engagement, Research Services, Research Policy, and Research and Sponsored Programs. Because the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Graduate School is under the Vice Chancellor of Research who also is the Dean of the Graduate School, there is a unique organization to the office with many Associate and Assistant Deans on the "Administrative Team." There are 22 professional staff members to assist students and faculty (See Appendix D).

University of Minnesota (Twin Cities). The Graduate School at the University of Minnesota is located in the twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, a large two-city metropolis with a combined population of more than 677,600 people (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013g; 2013h). Approximately 17,000 graduate and professional students are enrolled in 150 programs (University of Minnesota, 2014). The Graduate Student Services and Progress staff members are housed in the basement of what appears to be an addition to an existing building. The office is included in an area called "One Stop" for all students, both graduate and undergraduate.

The Graduate School's Acting Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education is assisted by an Assistant Vice Provost and Associate Dean, three Directors, and 18 professional staff members (see Appendix D). The oversight responsibilities were dispersed to the departments with the exception of three staff members who were in the Graduate Student Services and Progress area in the "One-Stop" service area for the Undergraduate College.

Northwestern University. The Graduate School at Northwestern University serves more than 9,000 graduate and professional students. Northwestern is situated in Evanston, a suburb of more than 75,000, is seated in the greater Chicago metropolitan area (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013e). Students can choose from majors in 100 graduate degree programs (Northwestern University, 2014). The offices are in a cluster of buildings near the edge of campus with Graduate Studies occupying most of one of the buildings.

The Dean of Graduate Studies and Associate Provost of the graduate school is assisted by three Associate Deans, three Assistant Deans, five Directors, and 18 professional staff members. The divisions within the graduate school are Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Admission and Recruitment, Financial Aid, Student Life and Multicultural Affairs and Student Services (Northwestern, 2014). The Student Services office houses the "doctoral program specialists" for Northwestern University (see Appendix D).

University of Iowa. The University of Iowa's Graduate School is home to 9,000 graduate and professional students who have more than100 programs to choose from (University of Iowa, 2014). Iowa City, where the University was built, has a population of approximately 70,000 and is considered a small, Midwest city in the southeast part of the state (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013f). The Graduate School is in an older structure that appears to have been an administrative building from its creation.

The Graduate School is divided into five units for Administration, Planning, Scholarships/Fellowships; Recruiting, Orientation, Diversity, Retention; Graduate Student Success, Career Services, External Funding; Academic Programs/Progress, Dissertation/Theses; and the Office of Postdoctoral Scholars. The staff within the graduate school includes the Associate Provost and Dean, five Associate Deans, four Directors, and 22 professional staff members (University of Iowa, 2014). The staff members within the Academic Programs/Progress, Dissertation/Theses unit are the "doctoral program specialists" for the University of Iowa (see Appendix D).

University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign. The Graduate School of the University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign serves more than 11,000 graduate and professional students (University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign, 2014). The campus is situated in the neighboring two-city setting of Urbana and Champaign with a combined population of more than 122,000 people (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013b; 2013i).

The 100 graduate degree programs are administered by an office consisting of an Associate Provost and Dean, four Associate Deans, three Assistant Deans, nine Directors as well as a staff of 26 other professionals. The office structure is broken into eight units: 1) admissions, 2) academic student services, 3) career services, 4) fellowships, 5) postdoctoral services, 6) program and policy development, 7) the Professional Science masters, and 7) Thesis/Dissertation Office (see Appendix D).

Indiana University. The University Graduate School at Indiana University is home to 9,905 graduate and professional students (Indiana University, 2014). Nestled in a small urban area of approximately 80,000 people, Indiana University-Bloomington is the flagship campus for an eight campus system (Indiana University, 2014; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013a). Students can select from one of the 190 graduate and professional programs. The offices are in a typical higher educational institution building. Multiple cubicles are positioned in a large room of an older structure. No privacy for staff and students exists (Indiana University, 2014).

The Graduate School is administered by the Dean, two Associate Deans, an Assistant Dean, and ten professional staff including one Director. The staff members within the office work on Recruitment and Admissions, Academic Affairs and Research,

Student Life and Support, Thesis and Dissertation, Fellowship Services and Faculty and Staff Resources (Indiana University, 2014). The two Thesis and Dissertation office staff members are the "doctoral program specialists" for Indiana University (see Appendix D).

Michigan State University. The Graduate School at Michigan State University serves 11,355 graduate and professional students (Michigan State University, 2014). East Lansing is a small town of 48,500 people set within the larger city of Lansing (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013d). Michigan State offers 200 programs for degrees (Michigan State University, 2014).

The Graduate School has oversight responsibilities, but most of the monitoring of student progress and student service responsibilities is housed within individual departments. The Dean of the Graduate School is assisted by four Associate Deans and two Assistant Deans (Michigan State University, 2014). The "doctoral program specialist" staff members are in the department level offices (see Appendix D).

University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, with a population of over 113,000 is host to one of the largest higher education institutions in the state (U.S. Census, 2013j). The University of Michigan, set in the sixth largest city in Michigan, has the only named Graduate School in the Big Ten. The Rackham Graduate School is the sole occupant housed in an imposing structure in which over 15,000 graduate and professional students do business. The University of Michigan offers over 190 majors at the graduate level. The size of Rackham is apparent in the listing of services and administration for the Graduate School. Besides the Dean, there are four Associate Deans, two Assistant Deans, and "supporting staff." (University of Michigan, 2014).

The Graduate Student Success Unit in the Office of Academic Records and Dissertation (OARD) provides the "doctoral program specialist" assistance to graduate students at the University of Michigan. Other Units are Admissions, Arts of Citizenship, Development and Alumni Relations, Faculty Honors and Awards, and Fellowships (University of Michigan, 2014).

The Director of the Academic Records and Dissertation Office provides oversight to the Dissertation Evaluators and the Records Evaluators. The graduate students' progress is monitored post-admission to graduation. This office assists with the commencement ceremony (see Appendix D).

Purdue University. West Lafayette, a small town in west-central Indiana of approximately 30,000 people, is home to Purdue University (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013l). The Graduate School offers more than 70 degree programs to around 9,300 graduate and professional students (Purdue University, 2014).

The Dean and four Associate Deans work along with six Directors and 29 professional staff to offer services in Admissions, Fellowships, Graduate Programs, Interdisciplinary Programs, Multicultural Programs, Professional Development, Records and Thesis and Dissertation as well as the Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (Purdue University, 2014). The Records and Thesis and Dissertation offices appeared to function as the "doctoral program specialists" for Purdue, however, when Purdue was contacted, I was referred to the Graduate Support Staff at the department level (see Appendix D).

The Ohio State University. The Ohio State University's Graduate School guides more than 13,000 graduate and professional students through 120 degree programs (Ohio State, 2014). The campus is located in Columbus, an urban area of 809,000 people (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013c).

The Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate School works with an Associate Dean, three Assistant Deans, and five directors as well as 15 professional staff to provide services in Career Development & Preparing Future Faculty, Recruitment and Diversity, Graduation Services, Registration Services and Fellowship Services (Ohio State University, 2014). Graduation Services is the home to the "doctoral program specialists" for Ohio State University (see Appendix D).

Pennsylvania State University. The Graduate School at Pennsylvania State University (University Park and World) campus is home to 12,671 students (Pennsylvania State University, 2014). Nestled in the hills of Pennsylvania in State College, a small city of 42,034, Pennsylvania State offers graduate students 170 graduate programs from which they can choose a major (Pennsylvania State University, 2014; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013k).

The Interim Dean and Assistant Dean are the administrators of the office with eight Directors and 38 professional staff members. They offer services in Graduate Enrollment, Financial, Theses and Dissertations, Fellowships and Awards, Educational Equity Programs, Alumni and Public Relations and Postdoctoral Services (Pennsylvania State University, 2014). The Graduate Enrollment Coordinators and Theses and

Dissertation staff are the "doctoral program specialists" for Pennsylvania State University (see Appendix D).

Doctoral Program Specialists

None of the participants shared the same title except for two participants in the same office. The participants' positions were split between managerial and clerical positions. Their titles included: Administrative Assistant-Graduate Affairs, Assistant to the Dean, Coordinator, Degree Coordinators, Counselor, Director of Academic Affairs, Director of Academic Services, Director of Graduation Services, Director of Student Services, Graduate Enrollment Coordinators, Graduate Program Officer, Ph.D. Recorder, Secretary II, Secretary III, Secretary V (five), and Thesis Coordinator. For the purpose of this study, all participants, regardless of their position at their home institution, will be referred to as the doctoral program specialist.

University of Wisconsin-Madison. The staff members who functioned as "doctoral doctoral program specialists" were in the Admissions and Academic Services team (see Appendix D).

The two Degree Coordinators – one for masters students, the other for doctoral – monitor student progress toward the degree from admission to graduation. They work with students, faculty and staff in the departments to ensure the graduate school requirements are met for graduation.

University of Minnesota (Twin Cities). One of the staff members housed in the student "One-Stop student services office was the equivalent of the "doctoral program specialist."

As Coordinator, Doctoral Degree Services, the staff member is responsible for working with all graduate students from admission to graduation. Monitoring has been decentralized to the departmental offices so interactions with departments and faculty has increased. This staff member is not listed within the organizational chart of the University's graduate school and is no longer listed as a staff member within the graduate school, but is still working in her position there.

Northwestern University. The Student Services unit is staffed by a Director, Coordinator, and Counselor of Student Services. Their responsibilities reflect those of the "doctoral program specialist" and include enforcing graduate policy, graduate registrar, academic records and professional development for all graduate students. In this, they provide guidance and support to students related to their academic milestones through graduation.

University of Iowa. The Director of Academic Affairs is the primary contact person in the Academic Programs unit. This individual is a full-time staff member who monitors students' progress from admission, giving them special permission for deadlines or processes all the way to graduation. The director represents the doctoral program specialist for the University of Iowa. There are two other part time staff members who work full-time during the deposit time for theses and dissertations. Both staff members interviewed have since retired from the University.

University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign. The Academic Services and Thesis/Dissertation staff members work as the "doctoral program specialists" at the

University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign (University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign, 2014).

The Admissions and Records Representatives work with both masters and doctoral students from first enrollment until graduation. They are a service center for students, departments on campus, and faculty.

The Academic Services office includes the Thesis Coordinator who has a two-fold responsibility for graduate students. The staff member assists students through the deposit of a masters thesis or doctoral dissertation. The second responsibility is to review requests for the appointment of doctoral examination committees for both the preliminary and final examinations.

Indiana University. The Ph.D. Recorder (doctoral program specialist) and Masters Recorder monitor the respective students' progress from the time they are admitted to graduation. The Masters Recorder is also an Admissions Coordinator. The Recorders ensure that the students fulfill all requirements for the awarding of the degrees, verifying information, review dissertations and theses, and assist with graduation.

Michigan State University. Five staff members from five programs were recommended to me as "doctoral program specialists" for interviewing by the Dean of the Graduate School. Three responded to a request for an interview. They worked in Engineering, English and Neuroscience. Two of the individuals met with me in a conference room in the building where one of the participants worked. One could not attend but phoned in. All three are in office clerical positions within their programs and were responsible for assisting students with administrative needs from application to

graduation, monitoring the progress for graduate students within their programs and working with faculty. They had the shortest amount of time in service of all the participants. The level and length of their employment gave a different perspective to the questions.

   University of Michigan. The milestone paperwork is tracked at the department level. The Records Evaluators (doctoral program specialists) monitor the progress of students in meeting the minimum graduate qualifications. Their work is divided up for specific programs they assist. The Director trouble-shoots, works on policy and interfaces with the Deans.

   Purdue University. Three staff members (doctoral program specialists) out of six programs contacted agreed to be interviewed. This consisted of a Secretary V (five) and a Graduate Program Officer representing the departments and an Administrative Assistant-Grad Affairs at an academic college level. All were involved in the administration of graduate student programs in their area. Except for the Graduate Program Officer, the variety of tasks in their positions included many non-graduate oriented tasks. Each was involved with graduate students from post-admission through graduation.

   The Ohio State University. The Director of Graduation Services (doctoral program specialist) along with staff monitors the progress of all doctoral students toward their degree. They specifically oversee the doctoral candidacy exams and dissertation defenses, as well as the graduation process which includes an audit of the student's record. The specifics of a student's program course work is determined and monitored by the individual departments. During the audit after the student has applied for graduation,

the Graduation Services office checks to see if the minimum requirements set by the
Graduate School have been met.

   Pennsylvania State University. A typical day for a Graduate Enrollment
Coordinator (doctoral program specialist) includes reviewing application materials for all
levels of graduate students as defined by the alphabetic parameters for them, processing
admissions, reviewing the progress for both masters and doctoral students as well as non-
degree and certificate programs. The individual programs have the primary responsibility
for monitoring progress and collaborate with the Enrollment Coordinators to track the
progress of each student up to the point of graduation. If the student is writing a thesis or
dissertation, the Thesis and Dissertation staff assists the graduate students at Penn State
through the final steps toward their degree. Their primary responsibilities are to approve
the dissertation or thesis for depositing in the electronic repository used by the university.

Summary

   The Big Ten Conference includes twelve institutions in diverse settings. Each had
a unique hierarchy and staff composition. Eleven of the institutions were visited for
interviews with twenty participants. The services offered to students varied as much as
the size of the student body being served.

Chapter 5

Themes

The findings of this study provide a description of the roles and interactions of 20 doctoral program specialists in the Big Ten conference universities. Fourteen participants were employed in the graduate offices and six participants were employed at the department level. Each participant's title and job description was unique. The size, physical and hierarchical placement of the offices varied at each university.

As participants described their positions and responsibilities, the following themes emerged: 1) change 2) work interactions 3) policy and 4) role identification. For further information, see Appendix E.

Table 2. Themes

Themes

Change
    • Process
    • Personnel
    • Responsibilities

Work Interactions
    • Administrative Offices
    • Academic Departments
    • Students

Policy
    • Governing Boards
    • Policy

Role Identifiers
    • Problem-solver
    • Anonymous
    • Middle-man

Change

The best introduction to this section is a quote directly from one of the participants, "You know, everything is different. No matter how many years I've been working here, everything still surprises. You never know what's coming to the door."

Four sub-themes emerged from participants' descriptions:

- processes

  All changes described by the participants included changing from paper-based processes to electronic. The descriptions from two participants described changing the method of delivery for important information to doctoral students to a video.

- personnel

  Changes were in the number of staff as well as the organization of the office without the benefit of reduction of responsibilities.

- responsibilities

  Responsibilities were described as multi-faceted and continually changing. Changes were experienced from responsibility shifts to major position changes including physical location.

Work Interactions

Collaborative relationships between academic departments and administrative offices were experienced by participants. Collaborators were viewed as extensions of the offices of the participants.

Participants' responses to the question about their responsibilities and interaction with other offices developed into the theme of relationships which had three sub-themes of:

- administrative offices

     Working relationships with administrative offices involved in doing the business of the institution were described.

