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FACULTY ROLE IN STUDENT CAREER PREPAREDNESS:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY

Marianne Jacullo Brosnan

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Higher Education Leadership Management and Policy
Seton Hall University
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ABSTRACT

As chief architects of curriculum, faculty are largely responsible for student learning outcomes. Given the cost of higher education and the amount of debt students incur, higher education stakeholders want to know if higher education is worth the investment.

Student career preparedness is an important goal of higher education. While research has been dedicated to college student development, career decision-making, and student-faculty interaction from a student perspective, little is known about the faculty perspective and their role in student career preparedness in a specific articulated way.

In this study, the phenomenological perspective provided a framework for data collection and analysis. Using qualitative data gathered from 10 faculty and one career services administrator through surveys and in-depth, semi-structured interviews, this dissertation investigated the participants' perceptions of the faculty role in student career preparedness, the ways in which they support undergraduate career preparedness in and outside of the classroom, and possible differences in perception and behavior detected by subgroups. Selected syllabi were examined for supporting factors and institutional websites were examined to determine the environmental conditions that can influence faculty behavior and provide messaging to stakeholders.

This study recognizes that students can acquire career preparedness through background contextual affordances, such as exposure to social and learning opportunities, and directly through learning experiences. Faculty can influence these through their interactions with students. This study identified environmental conditions, environmental response, social knowledge, self-knowledge, sociodemographic characteristics, and career influences on faculty behavior related to student career preparedness.

Through thorough data analysis several common themes emerged: (a) Faculty strongly agree that undergraduates need support and guidance in determining their career direction and agree that employment after college is a priority goal of higher education. Faculty feel they can influence student career preparedness through high-impact practices and assignments, advising and mentoring behavior, and connections to useful resources on and off campus. (b)

Effectiveness of student–faculty relationships and potential outcomes is largely dependent on an understanding of shared responsibility that the institution, faculty, and most critically, the students must mutually grasp and enact, but effectiveness is also related to faculty disciplines, careers, backgrounds, and connections. (c) The most noteworthy differences among subgroups are related to the subtle but disparate behavior by faculty disciplines of professional track faculty vs. liberal arts and sciences track faculty, with occasions of overlap between these subgroup tracks. Faculty have an appreciation for first-generation student struggles, who might lack social and cultural capital, and especially by those faculty with their own first-generation experiences. Those faculty with longevity in their careers and life (ages 66–85) urge the importance of students to embrace an attitude of life-long learning that has served each of them well. (d) Faculty feel barriers to supporting student career preparedness include: lack of career-related knowledge by faculty; lack of faculty time; student academic deficits and distractions which impedes development of helpful relationships with faculty. Clear communication of the importance of shared roles in student career preparedness remains a barrier for institutional effectiveness. A comprehensive system of career preparedness is presented as a model for practice and policy improvement.

Keywords: Faculty behavior; Student career development; Workplace readiness; High-impact practices; Faculty advising and mentoring; First-generation students; College student career preparedness system; Student cultural and social capital; Higher education goals.

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DEDICATION

For Tim Brosnan, forever and always my partner, my friend, my love.

And for anyone who can't quit.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There are convincing reasons to care about undergraduate career development and outcomes, the role faculty perceive they play, and how they enact this role and why. While universities and colleges prepare a diverse student population to join many professions, amplified pressure from stakeholders in higher education requires colleges to become increasingly accountable for student career development and preparedness that lead to desired outcomes (U.S. Department of Education, 2006; Dey & Cruzvergara, 2014; Franek, Soto, O’Toole, Staff of the Princeton Review, 2016; Humphreys, 2009; Kelchen, 2018; Kuh, 2009a; Lipka, 2008a; Rampell, 2015; Supiano, 2013).