- academic departments

     Interactions with academic departments responsible for the monitoring of student progress included descriptions of work with the directors of graduate studies and their assistants.

- students

     Working with students was described in light of the desire for all students to succeed. Student interactions were positive with participants involved in problem-solving with students, staff, and faculty.

Policy

The responsibility of and interaction with governing boards was described as the participants described working the students or faculty. They described creating and revising policy documents such as graduate college and student handbooks.

Role Identification

Participants described their roles as being

- problem-solvers

    Problem solving involved interpretation of policies and procedures published by the graduate school or department. This was then enacted in their interactions with administrative offices, academic departments or students.

- middle-men

    The nature of the participants' positions created the role of a go between in all aspects of their positions.

- anonymous

    Anonymity was described as their bosses or supervisors as well as faculty and students did not realize all the participants did in their positions. This was relevant more so for the "behind-the scenes" work they did.

Summary

As participants described the changes in their roles and responsibilities, they spoke about interacting with other offices and the academic departments. They described the governing bodies which were the source of the policies guiding their work and

interactions with students. From the discussions, identification of their roles as they

viewed them emerged. In the following chapters, the four themes are presented.

Chapter 6

Change

The first prominent theme from the interviews was change. All participants described changes affecting their positions. There were three sub-themes within the topic of change that emerged: changes in processes, changes in personnel and changes in responsibilities.

Change is inevitable in any job or situation. The academic profession has always experienced change with no clear ideal or stable state for it (Musselin, 2007). Changes have occurred in the doctorate at many institutions (McAlpine and Norton, 2006).

Participants were asked about changes in the administration of graduate offices and their professional careers at the universities. The question about change was limited to the changes that were currently being experienced by the participants or had been experienced within the past five years. One participant said, "It's amazing the things that have changed" and another jokingly asked if I was writing a book. However, the most prominent change was in the process of doing their work and the method of delivery. Transitioning to electronic processes was on everyone's mind.

Processes

All twenty participants reported changes in processes in their institutions. The change from paper to electronic forms was a dominant process change in all of the interviews. Two motivations stimulated this change in processes. First, there was a need to keep up with the new processes happening at other universities. This was acknowledged by the first participant interviewed for the

study, who stated, "The changes, I think, are that more and more of what I do is going to be done electronically." Second, there was a desire to better serve the students and faculty at their institutions.

> We're, like everybody else, trying to get away from paper as much as we can. The graduate school here seems to roll out two or three new paperless web sites for one function or another every year. It kind of keeps you on your toes. Trying to stay up on what's new there and learning how to use all of these systems. Yeah, we actually push very little paper anymore. There are a few things that still need to be hard copies that need to be signed. When students complete their comp exams and when they actually graduate, but other than that just about everything now is paperless.

The transition to going paperless was at different stages at the institutions. One institution had completed the transition while others were just in the beginning stages. Two participants described their efforts in making this change, "We're trying to get away from paper-based [forms] but we're still, I would say at 50/50."

All the participants described the implementation of the electronic thesis and dissertation depositing (ETD) process. As one participant stated, "It's really kind of standard fare anymore." Although there are different problems than paper submission, all participants noted the improvement in service to students. One of the staff interviewed explained that it changed the dynamic of the relationship with the students because prior to the ETD process, he explained,

Students would be sitting or lying on the floor and folks that officially worked

here couldn't walk down the hall without tripping over someone so by time the

students got in here and plopped the big stacks of paper they were frustrated.

There were quite a number of tense moments in this office. It was almost

combative in nature. Now, it is a positive experience for everyone all around.

One participant, in describing their ongoing efforts to expand the electronic

processes in their office, stated,

We're in the process right now of moving some of our paper [processes] to an

electronic system. We deal with thousands and thousands of pieces of paper a

month. It's not ever going to be completely paperless, but it's a good step.

Another participant described that moving to electronic review and upload

reduced the number of requirements and amount of paperwork. She said, "[I] hated the

fact that the doctoral student who's getting ready to defend has to think and take time to

come to our office to pick up pieces of paper."

Five participants discussed their efforts to track students' progress electronically.

Everything and everyone "has a record" according to the participants. They noted that

sharing programs between offices was not easy. One stated, "We switched over to the

school of sciences database and I literally had four places" to do the same data entry.

Another acknowledged having entries of the same information but liked the reports she

was able to provide from the process. She said, "It's much easier than all that paper and

trying to keep track of all the files." Three of the participants noted all they had to do

was "go into the system, pull it up or there's a dashboard report for it." The ease of access

to the same information for multiple people was described by two other institutions' participants.

The office where one participant worked was moving away from "approving stuff, in theory." She noted that they "were looking to digitize forms and doing workflow so that a student would initiate a process." However, another issue was more prominent in her descriptions due to the major changes occurring with her office,

> Our constituents are much more confused and much more stressed because everything's supposed to be moving to them, but they don't know what's come to them – so I spend a fair bit of time with students but I also spend a fair bit of time with faculty and program staff trying to navigate the new world of education.

Three of the participants described how administrative support and financial resources were not always aligned with their view of the need for the transition. One stated, "Nobody from the outside of graduate education was interested in it." Other descriptions reflected, somewhat, the nature of relationships with other administrative offices that affected the ability to implement change.

> We have to print out things, because the Graduate School still requires signed documents so you still have to send in transcripts and there's lots of things that have to be done in paper. They have done a lot of things like plans of study and a lot of those things to electronic versions, but there's still paper.

Half of the participants acknowledged that, in reality, their processes will probably never be totally electronic. They also described how manual processes were still involved with the electronic methods. One stated she felt it created more work. It was viewed as a "piece meal" transition with offices implementing it as they could. As some of the participants discussed the transition from paper, one stated "we digitized all the students' files" and that "nothing is submitted on paper anymore." However, the same individual conflicted that answer when she described fewer and fewer processes being done on paper because she acknowledged that some of the processes require signatures. The most frequent answer was "most of our processes are going digital or electronic."

Eight of the participants described their offices as still needing to do some of their tasks on paper because faculty or staff does not want to use the electronic forms. One participant stated,

> We've had people who've worked in the graduate college for a long time and thought that the paper file was really the best file to have. It's a hard transition to get them to say we need to have this information in the database because you can't provide this report to me tomorrow. But, if it's already in the database, I can get it tomorrow.

She acknowledged that it probably wouldn't be the case in the future because staff and faculty are more at ease with technology.

The ability for instant access to information was supported by other participants. The electronic method "sped up the processing as well as the time for departments to

receive the materials," according to one participant. Another participant described electronic processes as a blessing and a curse.

> It can be a blessing and a curse. It's a lot quicker. You're not always waiting for paperwork to be shuffled around campus and everything. And the curse is sometimes these new web sites don't work as well as they're supposed to especially when they first roll them out."

The realization of the complications for starting the process was explained by one participant.

> It's a very complicated process because it's not linear and it doesn't always involve just one department. When we started it, we really found out how differently every department on campus works.

One participant acknowledged that financial resources are not there to support the change, "The money isn't just devoted to degree issues" because there were so many other things going on to attract and retain good students. At times, even though there did not appear to be financial resources available, administrators for the office prioritized the initiation of electronic process. As one participant described it, "He wanted to do it for a long time and is pushing for it, not only to improve processes but to benefit students and staff." Money for the transition sometimes came out of the budget of the department or office experiencing the transition. One graduate office member stated "the graduate school is paying for the upgrade [to PeopleSoft] because of the transitions they want to put in place.

Going digital with forms and processes was not the only electronic form of delivery being used. Two participants discussed changes in the processes in the way that information was delivered to students. They moved the delivery mode from in-person workshop presentation to videos available on the office's web site. "I sat down and worked out some video tutorials and now have one for doctoral students and one for master students." The participant stated that the "return on investment has been so much better for that because of the fewer questions during the very busy times of the semester."

As one participant went on to say "You have no choice but to adjust what's out there. That's the next challenge, to manage that change." Another supported that as she relayed a former instructor's teaching that she should keep up with technology or her job may be gone.

Participants discussed changes in their individual offices. All participants described changes, either recent or current, to move from paper-based to electronic processes for students. "Continuing to learn how to take care of everything electronically is a big change for everybody," one participant stated. Two participants described a modified version of going electronic as they described changing the method of delivery for importation information to doctoral students.

Personnel

Another change that was prominent in participants' descriptions was that of personnel changes. These changes were in the number of staff as well as the organization of the office.

Twelve participants described changes in the structure and number of personnel in their office. Administrative structures have changed and the number of employees decreased in departments. One participant, who had worked at her institution for over two decades, stated,

 When I was hired there was one dean, two associate deans and I was the only professional appointment. Now I can't tell you how many people are in the college.

Two of the institutions had reorganized their graduate school staff to revise reporting structures, especially when a new Associate Dean or Assistant Dean position was added. In one case, the participant was hired into a newly created Director position because of the Dean's desire to separate two strong areas within the Graduate School. "After I'd been here about eight months, the dean promoted me and made me Director of Records in Student Services. It's been so much fun. I love it." The other institution added an Associate Dean and the job descriptions shifted, according to one participant, "in a way that we have a less broad umbrella of oversight."

Changes have led to reduction in resources as well as personnel. Two of the participants discussed the fluctuation in staff in their office. They both noted that their office had gone from a six person office to a three person one without "really getting rid of a lot of our duties." Two other participants described how,

Generally student services have shrunk. We used to be five people and we're now three plus we have part of the front desk position to assist with some of our work. One big thing is that our resources have diminished.

As one of the participants described the reorganization and move of her office she described the changes in relationships and how it made it harder to maintain those relationships.

Before we moved here, we were the first thing that people saw when they came to the office so we established relationships with students, faculty and program staff. We don't get that contact as much anymore.

Another participant, who had many years in her position, said, "There's longevity [in my employment] and I've trained many men to whom I report." She was joined by another participant who stated, "My boss changes every three years so I have to train somebody new every three years. They don't know squat until they come in. You just get them trained and they leave." Longevity in a position is desired. A participant who also supervised staff stated, "I have one that I call the encyclopedia because she's been here forever. She's good and she knows the history. History is important in this job."

When staff members leave, either through retirement or a new position, the job knowledge goes with them which then commences the self-training cycle again. One participant said, "You really have to go through a whole year." This was affirmed by another participant who stated, "You have to go through a whole year cycle so by the end of your second year you have established that 'I know what's coming up next'." Another participant stated to really learn her job she had to be there for three years. Chock's (2008) findings supported the importance of institutional memory – that knowledge from years of experience on the job is an important part of office functioning. As one

participant stated about her extensive job experience, "It's really been an accumulation of years of experience."

For participants, the evolving nature of their positions and frequent turnover of colleagues in all levels of offices created training disparities. Four of the participants described trying to maintain records or lists of office staff members who are frequently changing. The statement,

You just train someone and they're gone" was reiterated by another participant who added, "They change so fast. In the past, they'd stay on until they retired. Now it's like every week, there's someone new."

Another concern was "continual" turnover in another office caused misinterpretation of policy. The three participants described it as frustrating because they knew it was not correct.

One participant described how during the office's busiest time they had a staff member retire and had to hire a replacement and train her which added to the stress of the work. "You had to do it. There was just no way around it." A prevalent omission of training was that of fitting their job with the mission of the offices in which they served.

Reorganization and changes in the number of staff were experienced by many of the participants. Reduction in resources coupled with the staff changes without having the benefit of reduction of responsibilities forced adjustments in processes, relationships and responsibilities.

Responsibilities

As institutions grow and change their focus, positions in the institution change with them. Job description changes were described by twelve of the participants.

Two of the participants described their jobs as "ever changing." This made it hard to "learn their jobs and cross-train others for back up," according to the participants. One participant noted, "The position has evolved considerably since I started. This job is just ten-fold [busier] since I first started." Another participant had experienced major changes in responsibilities and focus because of the decentralization and reorganization of the graduate school.

> There's restructuring of the graduate school right now. Services have been moved. There have been a lot of changes including physical location.

One participant described experiencing more than one major change in the same time period. He explained that his title and basic responsibilities were the same, but they have "evolved quite a bit." He said,

> It's amazing the things that've changed - the semester switch, the change of student information system, the volume of graduate students graduating, going electronic for the dissertation and theses – all those things were things we had to work through. There were times I didn't know if we were going to make it.

Another participant acknowledged that responsibilities for the staff in her office have grown somewhat, but that they were "trying to streamline" things to be more efficient which gave them the opportunity to come up with guidelines so there would be consistency in their practices. New things "pop up all the time."

In describing the significant changes in her office, one participant stated "our jobs have become a little bit more important to help programs know what's changed and what's not." She described a switch in focus from advising and decision making to outreach and advising. She stated there's been some miscommunication with students because of lack of training.

As job's transitioned or evolved in all institutions, there were descriptions of lack of training for their positions. One participant noted, "There's no one here to train you. You have to learn on the job." Even those who had some training expressed that "the systems have changed over the years, so that has all changed." They acknowledged that training was job specific so as things changed, they did most of their own training for the specific jobs required of them.

However, for the participants, that did not translate into feeling "trained" if the model for an office is to be student-centered and service-oriented. For example, "recruitment and retention is everyone's job." They suggested there should be some training within those specific areas in the "big picture." As participants compared their roles and responsibilities to the mission of their respective offices, there were disparities in how they viewed their role and what was expected of them to support the mission. When asked what they would consider the mission of their office and how their roles fit with that mission, two participants stated that there really was no fit. One participant answered in the following way:

[The mission] is to bring in - this is what we've been told - the best graduate

students possible no matter where they come from in the world. And do I see my

position fitting in with that? No, because I push paper.

Another participant's description aligned with the paper pusher idea, "we get

them in with all the paperwork and then get them out. Really, that's what it is. There's

paperwork to get in and there's paperwork to get out."

Six participants were unable see a clear fit of their jobs to the mission of the

university; but, they knew they were part of the mission for their respective offices. In

that light, the mission and their responsibilities were more clearly integrated.

[Our mission is] to facilitate between faculty and grad students to make sure that

they're not doing things other than working on completing their dissertation in a

reasonable time.

It is easy to provide training on required software and procedures, but,

participants indicated this training is not sufficient to meet their job needs and the mission

of the university.

Responsibilities were described as continually changing. Changes were

experienced from responsibility shifts to major position changes including physical

location. The evolution of responsibilities sometimes caused training disparities.

Summary

Participants discussed changes in job descriptions and personnel without having

the benefit of reduction of responsibilities. All changes described by the participants

included changing from paper-based processes to electronic. Policy changes were

described as being for the benefit of the students in both reduction of paperwork and

clarification of policy. As one participant noted, "there's a lot of change, I hope I'm not

too stuck in the way things used to be. You've got to keep progressing."

CHAPTER 7

Work Interactions

The second theme that was prominent from the responses was work interactions. Participants' responses to the question about their responsibilities and interaction with other offices developed into the theme of work interactions. Although the theme was somewhat expected, the descriptions provide insight into the doctoral program specialist positions.

Participants described interactions with staff from a variety of offices. The staff could be categorized into administrative offices or academic departments. One participant stated,

I believe that departments view us as just bureaucracy and we're just trying to make their life difficult. That isn't the case, obviously, but that's the impression.

Because participants in student services positions were interviewed, the collaborations in their daily work life were a large part of that discussion. The participants described interactions with colleagues and students as they talked about their responsibilities. The amount of descriptions about interactions with students was expected because of the nature of their positions. All of the work interactions were grouped into these three categories: administrative offices, academic departments and students.

Administrative Offices

Administrative offices at higher education institutions for this study were defined as offices which have a function in the business of the greater institutional community.

They offered services to students, faculty and departments. Their responsibilities were for specific functions that contribute to the whole aspect of the institution's business.

At least twenty-four administrative offices that participants frequently interacted with were discussed or listed as they described their work. A partial list of offices was provided by two participants.

We work with the registrar, admissions, fellowship office, the international office, human resources, and the degree office – depending on the issue.

One participant stated, "I guess in a nutshell I would call us a service center for our students as well as our departments on campus and for faculty, particularly those faculty who are faculty advisors for doctoral students."

One participant was not as specific when he described work interactions in his position. He stated,

I contact other administrative offices from time to time, but generally speaking, that's only for information. If I need to know something or something's been fouled up along the way, I'll contact them to figure it out.

It was natural for the participants to describe interactions with some of the offices more so than others. For example, the interaction with the registrar was a natural outcome of participants' work on electronic processes which is student record based. The prominent discussion about the process of forms and tracking students' progress discussed earlier resulted in interaction with the official record keeper of the institutions. "They are ultimately responsible for awarding degrees," as indicated by one participant, "We work with them quite well."

Ten participants specifically discussed interacting with the registrar's office for data collection, academic records, registration issues, grades and deadlines. Six participants stressed the frequency of interaction with the registrar's office. As she was describing her work on behalf of students, one participant stated,

I pretty much need a red phone. I work with him a lot. Especially if the action we're trying to take is retroactive. So, yes, I work with him a lot.

Another participant described how her office had been given a responsibility that was previously done in the registrar's office. The task was a collaborative effort prior to the switch and it became "cumbersome going back and forth between offices." Once the responsibility was moved to the graduate office it was "a lot easier because it's housed all in the same area," according to the participant describing the move.

This was echoed by another participant. She described how their institution used different sources for their data and were duplicating efforts in reports. She described "doing a pilot project with our report that previously had a lot of hand-done parts. With the new system, I can access the registrar's database and find out the information."

Three participants noted that work interactions were sometimes frustrating because of the appearance that personal issues were involved in the other person's effort. "Sometimes it depends on her mood, what she will approve and what she won't approve." However, participants said that interactions with department or program staff members were positive.

It was stated best by a "veteran" of the job, "People will come help you solve the problem if you know how to ask people and whom to ask."

Academic Departments

Academic departments were defined for this study as those departments or programs which offer major courses of study leading to a degree. Seventeen participants described working with staff and faculty in academic departments as part of their positions. Even though some participants were employed in departments they also described interactions with other departments.

The focus of the descriptions by all participants was on interactions with staff on behalf of students and faculty. One participant summarized it as, "I speak with department secretaries, but sometimes the graduate advisors. I speak with them if there are issues that come up with their students."

Participants talked about their good relationships with the other university staff. Program staff training was mentioned by 14 of the participants, "We do staff training two to three times a year, but we still, in general, take a lot of calls from staff and students all day long." Another participant stated: "Although we have great relationships with our program staff at the University, I wish we would actually have the time to spend going over our policies and what our expectations are." One of the participants who had been in her position for over 20 years stated,

> You grow with the job and people learn to trust you as you grow with it, like any academic office. It takes a lot of people to make things work well. It takes a lot of dedication and willingness to work with outside people, students, faculty, but also within your own little group.

Included in descriptions about academic department interactions were explanations centered on the participants' relationship with the director of graduate studies.

Director of Graduate Studies. In every institution there were descriptions of working with the Directors of Graduate Studies (DGS) which were non-paid appointments in the academic departments. The director's main job was oversight of the graduate programs within their departments. "They are the voice of graduate education within their department," according to one participant. The positions are short-term appointments of two to five years. In describing interactions with departments about graduate education or graduate students, a participant noted, "we have directors of graduate study who we'll deal with as well as the department head." One participant described her institution's requirements,

> Each department or program is supposed to have a director of graduate studies.
> They may be the same as the department chair. Oftentimes, they are separate. We
> deal a lot with the directors on campus.

Along with the DGS faculty, each department may have support staff, sometimes called DGS assistants, who are responsible for assisting the faculty in their DGS roles. The support staff are responsible for "auditing a student's record for degree certification," according to one participant. In each institution, it varies who monitors student progress. A participant stated,

> We rely on the program and directors of graduate studies to ensure that students
> are doing what they're supposed to so they can meet those milestone deadlines.

Most of the monitoring is done by the department secretaries who keep track of students' progress. Six of the participants held this role. Three participants described the position as,

> [It is] dedicated to graduate administration. We are auditors working with a student's record. We represent the program in tracking the students' progress and telling the graduate school that all the requirements have been met.

The DGS faculty and assistants "help problem solve and work with their students." One participant described them as,

> They're really my contact into the program as we work on any issues with somebody's application to graduate or whatever. That's probably who I'm going to call first is the Grad Coordinator.

The responsibilities of the DGS faculty and the assistants created a partnership between the graduate school and the department. Building good partnerships with the programs through their work with the DGS started a good foundation for continued support of graduate students. A participant stated, "I do think the partnerships are good, but I think it would be nice if they were a little better." Sometimes there appeared to be a resentment of the graduate school because the graduate school imposes rules, but "it's a lack of understanding of what the expectations are," according to two participants.

Efforts to "be a little better" included monthly meetings during the school year to discuss issues or to help them understand policies of the graduate school. Twelve of the participants discussed workshops hosted by the graduate school deans or staff to assist

them in developing department guidelines that align with graduate policies or create strong programs in their department.

All participants talked about the importance of and the struggle with the Directors of Graduate Studies. A struggle exists because the positions are temporary ones which are passed around among faculty members who already have other faculty duties. As one participant stated, "There is no mandate that it is a three-year appointment or whatever so we have big turnover in those directorships. So the faculty don't know what's going on." One participant described the struggle of the DGS relationship with the other duties required of the DGS faculty and staff communication "What I think is going to happen if they can't go back to it [teaching relief during appointment] is that we're going to see a lot more one-year term DGSs and that makes communication very difficult."

Three other participants discussed the turnover in the Director of Graduate Studies position and how that was detrimental to the consistency of the office because there were issues with communication and they, as staff, were training their faculty bosses. As one participant stated, "So there's a longevity and I've trained many different men to whom I report."

There is a learning curve in the DGS position. "Every three years they change. By the third year, they really know what's going on and are making good decisions because they have to vote on so many things. Then they leave."

The administrative offices and academic offices support the efforts of the participants to assist students as they progress toward their degrees. Students were

prominent in all discussions so it is appropriate they are considered the final group with whom participants interacted.

Students

Every participant described student interactions. The amount of direct contact with students varied for each office because each institution has different requirements and milestones noting their progress. One participant stated,

A student once said to me, when I tell the other students I'm going to see you or that I'm going to the graduate school, they know exactly where I'm going or who I'm coming to see. You're that well-known on campus.

Throughout the interviews, participants used similar descriptors to describe their communication with students. These descriptors provide insight about the participants' roles and interactions with students. More formal terms were used when discussing negative events or the administrative responsibilities with the students. Phrases such as, "I oversee" and "I enforce policy" reflect the formal staff-to-student relationships. Informal phrases such as, "talk with," "chat with" were used when they described being the go-to person. One participant described it as "we basically take care of our students from their first enrollment until their graduation."

Talking about her responsibility to track students' progress, one participant stated, "I'm in charge of making sure they are academically in good standing, and if they're not, I'm the person that they come to chat with about that." Another participant noted, "We feel an obligation to find the answer to their problems."

Department authority to monitor graduate students was viewed differently by the participants. Department participants stated that it "enabled them to take ownership of their own graduate students' programs for a longer period before the students interfaced with the graduate school."

Seven of the participants discussed the monitoring of graduate student success from a different perspective because of their responsibility for all students and to the university. One participant said, "I'm usually pretty easy with people coming in, but I'm tough on them going out." Another specialist supported that by saying, "You want them in and then they will hang in there." Sometimes it meant being tough with the students.

The graduate school participant from one institution echoed other participants' descriptions of the importance of graduate school monitoring of student progress. Graduate school oversight ensured consistency of meeting the graduate degree requirements in holding up the integrity of the degree.

The integrity of the degree meaning that we're validating that the student has got the hours and the grade point average for the degree, the program's approved, that they've taken the adequate course work they needed to. We try to be as consistent and fair in applying policies to enable this process.

One participant stated "Our job is to uphold not just graduate college policy but university policy as well. I think people forget that."

Participants described being placed in the problem-solver role because of a crisis for the students. However, the participant described the situation as "solving those little problems for them." Another stated, "We work with students who don't really have

problems, maybe just questions and we try to guide them. Then we do work with students who have basically made a mess. That's what we're here for. We're problem solvers."

Throughout the interviews the underlying theme for all the participants' discussion about their interaction with students was their desire to see them succeed. Providing professional development programs for both students and staff were included in the services offered. This better equipped departments, who were considered part of the team, to be the "ground support" for students and faculty. As stated by two of the participants,

> The best part of this job is that you have the opportunity to come up with new things, implement or try them then maybe we can be more flexible in accommodating students.

Three participants believed that their mission was "to facilitate between graduate students and faculty to make sure they're not focused on the nitpicky, administrative side of their degree." One participant noted that "students need to learn the administrative side, but not focus on it so much they are not focusing on their degree." As one stated when he was describing his work assisting students, "I really see this as a professional development experience for the students." This sentiment was expressed throughout the interviews.

> We all try to help them. I tell students, "We see something in you that we think you'll be a successful graduate student. That's why we admitted you and obviously you saw something in our departments that made you want to come here. It's a balance there."

The role of participants was to help students navigate the system. One participant described her staff-student relationship as being the "first thing that people saw when they came into the office, so we would help them and establish a relationship with them." This role was sometimes complicated by the students' perceptions of graduate school. One participant stated, "They forget how big grad school is - that you can't get everything instantaneously." Another participant said, "It's not a drive through. They really need to learn something and to read directions so they're successful."

Participants reported assisting students to resolve issues whenever they were able to do so. One participant stated, "We're here to advocate for them. That's our primary position." Another participant echoed that in his description,

I think getting information to the students if there is a problem and getting information out to them as quickly as possible and helping them to resolve it or giving them options, being realistic with them, I think is a big thing.

The self-efficacy of the participants was evident in the descriptions of their positions.

[When past students] say, the staff at their place they wish was like the staff here. That's when they say "We didn't realize how really good you guys were" or new students coming in saying "I was told by so and so to see you, that you know all the answers." I'm like "Oh my god, what am I going to say to that?"

Assisting both students and faculty was a common part of the descriptions. Faculty assistance was described in the interviews in a similar manner.

Five participants stated that students and departments do not understand the unique characteristics of graduate education and the graduate school. There is a lot of confusion with students and some administrative offices about the students' academic home. They identify with the academic program or college more easily than the graduate college which is really where their student status lies. As two participants stated, "They're admitted through the graduate college but your program is part of the College of LAS, but you're a graduate student. It could be really confusing for them." Graduate students have different issues.

> Graduate education is so different and structured different because we're not an academic college. We're strictly administrative. How we deal with departments and students, and what we can and can't do is completely different than how the undergraduate college has to deal with things.

Summary

The theme for this chapter was work interactions. Details of work done with staff in other offices shows how much it takes to work together to get things accomplished for students. Participants' responses to the question about their responsibilities and interactions with other offices developed into the theme of work interactions which had three sub-themes of administrative offices, academic departments, and students.

Collaborations began in participants' offices but expanded to working with other administrative offices on campus. In discussing responsibilities, all participants talked about other offices they worked with to complete their work as they assisted graduate

students. The collaborations were with higher administration personnel and departmental or program staff.

Summarizing the discussion in this chapter can be done by quoting one of the participants. She said, "It takes a lot of people to make things work well. It takes a lot of dedication and willingness to work with the public, students, and faculty as well as those within your own group."

Chapter 8

Policy

Governance

Universities have governing boards for the entire institution. Part of their function is establishment of policy for the governance of the institution. One participant described working with the provost of her institution to prepare materials for the Board of Regents. Each institution had additional advisory or governing councils for the graduate education at their institutions.

Graduate degree conferring higher education institutions in the United States may have an advisory and administrative board comprised of graduate faculty who develop policies for the graduate school. According to participants, the Graduate Executive Board or Council members are elected for two- to four-year terms, depending on the institution. They represent faculty and students on their campus. The composition of the council varied according to the size of the graduate school and institution.

Fourteen of the participants described the council as the governing board for their graduate programs. Five of the participants described the council as the "first [governing] body that proposals are approved regarding programs and policy." The items may also need to be approved by faculty or the university's governing board. The Council of Graduate Schools (2004) stated, "It is the role of graduate schools to provide quality control for all aspects of graduate education and bring an institution-wide perspective to all postbaccalaureate endeavors."

Interactions by participants with the graduate council were different for each participant. Two participants described being part of an advisory group and attending many graduate council meetings to present or discuss issues. Others described their participation as being the enforcer of the policy created by the council.

As the council member and structure of the council was discussed, one participant noted the issue of faculty members rotating appointments. The longest time for a faculty to serve was four years. The participant stated,

By the third year, they really know what's going on and are making good decisions because they have to vote on so many things. Then their term has expired and they leave.

Another participant noted the unspoken advantage to the rotation is, "one more person knows a lot more about graduate education when they leave than when they came." A third participant noted, "They appreciate it more."

This study included interviews with staff who were positioned in departments or academic colleges on their respective campus. These participants had an additional governing or advisory faculty board creating policy and requirements for their programs which may be chaired by the Director of Graduate Studies for their program.

Policy Documents

The policies enacted or revised by the graduate school were created by graduate councils in each institution. Participants described how deans, staff and non-council faculty have input in the development of policies and procedures, but usually do not have a direct vote. All participants described frequently reviewing policy for their office.

Fifteen of the participants described working with colleagues or deans to review policies or procedures. "We are very involved in academic policies," stated one participant. Issues with policies were taken to the deans who would write the policy change for consideration. Their objectives were seeking to find ways to make things easier for both students and staff.

> I think the primary changes, or the most important ones, are making sure that our policies actually make a positive effect on students. Trying to accommodate them and making sure the policy holds while doing so.