Even with low unemployment, this scrutiny is particularly important given the increasing societal focus on the return on tuition investment and the outspoken demand: Is college worth it? There is continuing debate over the value of a higher education and its necessity in the marketplace (Becker et al., 1992; Clark, 2016; Schleifer & Silliman, 2016). Stakeholders ask colleges to prove they are a good investment (Dey & Cruzvergara 2014; Folsom & Reardon, 2003; Franek et al., 2016; Kelchen, 2016; Lipka, 2008a; Princeton Review, 2015; Supiano, 2013), and they hold the institutions accountable to produce high-skilled workers, particularly given the alarming \$1.5 trillion national student loan debt (Kelchen, 2018). This is compounded by the fact that nearly 70% of all students have debt, with individual graduates typically owing \$30,000–40,000 for their education (Kelchen, 2018). Kelchen (2016) asserts that taking on debt can be an outstanding investment, but *only if students end up getting good jobs* [emphasis added].

The increased attention on and pressures to boost student career preparedness generate interest in institutional responses. Clydesdale (2015), like others who champion a liberal education, such as the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), warns that the college years should not focus on the singular goal of career training, and college students should not forgo the big questions about who they are and how they can change the world for the better. Nevertheless, there is an urgency inspired by stakeholders who are concerned specifically with measurable student career outcomes in terms of higher education accountability, particularly given the enormity of investment and student debt (U.S. Department of Education, 2006; Kelchen, 2018; Schleifer & Silliman, 2016; U.S. Department of Education, 2015). With increased pressure, colleges and universities are eager to prepare students not just for awarding degrees, but for their role in the world and their careers (Howard, 2004; Schleifer & Silliman, 2016).

The AAC&U suggests that higher education is in a period of profound transformation because society itself is setting higher expectations for citizens and workers in the 21st century (Clydesdale, 2015; U.S. Department of Education, 2006; Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016; AAC&U as cited in Humphreys, 2009; Kuh, 2009b; Schleifer & Silliman, 2016; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). Colleges must equip students with not only a good education, including self-reflection and self-understanding, but also the ability to *adapt* to the competencies and skills required in an ever-changing workplace (Clydesdale, 2015; U.S. Department of Education, 2006; Humphreys, 2009; Kuh, 2009b; Lipka, 2008a; Supiano, 2013). Hollister (2010) and Clydesdale (2015) submit that preparing students professionally is essential to the stability of the local, national, and global economy and recognize the role

of the university in this objective. Once only the domain of career services offices, undergraduate career preparedness and outcomes have thus become a wider concern for American higher education and its stakeholders (The Atlantic, 2015; Kuh, 2008). Faculty, too, largely agree: 81.9% believe that “preparing students for employment after college” is an “essential” or “very important” goal for undergraduates, according to the Higher Education Research Institute Faculty Survey (Eagan, Stolzenberg, Ramirez, et al., 2014, p. 32). There is evidence American college students are widely concerned about their career development and outcomes, as well.

According to college freshmen in a CIRP survey (Eagan, Stolzenberg, Ramirez, Aragon, Suchard, & Hurtado, 2014), four of the seven top “very important” reasons for attending college include career-related concepts: “ability to get a better job,” “to get training for a specific career,” “to be able to make more money,” or “to prepare myself for graduate or professional school”(p. 38). The ability to make more money as very important in their decision to go to college is similar for male and female students and has increased gradually and consistently over nearly a 40-year period of study.

Additionally, there has been much attention in the popular media regarding college costs, return on investment (ROI), and student career outcomes as well (*The Atlantic*, 2015; Kelchen, 2016; PayScale.com, 2016). Data on salary outcomes have become increasingly more common by the government and other entities (Franek et al., 2016; PayScale.com, 2016; U.S. Department of Education, 2015; Stratford, 2015).

Problem Statement

Whether considered through the lens of contribution, accountability, or blame, American higher education is the understandably the focus of the student career outcomes

conversation. Importantly, there cannot be a conversation about career outcomes without an exploratory look at the career development and preparation made possible through higher education institutions and the perceptions, behavior, attitudes, and motivations of their faculty.