Twelve of the participants said they were comfortable addressing issues that needed to be changed with the dean(s) in their offices or, they had a contact person in the office that was their "go-to" person who would figure out which governing board to address it to. One of the participants, stated, "If there are questions, we, personally, can go to the dean of the graduate school." Another participant described times when she did not like a policy, she said, I will go to the deans directly and say, this needs to be changed" and then she would tell them why. Two participants noted,

> Deans are partners with the graduate school. They all serve on the administrative board so we have occasion to talk to the school deans or their representatives.

Another one of the participants, because of her position within the graduate school, spoke of reviewing policies or procedures and meeting with the deans if there were persistent issues.

I have twice-a-month meetings with the Dean. When we have issues where we

think it needs clarification, I take those to her. She likes to have a pulse on what's

going on.

Five of the participants described discussing policy with their dean because they

had encountered an issue concerning a student or discovered a loop hole. Interpretations

and exceptions to the policies are presented to the dean or dean's group for review and

discussion. One participant described when a problem or issue occurred she would start

with the director.

She's really the keeper of the handbook that contains the policies so it starts with

her. I mean we have discussions about what we're seeing and what the issues are.

Then discuss what would be a good solution and then we take that to her to have a

discussion. Then we go from there.

Four participant discussions described interactions centered on policy that

affected students or faculty. Two of the participants stated, "I would probably go to the

dean first [regarding a policy issue]. I would make them aware I feel there's an issue."

The second participant described approaching the dean as well,

When we have student issues, I very frequently go to them. I tell them I have this

issue and I need you to intervene. That's their job.

Eight participants referred to graduate college handbooks. These documents

allowed faculty and staff to know what policies were in place for their individual

programs. The graduate faculty council defines the policies so "ultimately the graduate

school handbook is where most of our policies are listed according to a participant. One

participant added humor to her description by stating, "Whether or not they (faculty) look at the handbook, is the question." Another participant said she deals with "a lot of faculty members that have as many questions as students when it comes to policy."

One participant noted the importance of having written, published policies at all levels of the institution. He stated,

I say it's really hard to try to explain something to someone and give justification for your position when you can't point to it in a book and say "This is why we're following the policy. This is why the policy is as it is or this is why I'm responding to you as I am because this is the policy that we have." If it's not in there and it's not in print somewhere, it just makes it that much more difficult to try to get your point across. Some stuff seems like common sense, or some people say common law, approach that we all have to do that in our positions to some degree, but, again, it certainly helps to have stuff in writing and laid out very clearly.

One participant described following two sets of policies because of the transition taking place at her institution. She explained the transition was going to be a "lengthy one" because of the options for the students in the program.

Another document discussed was the graduate student handbooks. Six participants discussed the student handbooks which reflected the council policies as they pertained to graduate student experiences. One participant described it,

We're a pretty structured program. Everything is spelled out in the handbook that all students have access to online and in hard copy.

The goal for the student handbooks is the same as that for the graduate college handbook. The goal, according to two participants, is to "provide all the information they need in order to complete the degree requirements based on policies and procedures." As one participant stated, "We're interested in making sure that those policies actually work for the student."

Summary

Participants discussed graduate councils responsible for creating policy for graduate faculty and students. They also discussed their ability to affect change in the documents published with those policies. Descriptions about the flow of policy decisions and their comfort level in addressing policy issues with administrators were given.

Chapter 9

Role Identification

The titles assigned to administrative staff members were different in each university. One institution may include administrative staff members within the senior management level while others may include administrative staff at the level of clerical support staff (Szekeres, 2006).

The identification of participants' roles was the fourth theme that grew from the research. It was a natural outcome of the "describe your position" question posed to participants. As participants detailed their job descriptions and responsibilities, similarities and differences in their positions emerged. Their view of their roles became clear.

Participants described "wearing a lot of hats" as they interacted with academic departments, administrative offices, students and faculty. They defined their positions as "multi-faceted" and different each day. One participant portrayed her office as "one office with eight different people (with the same position) having eight different days." Another participant acknowledged that "everyone has strengths and weaknesses." These strengths or weaknesses added to the interpretation of their roles within the office as well as impacted work relationships.

Three specific descriptors emerged as participants discussed their positions. They described being problem-solvers, the middle-man, and anonymous.

Problem-solvers

Fourteen participants described themselves as "problem-solvers." One even equated it to "fighting fires." However, they enjoyed the role because it made them feel good when they "helped somebody move forward." One participant stated,

Of course, we have a lot of problems, but that's exciting to me because you have to solve those. You remember one thing – every problem has a solution. Maybe some are bad solutions but they are solutions. No problems are fatal.

Because they knew they were helping someone, they liked problem solving. One participant explained,

We end up with lots of problems, at our level and stuff. We know we can solve them. Unfortunately, sometimes we solve too many because somebody else didn't do what they should have. We're the problem solvers.

Problem solving involved interpretation of the policies and procedures that were published by the graduate school or department. These interpretations guided their work with students and faculty. If they did their job well, they became the "go-to" person.

This morning I had a girl come in to talk to me about completing an activities form for the university. She goes "I knew you'd know the answer." I'm going I've never seen this form before in my life, but you read it, and it's like "Oh, here's what you need to do."

The analogy of solving a puzzle was used by three participants. Those interviewed described asking questions to try and figure things out "because what the student asks for may not be what they are after." Helping graduate students to solve

problems to "make their lives a little bit easier" is satisfying because they're happy and the department runs better. One participant described assisting a frustrated student over an extended period of time. Once the problem was solved the student was able to graduate and was happy. Another participant supported this as she described working with students. She said,

> Anytime you have someone who comes in concerned or upset, who feels like they have an enormous problem, if we can make them feel better about the situation or we can help them find a solution, they leave here happy. Then that's a success.

Their positions placed them in the problem solving role because they guided students who have questions. They also used their role to troubleshoot and look for problems before they became critical.

One participant's goal was to reduce the need for students to have a problem solved for them. "It's only when there's a problem that people come to see us so we are doing a lot of work to make sure students don't have to come see us."

Because of the different interactions with faculty, staff and students the knowledge of what the doctoral program specialists do was segmented by what have they done for the different populations with which they work. This led to only part of their responsibilities being known or recognized. That segmentation led to doctoral program specialists feeling anonymous in their positions.

Anonymous

Graham (2010) reported that administrators and staff have been ignored, not only by external agencies, but within the university and academic structure of institutions.

Participants indicated that in the office setting there was some anonymity to their job. They reported that they had little input in changes and processes for their positions. In describing her work on a project with her boss, the dean, one participant stated "The dean was our institutional coordinator and I was his anonymous sidekick." The hidden nature of their positions included the work they did to assist students and faculty. Bray's (2010) study of deans' roles revealed the lack of communication between nonacademic staff members and administration. A disregard for staff input with decisions that affected their job was part of Bray's findings. The participants stated that even though they did not have a problem with being behind the scenes, they still wanted to be consulted and considered when changes affected their position.

> One participant said, [when discussing Graduate School created data tracking systems] the new system that they're trying to get us to move to is only for Ph.D. students, not Masters. They're trying to do something for the masters, but I haven't heard anything more – which I don't like.

> An analogy was used of a ship. The participant compared the staffs'

positions to that of an engine room of a ship.

> It's dirty, it's boring, it's greasy and it's gross and nobody wants to go down there. Sometimes the ship's running and people don't have any idea how it's running. They just don't know what's in the engine room. Sometimes we feel like the engine room – that people have no clue what student services does.

Even though doctoral program specialists, especially those at the department level, keep faculty and students (and departments) organized in relationship to graduate school requirements, their relationships are hidden. One participant stated,

It just gives you a good feeling that you can actually do something nice for someone. We didn't want fanfare. We didn't need pats on the back. We knew that it had to be done and he got it and that was all we needed to know.

The anonymity extended to the large constituency of faculty that they served. The anonymity was described more often at the department level than from graduate school staff. Feeling anonymous extended to their bosses. The experiences described included a sense of lack of appreciation for what was done without knowledge of what they really do.

It's the lack of appreciation sometimes by your bosses, at least I experience that. We do what we can to get things done right and well and avoid problems. I think that they don't realize all the things we do behind the scenes to make them look good. That's one of the frustrations that I've had with this [job].

The contradiction in the participants' roles placed them in a "public" position where many individuals from all levels of the university interact with them, but their descriptions of anonymity belies the public nature of that very same position in that they do not believe they have a voice.

One participant stated, "The departments and students never know the amount of behind scenes work unless there is a problem." She indicated that the behind the scenes work gets overlooked because they work to "make sure people are notified or do

whatever needs to be done." The staff members are, in effect, acting as the go-between for the student and faculty or programs.

Middle-man

Three participants identified themselves as the "middle-man." Others used similar terms to describe their role as the in-between person, run interference, facilitator, the bridge-builder, or the catch-all. In these roles they assisted students by helping to clarify what students need by communicating with faculty or other staff. Participants described how they were the middle-man for students and faculty, for faculty and staff, and for administration and departments. One participant described it as "running interference" between administrators and students or faculty.

Two participants described their primary position on behalf of students as an advocate. Two other participants equated this to counseling. One of them said "sometimes you can help them when they've gotten themselves into such a stew." The other stated,

> I counsel them with their problems. You hang your shingle, hand over the
>
> Kleenex and do your "it's going to be alright" speech.

Another agreed that her position as a "bridge-builder" connects the student to answers and services for graduate students. She described it as: "I feel I'm actually a bridge-builder. Actually, I always feel I'm linking everyone including the data analysis person."

Being positioned in the "middle" caused them to feel as if they had to enforce the policies established by their institution's governing body. Participants stated that not

only were they between faculty and students, but also between students or faculty and administration. Two of the participants described interactions they were involved in as

> There's times when we do have to bring in the colleges when we're dealing with the programs [faculty, staff]. We're also dealing with our dean's office too. Because sometimes we have issues with our students so we need to work with the dean's office so they can deal with those unique situations.

> In working with departments or administrative offices, doctoral program specialists become the policy enforcers. One stated, "We're doing the hard work." One even equated it to being the "colon in the digestive system." Her work allowed her to get the students unstuck and processed. Seven participants viewed part of their roles to be policy enforcers. However, they explained, if the policy allowed, they were flexible. If students have done what they should have and are running up against a policy, they "were pretty flexible."

> We try to be reasonable people. If there's a reason to make a good exception, that's not one of our hard and fast deadlines, we try to be reasonable and evaluate everyone's requests.

> The goal of each office was to see the student succeed. The participants viewed their roles as being able to assist in that goal. "We're not just robots and apply policy," according to one participant. It takes work, thought, and flexibility.

Summary

Participants described their roles as being problem-solvers, anonymous, being the middle-man. The problem solving role came naturally for them as they assisted students

in maintaining progress toward their degree. They viewed themselves as "keeping their arms around the fact the students were active and engaged in their programs."

Anonymity came not because they weren't recognized for doing a good job, but because when issues were raised or policies changed that affected their job, they were not included in the discussions. Their feeling of anonymity was more present with faculty and administrators than with the students.

The nature of the participants' positions created the role of middle-man in all aspects of their positions. All of the roles blended together for the success of the students.

Chapter 10

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of doctoral program specialists within the universities of the Big Ten Conference in the United States.

Twenty "doctoral program specialists" described their roles and changes to their work at their universities. Interview questions were focused on: (a) the work of doctoral program specialists; (b) their relationships with members of the university community involved in graduate education (faculty, doctoral students, department staff); and (c) how the administration and work expectations have changed during the past 5 years. Role theory provided the theoretical framework for understanding how staff fit within the larger institutional setting.

Because of the transient nature of roles, there are constant changes in interactions with colleagues and students. One of the criticisms of role theory is that it attempts to prescribe specific characteristics to roles in order to analyze them or place them within a hierarchy, but they are not static (Jackson, 1998; Kipper, 1991). This was supported by the prominence in the descriptions of change by the participants.

Participants described their work in diverse institutional settings. Discussions ranged from the "nitty gritty" details to an overview of responsibilities for their positions. It was difficult to separate into distinctive themes because they are all interrelated. Changes to policies, personnel and procedures directly affected the work doctoral programs specialists did to guide doctoral students and the interactions with colleagues.

Four themes of change, work interactions, policy and role identifications emerged from their descriptions.

It is not unexpected that in the process of a study to investigate the role of doctoral program specialists that descriptions of changes in responsibilities would emerge. The degree of change ranged from a total reorganization and location of the office in which the participant worked to minor shifts in responsibilities.

Participants described changes within their professional career and collaborative relationships that affected their work and helped in the understanding of the challenges that were experienced in their role. The prominent change in participants' descriptions was of moving their student processes from paper-based to electronic delivery. Every participant described the process occurring in their offices. The main focus of this change was for those processes that required student input such as forms, but other processes were noted which changed the method of delivery of information to the student. These findings were supported by Chock (2008).

Personnel changes were closely tied to a change in responsibilities because participants described the impact of personnel changes on their responsibilities. Participants described two scenarios: 1) a shift in the number of staff, usually a reduction, without the benefit of a reduction of responsibilities and/or 2) an increase in responsibilities without the addition of more staff.

Within that experience, descriptions of collaborative interactions with administrative offices, academic departments, and students were prevalent. The particular subset of personnel discussed in academic departments was that of the Director of

Graduate Studies. The influence of turnover in the DGS positions affected the interactions experienced by the participants. It placed them in a frequent training role.

Individual characteristics were identified by the study participants. They described being in the role of problem-solver which at times placed them in the additional role of middle-men. In both of these roles, participants interpreted, clarified or enforced policy published by departments and the graduate school. The published guidelines, usually found in handbooks, guided their work with students, faculty, staff and other administrative offices. Through the establishing of policy and guidelines with input from faculty and staff, the institutions "defined good practices" (Council of Graduate Schools, 2004). The participants described working on behalf of students with faculty and other university offices to file documents and other milestone tasks. They were considered the "go-to" person.

Being identified as the "go-to" person appeared to be contradictory to the concept of anonymity. As participants discussed the feeling of anonymity, the discussion centered on those with whom they worked not understanding all of the work they did. Students, faculty and colleagues understood the participants' roles as it related to the needs of their own positions without grasping the larger picture. Participants described that even their bosses or supervisors did not know all that they did on behalf of the department or office. The second part to the feeling of anonymity was that decisions were made which affected their positions or job responsibilities without including them in the discussions or asking their opinion before the changes were implemented. These findings align with Szekeres' (2006) and Clegg's (2005) work.

Chapter 11

Implications

As this study began, it became clear that there was a void in the literature about managerial professionals in higher education. The literature showed there has been little research despite the increase in administrative staff at higher education institutions being the highest of any employee group within the institutions. It is important to discuss and examine roles, interactions and change for all employees in higher education.

Change

The theme of change addresses the research question of how the work has changed in the past five years. Descriptions of change within their professional career and collaborative relationships that affected their work helped in the understanding of the challenges that were experienced in their role.