Theoretical Orientation

Several theories are pertinent to this study including Blackburn and Lawrence's theoretical model on faculty behavior (1995), Lent and Brown's (2013, p. G) model of career self-management that extends Bandura's (1986) social cognitive career theory (SCCT), which frames the relationship between experiences and the formation of self-efficacy.

Blackburn and Lawrence (1995) take the theoretical perspective that the characteristics of individuals and their employing institutions combine and lead to variations in faculty motivation, behavior, and productivity. Generally speaking, the thick arrows in Blackburn and Lawrence's model signify the strong direct effects of the variables in one category on the variables in the category to which the arrow points. The thin arrows acknowledge that there are weaker effects between several of the principal concepts. (Figure 1)

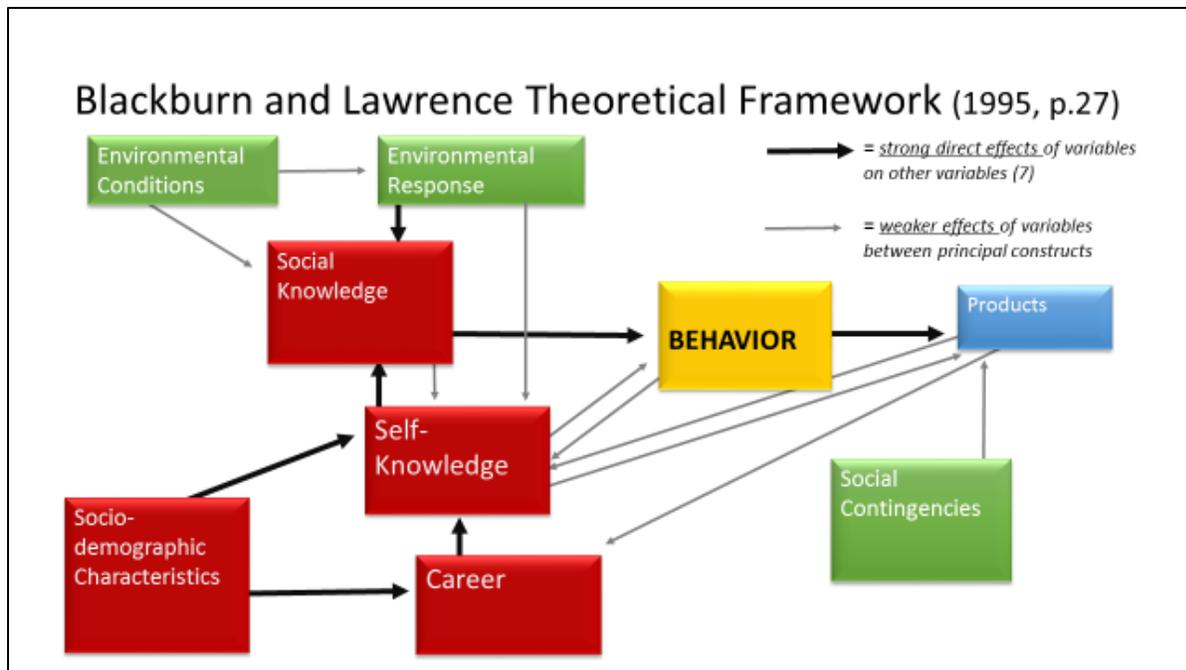


Figure 1. Blackburn and Lawrence theoretical framework (1995). Source: R. T. Blackburn and J. H. Lawrence (1995). Faculty at Work: Motivation, Expectation, Satisfaction. Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 27. Reprinted with permission.

Lent and Brown (2013, p. 562) propose a model of career self-management that extends Social cognitive career theory (SCCT; Bandura, 1986), which frames the relationship between experiences and the formation of self-efficacy. Central to Bandura’s social cognitive theory (1986) and its extensions into career theory is the concept of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is an individual’s belief in their ability to perform a given task in the future, regardless of their current ability (Bandura, 1986). Students can benefit from out-of-the classroom experiences by watching others and participating in hands-on activities that challenge them to think, plan, and execute (Majewski, 2018). This theory encourages students to self-manage by focusing on the adjustments to behaviors that influence career development, including career exploration, decision-making, job searching, and identity management (Majewski, 2018). Faculty in their

academic roles have vast influence on students' learning experiences and thereby impact student self-efficacy and outcome expectation in student career self-management.