The most prevalent example is that of managing the current shift from paper processes to electronic. By the mid-1990s, technology had drastically changed how business was done on campus with online applications, payment services and web-based courses. As the world becomes more electronic, so too must more of the paper processes within higher educational institutions change without losing the connection to the students. For all of the participants, there recently had been or soon would be a change to electronic processes within the graduate school. The roles which were discussed within this framework was one of trainer so that all involved – students, staff and faculty - would be able to work with the new method of doing business. One participant voiced the opinion that was reflected in many of the interviews, "[Going electronic] is a much more

productive relationship with students, much more. It's a positive experience for everyone all around. It's so convenient."   However, also voiced within this context was the concern that there should be training both for the faculty and the departmental support staff.

A balance must be strived for in the inclusion of all affected by the change. Welsh, Nunez, and Petrosko (2005, p. 22) stated that "Institution management practices may inhibit broad campus support for strategic planning because they do not encourage participation and personal involvement from campus participants."

Work Interactions

The ability to describe work interactions allows for better clarity of job descriptions as they are evaluated and revised in the work force. In all levels of professional relationships, there are different views of the nature and meanings of the relationships, particularly with regard to the dynamics of the communication between administration and staff (Kuo, 2009).

Collaborative relationships should be included in the discussions to further clarify roles. Within the doctoral program specialist experience, descriptions of interactions with students, faculty and collaborative relationships with colleagues were prevalent. For doctoral students, the programming and services offered extended far beyond the monitoring of the students' fulfillment of the graduate school requirements. West, Gokalp, Vallejo, Fischer and Gupton (2011, p. 5) put it in the perspective of the student when they said, "The student needs support beyond what the advisor and committee can provide. Workshops and other support services from the institution may fill in the gap."

The ease of interacting at all levels was supported as the participants described their ability to address issues with administrators at their institutions. The theme of work interactions and collaborations address the research question of the relationships with other members of the university community. Doctoral program specialists spoke of the support they give their students through many different activities the office sponsored. Training was extended to faculty and departmental staff so they would be enabled to fulfill the roles they were asked to do in support of the student.

Policy

"It is essential that graduate education maintain a strong presence and place of prominence on college and university campuses if it is to fulfill its purpose of providing the future intellectual leaders of society (Council of Graduate Schools, 2004). Graduate councils and department committees provided guidance for the graduate education on their campuses. The administration of those policies was a collaborative effort of graduate college professionals, directors of graduate studies and staff. In doing so the institutions' programs were administered in a way that makes their success possible (Council of Graduate School, 2004). Participants described enforcing or interpreting policy as they discussed their responsibilities and interactions.

Role Identification

According to Bennis and Nanus (2007), individuals are able to determine their roles within an organization if that organization has a clear sense of its purpose, direction and future, which is widely shared. The participants in the study needed to believe they could make a difference.

Understanding the roles and issues affecting all staff within an institution provides insight for future discussions about staffing. The study offered insight to the roles of the doctoral programs specialists within the Big Ten conference. There was a shared experience and an identity among the participants. The identification of role themes addressed the research question of the work of the doctoral program specialists.

Szekeres (2004) identified support staff as a hidden population but showed that the position they hold, not only in the life of the student but of the University, is important for its functioning and mission. This was supported in part by this study. The doctoral program specialists, as they were identified, described the feeling of anonymity. The expected result was that of a description that "no one knows we exist."

However, participants acknowledged they were recognized in a part of their roles. When they discussed being the middle-man or bridge-builder, the descriptions included recognition from students. In part, then, there was some acknowledgement of their roles in the lives of the students and faculty at their institutions. Szekeres (2004) in discussing the role of non-academic managerial or clerical staff within the graduate student experience supported the need for more investigation of that role.

The definition of their roles was limited to the perspective of their departmental positions. However, the unwritten role in all of their job descriptions was that of helping to fulfill the mission of their department or, greater yet, the university. "In the absence of more formal assessment, one looks to the unwritten rules and informal norms to understand the expectations to guide one's role (Bray, 2010, p. 286)."

The focus from students being classified as students to stakeholders has caused a shift from the idea that only those in student affairs offices should be concerned with student retention. Kuo stated that "university academic staff and administrators play critical and central roles in higher education in fulfilling the missions of education, research advancement and public service" (Kuo, 2009, p. 43).

The majority of the roles in which staff were involved, at least indirectly, included an overarching theme of retention. The participants described their roles and used phrases and words which described retention efforts without identifying with the retention mission of their office or university. As one of the participants stated, "Our mission is to do whatever we can to enhance our policies and procedures so that we can decrease the time it takes to get a project done and to assist students to get where they want to go in the most efficient way possible."

The descriptions did not, as one might suspect, only describe training in regard to the position they were in, it was in relationship to the mission of the office. The mission espoused an overarching role with which participants' jobs did not relate. The participants' descriptions included the lack of training or clarification of what some of their higher roles meant to their position. These themes aligned with discoveries of previous studies done on the expertise and perception of staff at universities (Bensimon, 2007; Chock, 2008; Szekeres, 2004, 2006).

The participants were defined within the parameters of the Big Ten conference. As described, there are opportunities for networking and skills building within the setting of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation for higher administrative levels and

faculty. Graduate students have the opportunity to take advantage of the membership to study in Big Ten institutions. The disconnection of the participants with the Big Ten or CIC was evident in the participants' descriptions. No one described being in the Big Ten or discussed opportunities available to them for networking or training.

Summary

The inclusion of doctoral program specialists in research about their positions enhances the research. It is important for researchers to include program specialists in the forming of questions, the collecting of data and then verifying the accuracy of the data. The shared experiences of doctoral program specialists should be shared to enable them to gain insights and best practices from their peers. Because of my experience, the understanding of the issues was enhanced because of my professional background which allowed me to dig into the issues as the interviews were taking place.

Chapter 12

Limitations and Future Research

The present study offers recommendations for connecting and improving best practices across higher education institutions within the positions of the doctoral program specialists.

Doctoral program specialists' roles include a variety of responsibilities and relationships that involve all levels of administration and staff at their universities. As the variety of position titles for participants attests, there is not an easy way to group everyone together.

Discussions about higher education administration appear to group all institutions in one glass ball that allows for across the board perspectives, programmatic alignment and operational similarity. According to Bray (2010) this is not possible because norms and perspectives are not universal across higher education, but can vary by institution and across disciplines. Bray (2010) stated that higher education suffers because of the lack of consistency.

Even within institutions, the variation of administrative practices increased the complexity of attempting to implement best practices and procedures. The differences in administration of departments on a single campus are indicative of how difficult sharing practices among several campuses can be.

Recommendations

The job of student recruitment and retention is number one in most universities. If the mission of the university is growth, then all faculty and staff have a vested interest in

that goal. At any institution, service to students is a university-wide retention activity; but as this study shows, it is not used in the jargon of the staff throughout the university, especially when asked "what do you do?"

More communication with the university groups would help communication improve processes, and build relationships throughout the campus. West (in DiPierro 2007 p. 6) stated, "It is apparent that much of the conversation concerns identification of various factors that contribute to attrition, without benefit of conversations that address the implementation of best practices or interventions that lessen it." Coinciding with this effort should be some attempts at defining what does recruitment and retention mean for specific positions as we think about staff hires.

This study began with the assumption that non-academic staff was not recognized in their contributions to the success of the university's mission and goal of support for students. Specifically, research is lacking about roles within the graduate school which are in existence for the support of graduate students. Along with Chock's (2008) research, this research shows the importance of non-academic staff for the success of the mission within higher education. This may provide training or networking opportunities for non-academic staff across institutions.

The qualitative nature of the research presented limitations for the study. The findings cannot be generalized because of the small number of participants and the specificity of the positions of the participants. Future studies may investigate similar positions within other institutions and integrate the findings with this to provide a larger picture of the staffing roles and professional needs within higher education institutions.

Further research to understand the roles of a broader range of non-academic staff at higher educational institutions may add to the understanding of the findings and provide a greater understanding of how all positions complete the support network for students.

This study was conducted over a brief, one-year period and is just a snapshot of the job responsibilities of the participants during that time frame. It is understood that jobs are not static so a larger picture of the nature of the positions, particularly as they are involved in change, could perhaps be understood better if looked at through a more longitudinal lens. Future studies could follow-up the findings of this study to determine the issues that change brings for positions such as these.

Participants were narrowly identified and were interviewed individually or in small groups. The opportunity to interview the person with their peers in the office was not afforded very often. Only four campuses of the twelve provided an opportunity for combined interviews. In all but two of the interviews, there was not a variety of levels of staff members involved. Future research may involve more staff within the same office to provide a broader view of the connectivity of the roles.

A recommendation based on the finds is that the existing training structure within the Big Ten conference and CIC be expanded to recognize the needs of all staff members to learn from each other and establish means to encourage networking at regional or national meetings of Deans or educational associations. Kouzes and Posner (2007, p. 223) stated, "Leaders understand that to create a climate of collaboration they need to determine what the group needs in order to do their work and to build the team around common purpose and mutual respect."

Another recommendation is to enable best practices to be shared with all sub-groups outside of the usual student affairs area. These sub-groups should be identified and encouraged to develop a variety of methods of training.

Also, dialogues should occur on campuses to engage non-academic staff in the practice of retention. Additionally, the CIC should create and maintain a database of graduate-level office staff in related positions so that contacts can be made with similar staff members to discover practices and policies across the Big Ten Conference graduate schools.

Chapter 13

Research Epilogue

My experience conducting this research was informative. I conducted research at eleven separate institutions with many participants whose positions closely aligned with the position I currently hold. Here are some of the lessons learned:

1. Identify participants early - Identifying staff members from other institutions was a bit challenging because no titles were the same. Staff members were sometimes hesitant because they were not sure if permission was needed by their supervisors or the deans in their institution. For most of the interviews, I began with the dean or the dean's administrative assistant to: 1) inform them of my intent and 2) to receive guidance about the staff members I should interview. They were quite helpful and, in some cases, literally gave me the staff members' names and department information to contact.

2. Break it up - The next hurdle was scheduling. Because I work full time and my work load fluctuates, I was limited in the times I could be absent from work to conduct the research. Corresponding with that, I was aware that the staff members I was asking to participate were similarly restricted. After approval from the dean and potential participants was received, scheduling the trips to maximize time and visits commenced by contacting them via email. Enough lead time was given for the participants to fit in reading the email in their busy schedules. I chose to do my research in three separate trips.

3. Be flexible in scheduling – After determining what groups of institutions would work best together I contacted the participants with a range of dates. This allowed them to pick the date that would work best around their schedules. The first trip was the oddest because I was unable to schedule two nearby institutions together.

4. It IS important to see the settings in which people work. The campus settings as well as the individual offices provided a backdrop for some of the implied information shared during the interviews.

The experience was wonderful. I enjoyed meeting others who were in similar positions to spend time discussing their positions. My background allowed me to gain rapport quickly and I was able to gain a lot of insight into our profession. I am sure there are many more stories to be told.

I close with one thought. Just as students are told that as they are advancing toward their degrees it is important to build networks, so, too, it is important for staff members to be encouraged to build networks, both intra- and inter-institutional. Encouraging the development of networks will build support systems that will both educate about and socialize staff members to the roles within their positions.

References

Altbach, P. (2011). Patterns of higher education development. In P. Altbach, P. J. Gumport, & R. O. Berdahl (Eds.), *American higher education in the twenty-first century: Social, political and economic challenges (3ʳᵈ ed.)*, (pp. 15-36). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

American Council on Education. (2004, May) *Shifting ground: Autonomy, accountability and privatization public education. Higher education change 1994-1999.* Washington, DC: Author.

Anderson, J. L. (2005) Community service as learning. In A. Kezar (Ed.), *Organizational learning in higher education.* (pp.37-48). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Augustine, R.M.. (2008). Leadership roles of the graduate dean. *Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools, 64ᵗʰ Annual Meeting Proceedings*, pp. 60-66.

Barbuto, J. E., Story, J. S., Fritz, S. M. & Schinstock, J. L. (2011). Full range advising: Transforming the advisor-advisee experience. *Journal of College Student Development, 52* (6), 656-670.

Bary, L. (2013). Faculty governance in the new university. *Academe*, *99*(5), 17-2

Bennis, W. & Nanus, B. (2007). *Leaders: Strategies for taking charge, 2ⁿᵈ Ed.* New York: HarperCollins.

Bensimon, E. M. (2007). The underestimated significance of practitioner knowledge in the scholarship on student success. *The Review of Higher Education, 30*(4), 441-

Biddle, B. J. (1979). *Role Theory: Expectations, identities, and behaviors*. New York:
Academic Press.

Biddle, B. J. (1986). Recent development in role theory. *Annual Review of Sociology, 12*.
67-92.

Big Ten Conference. (2013). *About the conference*. http://www.bigten.org/school-bio/big10-school-bio.html. Viewed October 31, 2013.

Bray, N. J. (2010). The deanship and its faculty interpreters: Do mertonian norms of
science translate into norms of administration? *The Journal of Higher Education,
81*(3). 284-316.

Chock, M. (2008). *Managerial professionals in higher education: Change in number,
roles, and responsibilities*. Retrieved from University of Hawaii Dissertations,
HAWN_AC1.H3_5096_r.pdf.

Church, S. E. (2009). Facing reality: What are doctoral students' chances for success?
Journal of Instructional Psychology, 36 (4), 307-316.

Clegg, S. & McAuley, J. (2005). Conceptualising middle management in higher
education: A multifaceted discourse. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and
Management, 27*(1), 19-34.

Cohen, P. (2007). The graduate dean as pope. *Academe Online*. Downloaded from
http://ww.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/academe/2007/NJ/Feat/Cohe.htm on May 9,
2012.

Committee on Institutional Cooperation. (2014). https://www.cic.net/about-cic/history-of-cic. Viewed February 27, 2014.

Council of Graduate Schools. (2004). *Organization and administration of graduate education*. Washington, DC.

Council of Graduate Schools. (2008). *Graduate enrollment and degrees: 1998 to 2008*. Nathan Bell, Ed. Washington, DC.

Council of Graduate Schools. (2012). *GradEdge,1* (4).

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches,* 2nd Ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications

de Valero, Y. F. (2001). Departmental factors affecting time-to-degree and completion rates of doctoral students at one land-grant institution. *The Journal of Higher Education, 72* (3), 341-367.

DiPierro, M. (2007). Excellence in doctoral education: defining best practices. *College Student Journal*, *41*(2), 368-375.

Eaton, J.S. (2006). Higher education, government and expectations of academic quality and accountability. *American Academic, 2*(1), 73-87.

Ehrenberg, R. G., Jakubson, G. H., Groen, J. A., So, E. & Price, J. (2007). Inside the black box of doctoral education: What program characteristics influence doctoral students' attrition and graduation probabilities? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 29*, 134-150.

Elgar, F. J. & Klein, R. M. (2004). What you don't know: Graduate deans' knowledge of doctoral completion rates. *Higher Education Policy*, *17*, 325-336.

Gardner, S. K. (2009a). Conceptualizing success in doctoral education: perspectives of faculty in seven disciplines. *The Review of Higher Education, 32*(3), 383-406.

Gardner, S. K. (2009b). The development of doctoral students: Phases of challenge and

    support. *ASHE Higher Education Report, 34* (6). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Gardner, S.K. (2010). Contrasting the socialization experiences of doctoral students in

    high and low completing departments: A qualitative analysis of disciplinary

    contexts at one institution. *The Journal of Higher Education, 81*(1). 61-81.

Golde, C.M. (2005). The role of the department and discipline in doctoral student

    attrition: Lessons from four departments. *The Journal of Higher Education,*
76(6), 669-700.

Golde, C.M. & Dore, T. M. (2001). *At cross purposes: What the experiences of doctoral*

    students reveal about doctoral education. Philadelphia: PA: Pew Charitable

    Trusts.

Gornitzka, A. & Larsen, I. M. 2004. Towards professionalisation? Restructuring of

    administrative work force in universities. *Higher Education, 47,* 455-471.

Graham, C. (2010). Hearing the voices of general staff: a Delphi study of the

    contributions of general staff to student outcomes. *Journal of Higher Education*
Policy and Management, 32(3). 213-223.

Hancock, H. & Hellawell, D. (2003). Academic middle management in higher education.

    Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 25, 5-12.

Hatch, J. A. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in educational settings.* Albany, NY;

    State University of New York Press.

Ikenberry, S. O. (2004). The dangers of public higher education's unplanned future.

    Trusteeship, 1-6.

Indiana University. (2014). Student Demographics.
(http://graduate.indiana.edu/about/demographics.shtml) viewed February 25,
2014.

Jackson, J. (1998). Contemporary criticism of role theory. *Journal of Occupational Science, 5* (2), 49-55.

Johnsrud, L. K. (2003). Higher education support professionals: The fear of speaking out. *The NEA 2003 Almanac of Higher Education,* 109-118.

Kezar, A. (2005) What campuses need to know about organizational learning and the learning organization. *New Directions for Higher Education, 131*, 7-22.

Kezar, A. (2012) Bottom-up/top-down leadership: Contradiction or hidden phenomenon. *The Journal of Higher Education, 83*(5). 725-760.

Kipper, D. A. (1991). The dynamics of role satisfactions: A theoretical model. *Journal of Group Psychodrama & Sociometry, 44* (2). 71. Retrieved from http://0=search.ebscohost.com.library.unl.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=9605072210&sites=echost.live, November 21, 2013.

Kouzes, J. M. & Posner, B. Z. (2007). *The leadership challenge.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kuo, H. (2009). Understanding relationships between academic staff and administrators: an organizational culture perspective. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 31*(1), 43-54.

Leicht, K. T. & Fennell, M. L. (2008). Who staffs the US leaning tower? Organisational change and diversity. *Equal Opportunities International, 27* (1) 88-106

Lovitts, B. E. (2001). *Leaving the ivory tower: The causes and consequences of departure from doctoral study*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

McAlpine, L. and Norton, J. (2006). Reframing our approach to doctoral programs: an integrative framework for action and research. *Higher Education Research & Development, 25* (1). 3-17.

Merton, R. K. (1968). *Social theory and social structure.* New York: The Free Press.

Michigan State University. (2014). http://www.msu.edu/about/thisismsu/facts.html. Viewed on February 25, 2014

Mills, N. (2012, Fall). The corporatization of higher education. *Dissent.* 6-9.

Musselin, C. (2007). The transformation of academic work; Facts and analysis. *Center for Studies in Higher Education Research & Occasional Paper Series: CHSE.4.07.* Retrieved on May 14, 2012 from http://cshe.berkeley.edu/publicatons/publications.php.

National Education Association Higher Education Research Center. (2003, February). The other staff: Non-teaching staff represent bulk of employees in higher education. *Update, 9(2)*, 1-2

Nerad, M. (2009). The graduate school: A model to enhance quantity and quality in PhD production. *South African Panel Report*. Retrieved May 9, 2012 from Google Scholar.

Northwestern University. (2014). http://www.northwestern.edu/about/facts/our-students-and-alumni.html.   Viewed February 25, 2014.

Northwestern University. (2013). (http://www.northwestern.edu/admissions/ graduate.html). Viewed October 20, 2013.

Nyquist, J.D. (2002). The PhD. *Change*, *34* (6), 12-21.

Nyquist, J.D. & Woodford, B.J. (2000). The Ph.D.: What concerns do we have? *Report to the Pew Charitable Trusts*.

Ohio State University, The. (2014). http://www.osu.edu/facts.php. Viewed February 25, 2014.

Paglis, L. L., Green, S. G. & Bauer, T. N. (2006). Does advisor mentoring add value? A longitudinal study of mentoring and doctoral outcomes. *Research in Higher Education, 47*(4), 451-476.

Pennsylvania State University. (2014). (http://www.budget.psu.edu/factbook/). Viewed February 25, 2014.

Purdue University. (2014). http://www.purdue.edu/oir/ Viewed on February 25, 2014.

Rhoades, G. (2001). Managing productivity in an academic institution: Rethinking the whom, which, what, and whose of productivity. *Research in Higher Education, 42*(5), 619-632.

Rhoades, G. & Maitland, C. (1998). The hidden campus workforce: (De)Investing in staff. *The NEA 1998 Almanac of Higher Education.* 109-118.

Rich, D. (2006). Academic leadership and the restructuring of higher education. *New Directions for Higher Education, 134*, 37-48.

Robbins, S. P. (2013). From the editor – Balancing the personal and professional in an era of transformed faculty roles. *Journal of Social Work Education, 49,* 191-193.

Rose, G. L. (2005). Group differences in graduate students' concepts of the ideal mentor. *Research in Higher Education, 46* (1), 53-80.

Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*, 3rd Ed. New York: Teachers College Press.

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Stake, R. E. (2010). *Qualitative research: Studying how things work*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Szekeres, J. (2004). The invisible workers. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management,26*(1), 7-22.

Szekeres, J. (2006). General staff experiences in the corporate university. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management,28*(2), 133-145.

Tierney, W. G. (1999). *Building the responsive campus*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications

Tinto, V. (1993) *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*, 2nd *Ed*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press

University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign. (2014). http://www.dmi.illinois.edu/stuenr/class/enrfa13.htm. Retrieved February 25, 2014.

University of Iowa. (2014). http://www.iu.edu/~uirr/reports/standard/factbook//.

Retrieved February 25, 2014.

University of Michigan. (2014). http://obp.umich.edu/root/facts-figures/students/.

Retrieved February 25, 2014.

University of Minnesota. (2014). http://www1.umn.edu/twincities/campus-facts/.

Retrieved February 25, 2014.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln (2014) *Factbook*. http://irp.unl.edu/institutional-

research/fact-books. Retrieved February 25, 2014.

University of Wisconsin-Madison. (2014). http://www.wisc.edu/about/facts/ Retrieved on

February 25, 2014.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2013a). Bloomington, IN.

http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/18/1805860.html. Retrieved October 19,

2013.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2013b). Champaign, IL.

http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/17/1712385.html. Retrieved October 19,

2013.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2013c). Columbus, OH.

http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/39/3918000.html. Retrieved October 20,

2013.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2013d). East Lansing, MI.

http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/26/2624120.html. Retrieved October 19,

2013.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2013e). Evanston, IL.

http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/17/1724582.html. Retrieved October 19,

2013.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2013f). Iowa City, IA.

http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/19/1938595.html. Retrieved October 19,

2013.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2013g). Minneapolis, MN.

http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/27/2743000.html. Retrieved October 19,

2013.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2013h). St. Paul, MN.

http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/27/2758000.html. Retrieved October 19,

2013.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2013i). Urbana, IL.

http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/17/1777005.html. Retrieved , October 19,

2013.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2013j). Ann Arbor, MI.

http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/26/2603000.html. Retrieved October 19,

2013.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2013k). State College, PA

http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/42/4273808.html. Retrieved October 19,

2013.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2013l). West Lafayette, IN

http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/18/1882862.html. Retrieved October 19,

2013.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2013m). Madison, WI

http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/55/5548000.html. Retrieved October 19,

2013.

Walker, G. E., Golde, C. M., Jones, L., Bueschel, A. C. & Hutchings, P. (2008). *The*

Formation of Scholars. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Weber, M. (1947). *Max Weber: The theory of social and economic organization*.

Henderson, A.M. & Parsons, T., translators. New York: Oxford University Press.

Welsh, J. F., Nunez, W. J., & Petrosko, J. (2005). Faculty and administrative support for

strategic planning: A comparison of two- and four-year institutions. *Community*

College Review, 32(4), 20-39.

West, I., Gokalp, G., Vallejo, E., Fischer, L., & Gupton, J. (2011). Exploring effective

support practices for doctoral students' degree completion. *College Student*

Journal, 45(2), 310-323

Whitchurch, C. (2009). The rise of the blended professional in higher education: a

comparison between the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States. *Higher

Education 58*, 407-418.

Appendix A

Interview Questions

Interview Questions

1. Please describe your position, how long you've been in it and if you've had any other experiences at the university.

    a. Clarifying question: What has kept you coming to work every day?

2. To what administrative office does your office report or receive support from?

    a. Clarifying question: For example, *the Graduate School*, the Academic Affairs office, Research/Grants Office or Student Affairs?

3. What changes have there been in your position in the last 5 years?

4. What changes, if any, do you anticipate within your position?

    Clarifying question: Will there be changes within the administrative reporting structure?

    Clarifying question: Will there be a change in the work processes or structure (i.e., paper vs. electronic)?

5. What are the challenges or critical issues you deal with in your position?

6. With what university populations do you work?

    a. Faculty, students, or *other* support staff?

7. If there was one thing you wish everyone knew about your role within the Graduate School *with doctoral students* what would it be?

8. Is there anything you'd like to add?

*Those words or phrases in italics will be substituted for terminology identified as Graduate School specific during interviews with departmental support staff.

Appendix B

IRB Documents
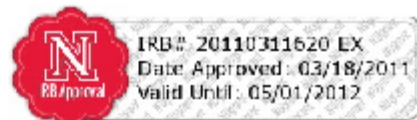
Nebraska
Lincoln

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES
Department of Educational Administration

University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Broadening the view: Interviews with "doctoral specialists"
Informed Consent Form

Identification of Project:

Broadening the view: Interviews with doctoral specialists

Purpose of the Research:

The purpose of this study is to provide insight from colleagues who are working in similar positions in peer institutions as they describe their positions and interactions with doctoral students.

Procedures:

Participation in this study will be through an interview conducted by the researcher. Interviews are being conducted with one individual from each campus (10 campuses) and will be audio-recorded. The interviews will consist of approximately eight open-ended questions and take no more than 60 minutes of your time. The interviews will take place at a location convenient to the participant. Later, the data will be transcribed. Data will be presented as a final report during class but may also be presented at conferences. An opportunity will be provided to review the interview transcript.

Risks and/or Discomforts:

There will be no known risks or discomforts to any participant.

Benefits/Compensation:

There will be no compensation and no obvious benefit to any participant for their involvement in the study.
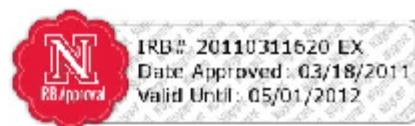
Confidentiality:

Any information obtained during this study which could identify you will be kept strictly confidential. The data will be kept in a locked cabinet for two years and will only be seen by the investigators for this study. Pseudonyms will be assigned for participants during the time of the interview and reporting of the data. Any confidential information concerning the job will not be requested or noted during the interview.

Opportunity to Ask Questions:

Participants may ask questions about the study at any time. If after the interview is over, you wish to contact me, you may do kinfind46@hotmail.com. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject that have not been answered by the investigator or to report any concerns about the study, you may contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board, telephone (402) 472-6965.

Freedom to Withdraw:

You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigators or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, or your institution. If you do withdraw, your data will not be used.

Consent, Right to Receive a Copy:

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. Your signature certifies that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented. A copy of this consent form will be given you for your records.

_____ I agree to be audio taped during the interview.

Signature of Participant:

_____   _____

Research Participant's signature   Date

Name and Phone Number/email of investigator:
Eva Burns Bachman, 429-2388, kinfind46@hotmail.com
Marilyn Grady, 472-0974, mgrady1@unl.edu

Emails soliciting participation and follow-up after interview scheduled:

(Approved by IRB)

Dear:

My name is Eva Bachman. I am a doctoral student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln beginning my research for my doctoral dissertation. My professional role is that of the Doctoral Programs Specialist at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The research interfaces those two roles.

I believe it will be beneficial to all of us to "hear others speak" about their job working with doctoral students. To do this, I would like to interview you about your work. This would be arranged at your convenience and will take place at a location convenient for you. It should no more than one hour.

If you are willing to speak with me, may I set up a time to visit with you? (If they say, yes, we'll arrange a time; if no, then no further contact will be made).

Thank you very much for your time.

Eva Burns Bachman   Marilyn Grady, Ph.D. (advisor)
University of Nebraska-Lincoln   University of Nebraska-Lincoln
4125 B St.   128 Teac
Lincoln, NE 68510   Lincoln, NE 68588-0360
ebachman1@unl.edu
402-429-2388 (cell)

IF YES: Follow-up

Dear:

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me to talk about your work with doctoral students. We have arranged to meet on MM DD, 2012/13 at ????AM/PM. I will meet you at ???? (location).

As noted when I first contacted you, this should take no more than 60 minutes. I am including a Letter of Consent for you to review and sign. If you would bring it with you when you come to the interview I would appreciate it.

You are free to withdraw from this at any time. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at ebachman1@unl.edu or 402/472-8669.

See you soon.

Eva Burns Bachman	Marilyn Grady, Ph.D. (advisor)
University of Nebraska-Lincoln	University of Nebraska-Lincoln
4125 B St.	128 Teac
Lincoln, NE 68510	Lincoln, NE 68588-0360
ebachman1@unl.edu	
402-429-2388 (cell)	

Email cover accompanying text of interview when sent for validation:

Dear:

Thank you for talking to me about your position. I enjoyed the interview. As promised, I am sending you the script of the interview for your verification of its accuracy. Once you have read the document, by response to this email would you please indicate the following:

1) I have read the script and it accurately reflects the interview. No changes required.

2) I have read the script, please make the following changes:

Again, thank you for your time and willingness to participate.