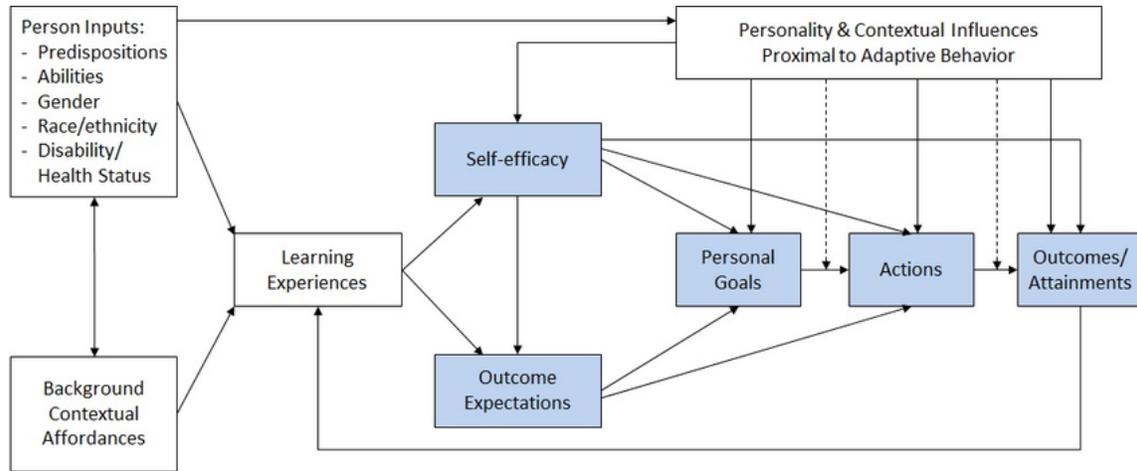


Figure 2. Model of career self-management. Adapted from “Social Cognitive Model of Career Self- Management: Toward A Unifying View Of Adaptive Career Behavior Across Life Span,” by R. W. Lent, S. D. Brown, 2013, *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 60, p. 562. Copyright 1993 by R.W. Lent, S. D. Brown and G. Hackett. Reprinted with permission.

Secondary Source: “Does College Experience Matter? A National Study Understanding Graduates’ Job Satisfaction” by K. R. Majewski, 2018, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Seton Hall University. p. 20. Reprinted with permission.

Overview of Study

Given the lack of clear knowledge in prior research on faculty’s perception of their role in student career preparedness, this study addressed the following questions:

- Q1: How do faculty perceive their role in student career preparedness?
- Q2: In what ways, if any, do faculty support undergraduate career preparedness in and outside the classroom?
- Q3: What differences in perception and behavior, if any, exist by subgroups (discipline, rank, age, gender, longevity in academia, tenure, parental and first-generation status)?

To seek answers to these research questions, I conducted a qualitative study at a small, private Catholic university in the northeastern United States known for teaching and professional studies. My methodology is outlined in Chapter III. The study includes multiple sources of data, including in-depth, semi-structured and open-ended interviews of faculty participants from two areas, specifically the professional track majors, including nursing, education, art therapy, communication and media, business and liberal arts and sciences track majors, including biology, chemistry, history, and psychology. I also interview the career services administrator for her views on faculty role in student career preparedness at this institution.

Interviews were approximately 60 to 90 minutes in length and conducted at an agreed-upon location and followed up with emails and telephone conversations when clarification was needed. All interviews were audio-recorded and/or transcribed. During the in-depth interviews, participants answered background information surveys, a vital aspect of the data gathering to arrive at the findings. To enrich this study, I examined the syllabi of selected courses and institutional websites for related student career preparedness content. I coded and analyzed all data using the preliminary codes to arrive at conceptual themes and subsequent findings (Appendix H). I also make suggestions for further study and offer conclusions.