Sincerely,
Eva Burns Bachman   Marilyn Grady, Ph.D. (advisor)
University of Nebraska-Lincoln   University of Nebraska-Lincoln
4125 B St.   128 Teac
Lincoln, NE 68510   Lincoln, NE 68588-0360
ebachman1@unl.edu, 402-429-2388 (cell)

Appendix C

Institutions within the Big Ten

Institutions within the Big Ten
(Fall 2013 statistics)

University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign)   Established:1867, Land Grant
     Fall 2013 Total Student Population: 43,398
     Fall 2013 Graduate & Professional Students: 11,104
     Number of Campuses in system: 1
     URLs: Facts: http://www.dmi.illinois.edu/stuenr/class/enrfa13.htm
     Graduate: http://www.grad.illinois.edu/faculty-staff

Indiana University   (Bloomington)   Established:1820
     Fall 2013 Total Student Population: 36,817
     Fall 2013 Graduate & Professional Students: 9,905
     Number of Campuses in system: 8
URLs: Facts: http://www.iu.edu/~uirr/reports/standard/factbook/
     Graduate: http://www.indiana.edu/~grdschl/index.php

University of Iowa   (Iowa City)   Established:1847
     Fall 2013 Total Student Population: 31,065
     Fall 2013 Graduate & Professional Students: 9.091
     Number of Campuses in system: 1
URLs: Facts: http://www.uiowa.edu/facts/
     Graduate: http://www.grad.uiowa.edu/

Michigan State University   (East Lansing)   Established:1855, Land Grant
     Fall 2013 Total Student Population: 49,300
     Fall 2013 Graduate & Professional Students: 11,355
     Number of Campuses in system: 1
URLs: Facts: http://www.msu.edu/about/thisismsu/facts.html
     Graduate: http://grad.msu.edu/

University of Michigan (Ann Arbor)   Established: 1817
     Fall 2013 Total Student Population: 43,710
     Fall 2013 Graduate & Professional Students: 15,427
     Number of Campuses in system: 3
URLs: Facts: http://obp.umich.edu/root/facts-figures/common-data-set/
     Graduate: http://www.rackham.umich.edu/

University of Minnesota (Minneapolis/St. Paul)   Established:1851, Land Grant
    Fall 2013 Total Student Population: 51,526
    Fall 2013 Graduate & Professional Students: 16,672
    Number of Campuses in system: 5
URLs: Facts: http://www1.umn.edu/twincities/campus-facts/
    Graduate: http://www.grad.umn.edu/index.htm

University of Nebraska (Lincoln)   Established:1869, Land Grant
    Fall 2013 Total Student Population: 24,445
    Fall 2013 Graduate & Professional Students: 5,069
    Number of Campuses in System: 4
URLs: Facts: http://irp.unl.edu/factbooks.html
    Graduate: http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/

Northwestern University (Evanston, 2145 Sheridan Rd) Established: 1851
    Fall 2013 Total Student Population: 17,072
    Fall 2013 Graduate & Professional Students: 9,722
    Number of Campuses in system: 3
URLs: Facts: http://www.northwestern.edu/about/facts/our-students-and-alumni.html
    Graduate: http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/

The Ohio State University (Columbus)   Established:1870, Land Grant
    Fall 2013 Total Student Population: 63,964
    Fall 2013 Graduate & Professional Students: 13,413
    Number of Campuses in system: 6
URLs: Facts: http://www.osu.edu/visitors/aboutohiostate.php
    http://www.osu.edu/osutoday/stuinfo.php#enroll
    Graduate: http://www.gradsch.osu.edu/

Pennsylvania State University (University Park)   Established:1861, Land Grant
    Fall 2013 Total Student Population: 46,184
    Fall 2013 Graduate & Professional Students: 6,099
    Number of Campuses in system: 6
URLs: Facts: http://www.budget.psu.edu/factbook/
    Graduate: http://www.gradsch.psu.edu/

Purdue University (West Lafayette)   Established:1869, Land Grant
    Fall 2013 Total Student Population: 38,788
    Fall 2013 Graduate & Professional Students: 9,348
    Number of Campuses in system: 5
URLs: Facts: http://www.purdue.edu/oir/
    Graduate: http://www.gradschool.purdue.edu/

University of Wisconsin-Madison   Established:1848, Land Grant
    Fall 2013 Total Student Population: 43,275
    Fall 2013 Graduate & Professional Students: 11,956
    Number of Campuses in system: 26
URLs: Facts: http://www.wisc.edu/about/facts/
    Graduate: http://www.grad.wisc.edu/

Appendix D

Organizational Charts

Big Ten Universities

Dean

Assoc. Dean — Assistant Dean — Asst Dir., Career Serv.

Postdoc

Assoc. Dean — Assistant Dean

Dir., External Fellowships — Asst. Dir., External Fellowships — HR Assocs.

Dir., Assts/ Fellows. — HR Assocs.

Dir., Educ Equity Program

Admin Aide

Assoc. Dean

Dir. Comm.

Bus/Admin Assoc.

Admin Bud. Clerk

Dir. Info. Mngt.

Grad Data Spec

Info. Spec

Info. Tech

Office Managers

Off Supp Spec

Front Desk

Assoc. Dean — Assistant Dean

Dir. PSM

PSM Off. Supp Spec

Dir. Acad Prog/Pol

Asst Dir., Postdoc/T

Thesis/ Std Dev Spec.

Dir. Acad Services

Asst. Dir. Acad. Serv.

Dir., Grad/Pro Adms.

Admiss. Coord.

Admission/ Records

DRAFT

University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign
Graduate School

Indiana University
Graduate School

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA
GRADUATE College

Associate Provost for Graduate Education and Dean
John C. Keller

Secretary IV
Kathy Klein
(50% of effort)

Departments/Programs

- School of Library and Info Sciences
  David Eichmann, Director
- School of Urban and Regional Planning
  Charles Connerly, Director
- Center for the Book
  Tim Barrett, Director
- International Writing Program
  Christopher Merrill, Director
- University of Iowa Press
  James McCoy, Director
- Scholarly Integrity
  Minnetta Gardiner, Director

Interdisciplinary Graduate Degree Programs
- Applied Mathematical & Computational Sciences (Gerhard Strohmer, Dir.)
- Genetics (Dan Ebert, Dir.)
- Human Toxicology (Larry Robertson, Dir.)
- Immunology (Steve Varga, Dir.)
- Informatics (John Keller, Dir. with Adv Cte
- Molecular and Cellular Biology (Frederick Domann, Dir.)
- Neurosciences (Daniel Tranel, Dir.)
- Second Language Acquisition (Judith Liskin-Gasparro, Co-Dir., Roumyana Slabakova, Co-Dir.)

Dean's Staff

Director of Finance & Human Resources
Donna Welter

Administrator,
HR and Finance
Sandy Gay

Clerk IV
Jennifer Crawford

Program Coordinator
Liz Crooks

Strategic Communications Manager
Jennifer Masada

Writer/Editor
John Riehl

Director of Info Technology
Andy Jenkins

IT Support
Consultant
Derrick Johnson

Application
Developer
Matthew Arant

Advisory Committees

Graduate Council
(Serves as executive committee of graduate faculty and as advisory committee to the Dean)

Postdoctoral Education Advisory Committee

Senior Associate Dean for Academic Programs
Dale E. Wurster
Academic Programs, Academic Progress, Degree Requirements, Grievances

Academic Affairs
Coordinator
Eunice Prosser

Secretary III
Cindy Fetters

Director of Academic Affairs
Heidi Arbisi-Kelm
Theses/Dissertations, Special Student Advisor, New Program Review

Clerk III (50%)
Kris Grinstead

Clerk III (50%)
Matthew Pollard

Secretary IV
Kathy Klein
(50% of effort)

Associate Dean for Student & Administrative Affairs
Daniel Berkowitz
Planning, Scholarships, Fellowships, Graduation, Off-Campus & International Programs

Assoc Director
Grad Student Success
Jennifer Teitle

Associate Dean for Recruitment and Professional Development and Director, Graduate Inclusion
Minnetta Gardiner
Diversity, Recruitment Outreach, Orientation, Retention

Secretary III
Paul Mentel

Admissions & Enroll
Serv Specialist/Coord
Joseph Henry

Office of Graduate
Inclusion
Director
TBN

Admin Services
Coordinator
Ann Dudler

Diversity &
Inclusion
Coordinator
Diana Bryant

Postdoctoral
Scholars Office
Program
Coordinator
Kim Chickering

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA GRADUATE College

Associate Provost for Graduate Education and Dean
John C. Keller

Departments

Interdisciplinary Graduate Degree Programs and Other Programs

School of Library and Information Science
David Eichmann, Director

- Carol Ives Program Coordinator 50%
- Vicki MacLeod Secretary III
- Jim Elmborg, Associate Professor
  Jennifer Burek Pierce, Asst. Prof.
  Patricia Katopol, Asst. Prof.
  Joan Bessman Taylor, Asst. Prof.

Center for the Book. Tim Barrett, Director
UI/CB Paper Facility, Director
- Kathleen Tandy Admin Services Coord 50%
- Matt Brown Associate Professor 50%
- Julie Leonard Associate Professor

School of Urban and Regional Planning
Charles Connerly, Director
- Janet Bell Career Services Coord (75%)
- Tanya Kooi Grad Adm Coord (50%)
- Pam Butler Admin Services Coord
- Nick Benson Program Coordinator IA Initiative for Sustainable Comm
- Jerry Anthony, Assoc. Prof.
  John Fuller, Prof.
  Richard Funderburg, Asst. Prof.
  Lucie Laurian, Asst. Prof.
  Miwa Matsuo, Asst. Prof.
  Phuong Nguyen, Asst. Prof.
  Scott Spak, Asst. Prof.
  Aaron Strong, Asst. Prof.

International Writing Program
Christopher Merrill, Director
- Kelly Bedeian Program Coord 70%
- Maria Bertorello Admin Services Coordinator 50%
- Lisa Dupree Admin Services Coord 75%
- Hugh Ferrer Assoc Director 80%
- Susannah Shive 50% Distance Lrn Crd
- A. Davidson 75% Outreach Crd
- Natasa Durovicova, Editor 60%
- Kelly Morse BTL Admin Serv Coord 75%

Immunology
Steve Varga, Director
Molecular & Cellular Bio
Frederick Domann, Dir
- Paulette Villhauer Academic Program Management & Services Specialist
- Joshua Lobb Academic Prgm Mng Serv Assoc

Genetics
Dan Eberl, Director
Neuroscience
Daniel Tranel, Director
- Keavy Saul Academic Program Management & Services Specialist
- Linda Hurst Clerk IV

Applied Mathematical & Computational Sciences
Gerhard Strohmer, Director

Second Language Acquisition
Judith Liskin-Gasparro, Co-Dir
Roumyana Slabakova, Co-Dir

Human Toxicology
Larry Robertson, Director

Informatics
John Keller, Director with Adv. Cte.
- Carol Ives Program Coordinator 50%

University of Iowa Press
James McCoy, Director
Karen Copp, Assoc Direct/Design/Prod Mngr
Elizabeth Chretien, Acquisitions Editor
Allison Means, Marketing Director
Faye Schillig, Assistant to the Director
Charlotte Wright, Managing Editor
Catherine Cocks, Acquisitions Editor

The Graduate School Organizational Chart

4/2/2013

Karen Klomparens — Dean — 96%

Tony Nunez — Associate Dean — 60%

Judith Stoddart — Associate Dean — 40%

Rique Campa — Associate Dean — 40%

Terry May — Responsible Conduct of Research Coord. — 10%

Julius Jackson — Associate Dean — 60%

Melissa McDaniels — Assistant Dean and Director, Teaching Assistant Program — 80%

Zeynep Altinsel — Teaching Assistant Prgm — 100%

Steven Thomas — Program Coordinator — 75%

Jennifer Bertram — University Advancement — 100%

Katie Kelly — Communications — 100%

Amber Authur — Univ Advancement

Maura Benton — Univ Advancement

Matt Helm — Director, Graduate Student Life & Wellness AND PhD Career Services — 50%

Julia McNallan — PhD Career Services — 25%

TBA — Intern'l Recruiter — 30%

Esther Reed — IT Manager — 100%

Mikala Rioux — Budget Manager — 100%

Melissa Del Rio — Office Manager — 100%

Denise Greenhoe — Office Assistant — 50%

TBA — Office Assistant — 100%

Deanne Hubbell — Office Assistant — 100%

Trina Trefil — Secretary — 100%

Legend:
- Executive Management & Faculty
- AP SA
- APA
- CT

Revised April 2013

Rackham Graduate School

Janet A. Weiss
Vice Provost for Academic Affairs – Graduate Studies and Dean of the Graduate School

Donna Reed
Chief Administrative Officer

Business Services, Fellowships, and Dean's Office

Affiliated Units Reporting to Rackham
ADVANCE
Arts of Citizenship Institute for Human Adjustment Michigan Quarterly Review Society of Fellows

Mary Weigelin
Assistant to the Dean

Sara Blair
Associate Dean

John Godfrey
Assistant Dean for International Education

Peter Hitchcock
Associate Dean

Mike Solomon
Associate Dean

Shelly Connor
Assistant Dean for Academic Planning and Policy

Institutional Research

Tabbye Chavous
Associate Dean

Donna Huprich
Director of Academic Records and Dissertations

Jill McDonough
Director of Development and Alumni Relations

Rex Patterson
Senior Director of Information Technology Services

Mark Kamimura-Jimenez
Director of Graduate Student Success

Monique Washington
Director of Admissions

Rackham_OrgCharts_6-20-13.vsd

134

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Graduate School
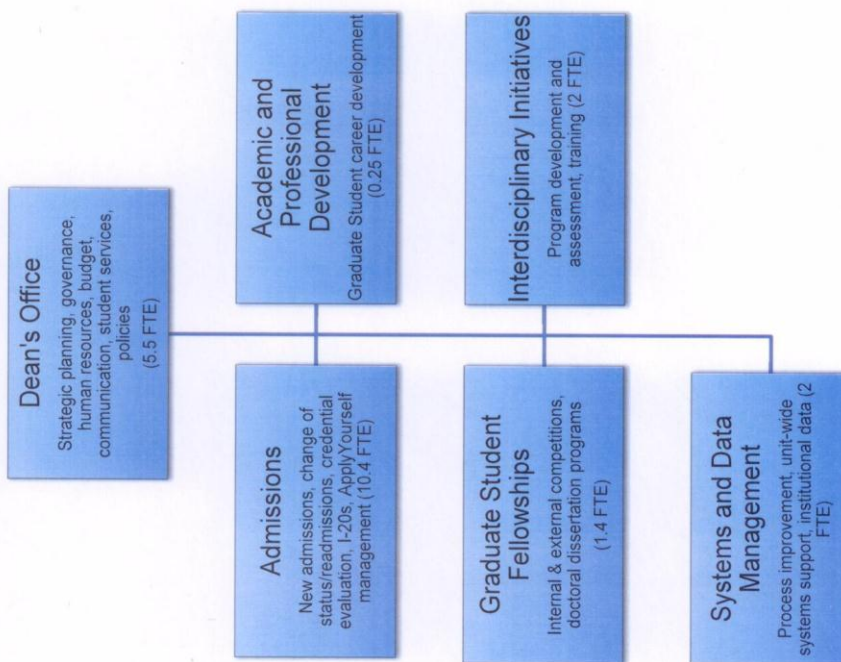
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Office of Graduate Studies

Northwestern University
Graduate School
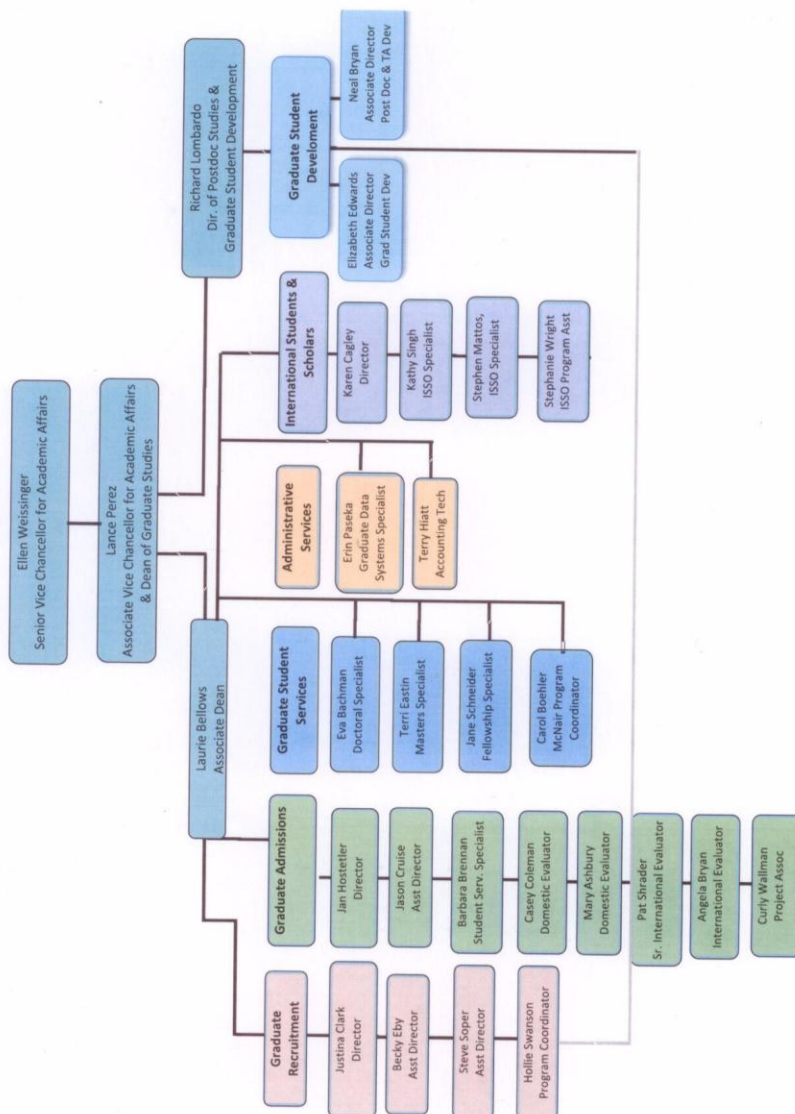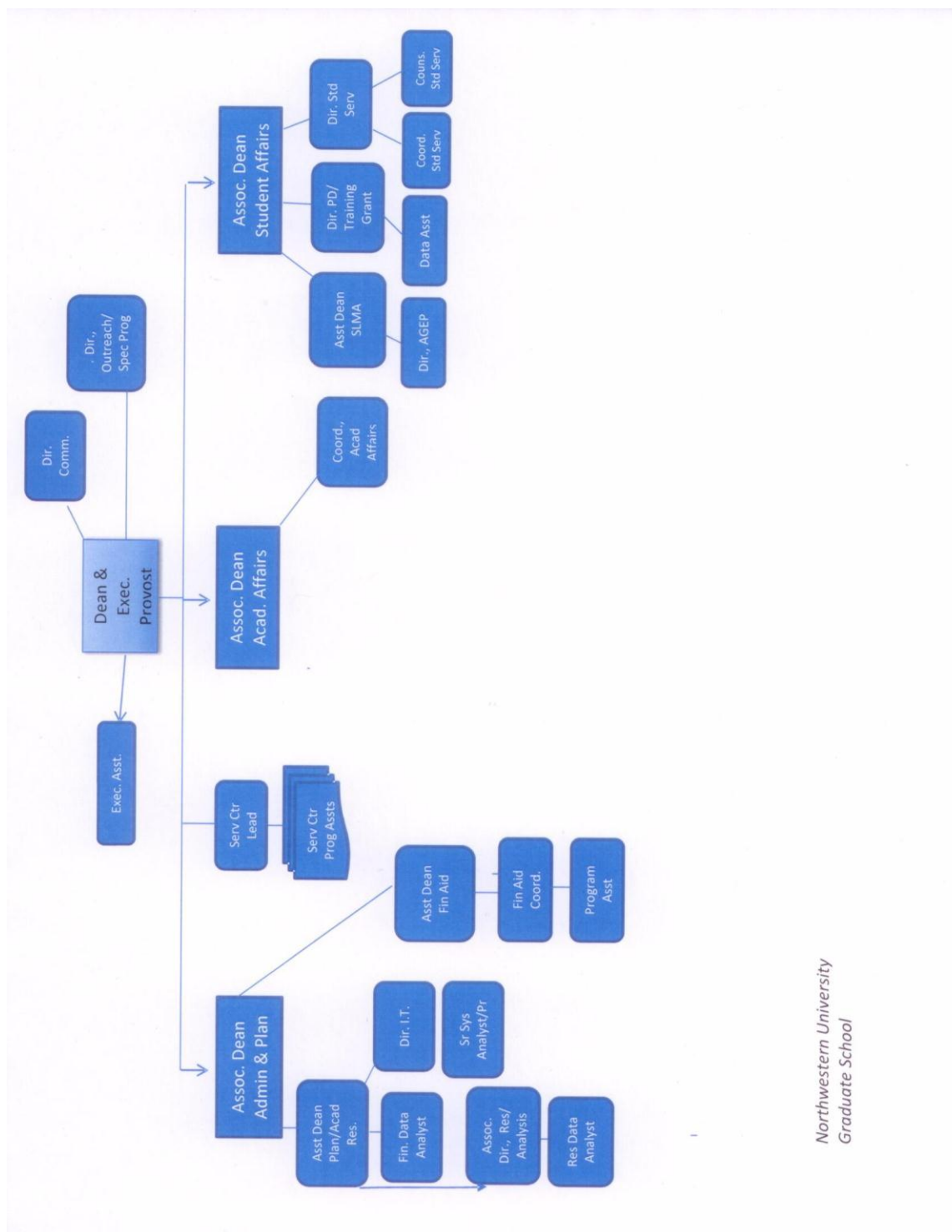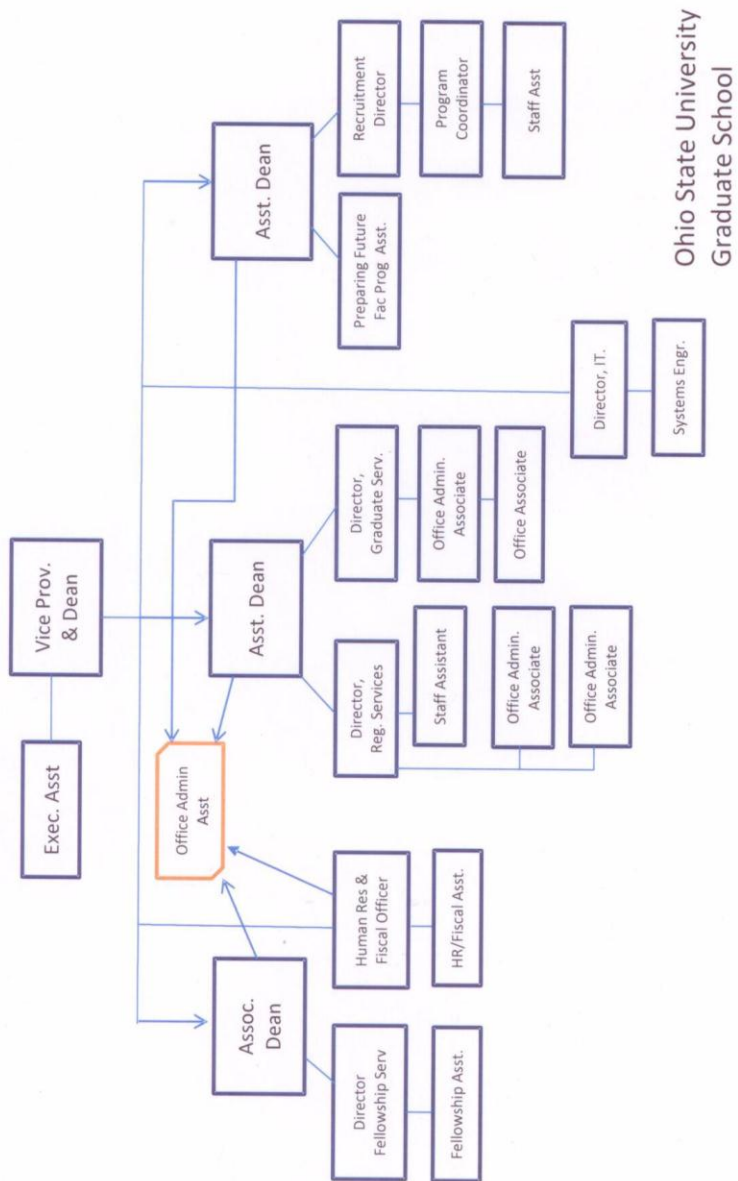
Ohio State University Graduate School

The Graduate School, Penn State
Organizational Chart

Nicholas Jones
Executive Vice President and Provost

Regina Vasilatos-Younken
Interim Dean of the Graduate School

Interim Vice President for Research

Chad Simpson
Manager, Human Resources**

Human Resources Generalists (2)**

Gary Stroschein
Financial Officer (Controller)/Director of Business Services

Lynne Williams
Assistant to Financial Officer**

Elizabeth Price
Executive Director of Graduate Education Administration and Special Assistant to the Dean

Executive Assistant

Administrative Support Assistants (4)

Intercollege Graduate Degree Programs*

Kathleen Simon
College of Medicine
Administrative Assistant

Cynthia Nicosia
Director
Graduate Enrollment Services

Associate Director

Graduate Enrollment Coordinators (9)

Coordinator, Office of Theses and Dissertations

Editorial Assistant, Office of Theses and Dissertations

Administrative Support Assistants (5)

Marilyn Engle
Director
Graduate Alumni and Public Relations

Project Manager

Suzanne Adair
Assistant Dean for Graduate Student Affairs
Director, Office of Postdoctoral Affairs

Office of Postdoctoral Affairs

Graduate Writing Center

Stephanie Preston
Senior Director, Graduate Educational Equity Programs

Administrative Support Assistant

Teresa Tassotti***
Director
Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program

Academic Coordinator***

Administrative Support Assistant***

Barbara Struble
Director
Graduate Fellowships and Awards Administration

Assistant Director

Lori Cottrill
Director
Network Operations and Data Systems

Programmer/Analysts (5)

Systems Administrator

IT Support Specialist

Strategic Information Analyst

10/1/2013

The Graduate School
Purdue University
Organizational Chart
March 2012

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Graduate School

Graduate School Administration

Martin T. Cadwallader
Vice Chancellor for Research and Dean of the Graduate School

Associate Vice Chancellors for Research Policy

Petra Schroeder
Administration
Associate Dean

Center Directors

Academic Associate Deans

Wendy Crone
Graduate Education
Associate Dean

Dan Uhlrich
Senior Associate Vice Chancellor for Research Policy

William Barker
Director, Office of Research Policy
Director, Office of Industrial Partnerships

William Mellon
Associate Vice Chancellor for Research Policy (for Select Agents, Export Controls and Cybersecurity)

Brian Fox
Interim Associate Vice Chancellor for Research Policy (for Industrial Partnerships and Conflict of Interest)

Mark Field
Information Technology
Director, Computer Services

Julie Karpelenia
Human Resources
Assistant Dean

Nick Novak
Research Services
Assistant Dean

Russell Schwalbe
Accounting
Assistant Dean

Aquatic Sciences Center
Arboretum
Biotechnology Center
Biotron
Institute on Aging
Molecular Virology
Cell & Molecular Biology
Primate Research Center
PSL/SRC
RARC
SSEC
UW Press
Waisman Center
WID
WIPAC
Stem Cell

Steve Ackerman
Physical Sciences
Associate Dean

Lea Jacobs
Arts and Humanities
Associate Dean

Daniel Kleinman
Social Studies
Associate Dean

Donna Paulnock
Biological Sciences
Associate Dean

Alissa Ewer
Professional Development and Engagement
Assistant Dean

Steve Hahn
Admissions and Academic Services
Assistant Dean

Kelly Haslam
Academic Assessment and Funding
Assistant Dean

Dorothy Sanchez
Engagement for Inclusion & Diversity
Assistant Dean

12/7/2013

Appendix E

Coding Table

Table 3. Coding Table

Theme	SubTheme	Codes
Change	Process	Switching systems Changed from quarter to semester Going electronic dissertation and theses Working/moving to on electronic forms Moving to electronic processes Application times (processes) Grading scale
	Personnel	Student service staff has shrunk Resources have diminished Additional Dean in administration of office Department support staff changing frequently Graduate School staff turnover Added staff Graduate college reorganization Decentralization Reporting structure changed. Training of staff Trained many bosses
	Responsibilities	The position has evolved considerably Responsibilities have grown Making sure our policies have a positive effect on students More emphasis on accountability – students and programs; Job is looking different day to day Breadth of responsibilities changed
Work Interactions	Administrative	Work closely with other offices Award degrees Work with: Dean of Graduate Studies, Graduate Committee Chair Director of Graduate Enrollment Services Assoc. Dean of Graduate Studies Asst. Dean of Graduate Studies Director, Academic Services, Registrar, Admissions Fellowship office, International Office, Degree OfficeHuman Resources
	Academic	Decentralized graduate education services Reviewing requests for committees Work with dept. staff and faculty Service center for students, dept, faculty All application materials go to each individual program Provide oversight to dissertation or records evaluators Degree Audit Work with: Department Chair (3), Asst Dept Head Working in conjunction with grad programs

Theme	SubTheme	Codes
Work Interactions	Students	Give seminars to students. Ensure professional development opportunities are available Take care of students from their first enrollment until their graduation. Follow students from admission to graduation Review/approve all student files Responsible for processing all of the dissertations/theses Program plans, work on graduation, anything they need done Assisting/working with students We're here to advocate for them – our primary position Make sure student fulfill all requirements/ready for degree completion Assist people with their degrees Communicating policies to students & programs Provide guidance and support to students Provide information for degree completion
Policy		Review policies Review issues with the dean Develop procedures Enforce policies Changes to policies Policies (tweaking so they're beneficial for students) Board of Regents Graduate Council Graduate Handbooks Department Handbooks
Roles		Customer relations Look after day-to-day stuff Managing a lot of stuff Maintain integrity of degree
	Problem-solver	Responsible for making sure things go smoothly, untying knots. If they don't know who to contact to get something done - I'm the person I'm the one who solves the problems
	Middle-man	I'm the individual who's kind of between the front office personnel and the Sr. Assoc. Dean Middle-man, go-to person Run interference, catchall
	Anonymous	Anonymity They don't understand what I do All I do is produce the paperwork Paper pusher