Significance of the Study

I am compelled to ask how higher education prepares students for good jobs, adaptability in the workplace, and/or provides a means for students to decide their career direction. More specifically, I wanted to know what faculty perceive they have to do with it and how they behave in response to the clear imperative to help undergraduates prepare for careers and the workplace. Though we have much data in terms of the benefits of student–faculty interaction and related high-impact practices and other data on faculty behavior, we currently have only vague or

indirect knowledge of the faculty perspectives and behaviors regarding their role in student career preparedness.

Inquiring about faculty from a qualitative point of view in essential matters is endorsed by FTI Consulting (2015), which posits that in the current demanding economic environment, it is crucial to understand faculty members, both as stakeholders and as potential creators and drivers of innovation, and as the direct, front-line drivers of student success. A qualitative faculty investigation could capture the quality of their perceptions, particularly the nuances of *how* faculty perceive student career preparedness as part of their faculty roles and *why* or *why not* faculty embrace this role. Results of this qualitative study may help faculty, college administrators, and other higher education stakeholders understand more about how faculty perceive their roles, what behaviors they enact in and out of the classroom, and how this might align with departmental and institutional goals and the goals of higher education, both stated or implied (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002).

Summary

In summary, economic, environmental, and other general factors drive our attention to student career preparedness and the potential and importance of faculty support. Factors include the demand for return on large tuition investments and accompanying student debt, students' topmost reasons for attending college, a demand for higher skills essential to the nation's and global workplace, the need for institutional accountability for preparing students for the workplace given government financial aid investment, faculty agreement that preparation for employment is a very important higher education goal, and heightened media and societal attention. Specific focus on faculty could harness the actuality of student career preparedness support behaviors in and out of the classroom through pedagogy, assignments, and advisement

and identify departmental or institutional messaging, supports, or other deterrents that could require attention in development of programs and policy.

Dissertation Organization

This dissertation explores faculty perceptions of their role in student career preparedness and reviews relevant documents. The research design model includes faculty surveys, semi-structured and open-ended interviews, and an examination of syllabi and institutional websites. Chapter I introduces the concept faculty's perception of their role in student career preparedness, the problem related to understanding faculty as front-line drivers of student success, and theoretical model lenses through which data can be explored. Chapter II provides a review of high-impact pedagogical practices related to student-career preparedness, with an emphasis on faculty practices in and out of the classroom related to career preparedness, and the value of student-faculty interactions in which student career preparedness is often embedded. It also provides an exploration of a related theoretical model that influences faculty attitudes and behavior and a theory that lends an understanding of the importance of experiences on the formation of student self-efficacy related to career development. Chapter III introduces the data collection methodology, sample, and analytic strategy used to address the research questions of this dissertation. Chapter IV includes more information on the data and sampling collection followed by all the results and findings from inductive qualitative analysis. Chapter V serves as a summary of findings, implications for future practice, policy, and research, and conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

While career preparedness can be considered in psychological, educational, and organizational contexts, what follows is a literature review in relation to faculty's role in student career preparedness within the undergraduate higher education milieu. Because career preparedness is recognized as one of the overarching goals of higher education, a comprehensive literature review could overlap with a variety of related perspectives.

The scope of this literature review, however, will be concerned with the following issues: (a) the impact and value of student–faculty relationships in a current context and student career preparedness enmeshed within these relationships, (b) trends in student career preparedness and faculty behavior, (c) the value and use of certain high-impact practices in relation to the notion of student career preparedness, and (d) an examination of a theoretical model of faculty behavior by Blackburn and Lawrence (1995) and a modified model of students' career self-management by Lent and Brown (2013, p. 562) as reported by Majewski (2018, p. 20).

Definition of Terms

High-impact practices (HIPs) are practices widely tested and shown to be beneficial for college students from many backgrounds and thought to increase rates of student retention and student engagement. They include: first-year seminar, common intellectual experiences (formerly known as core), learning communities, writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, undergraduate research, diversity/global learning, service learning, community-based learning, internships, capstone courses and projects. These, I believe, are strongly related to career development and have been identified as especially valuable by employers (Kuh, 2008).

Student career development and preparedness refers to activities, discussions, advising, mentoring, and experiences that add to the advancement of students' skills, knowledge, and abilities applicable to workplace positions. Such experiences allow students to explore their interests, define their career goals, seek opportunities for personal growth and professional development, connect their education with their values, meaningful and purposeful work-life planning, and assume and adapt to responsibilities expected of them in the modern workplace.

Student–Faculty Relationships

Student–faculty relationships are a foundational concept of the earliest higher education history, where institutions first prepared men for roles as civic leaders and clergy (Veysey, 1970). These relationships have evolved through advisement and mentoring interactions in the present day as education has expanded from elite to mass enrollment in the 20th century (Jacobi, 1991; Johnson, Rose, & Schlosser, 2010; Trow, 1999). There are extensive empirical studies—literally hundreds—on the nature, quality, and frequency of student–faculty contact and its positive impact on students (Alderman, 2008; Cox, McIntosh, Terenzini, Reason, & Lutovsky Quaye, 2010). One might say it is the very essence of education in any context.

Most research on student–faculty interactions is quantitative. Some of the positive student outcomes include student engagement, academic achievement, college satisfaction, student retention, persistence, and clarification of career and learning goals (Alderman, 2008; Cox et al., 2010). The last outcome in Cox et al. (2010) suggests that student–faculty interaction research is highly relevant to the specificity of my research topic (Alderman, 2008; Astin, 1993; Kuh et al., 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1987; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005; Wilson, Wood, & Gaff, 1974). Indeed, while many positive results and benefits from student–faculty interaction appear well-supported by the literature of nearly four decades, it is the entanglement with overall

student success and pedagogical practice that provides a challenge to discerning the relation of the student–faculty relationships specifically to student career preparedness.

One early study on college influences on students’ sociopolitical attitudes by Jacob (1957) noted that the student–faculty interactions of “peculiar potency” were those that were “normal and frequent and students find teachers receptive to unhurried and relaxed conversations out of class” (p. 8). Studies since have demonstrated the potency and influence of student–faculty interactions in a variety of important ways, including the nuance of impact on undergraduate career preparedness.

Beginning in the 1980s, education advocacy groups pushed for reform in university teaching, focused, in part, on active learning, diversity, and community involvement (Brint, 2011 as cited in Chory & Offstein, 2016). Brint (2011) reviews a 30-year movement, during which various high-impact educational practices evolved, many of which require students and faculty to interact off campus in nontraditional contexts and roles. (See the next section for specifics on high-impact practices related to in-class interaction.) Student–faculty contact is identified as influential in fostering overall student engagement, essential to persistence and degree attainment (Brint, 2011; Kuh & Kinzie, 2018).

Preceded by the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ; in use 1979 – 2014), the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) captures data on out-of-class academic student–faculty interactions. Other assessments, such as the Early Collegiate Experiences, Freshman Year (Milem & Berger, 1997), College Student, and Freshman surveys (Sax, Bryant, & Harper, 2005), and the Gallup-Purdue Index (Gallup, Inc., 2016) also address nonacademic student–faculty experiences (Chory & Offstein, 2016). These reports and nationally representative studies have brought specific attention to the benefits of student–faculty

interaction for students. Importantly, current quantitative research has centered on the CSEQ and NSSE data (Chory & Offstein, 2016). The Gallup-Purdue Index measures jobs outcomes in *Great Jobs, Great Lives* (2016) and provides higher education leaders with insights for meaningful performance improvements. The initiative aims to create a national movement toward a new set of measures, created by and for higher education, and to foster a new level of accountability for the higher education sector. More college graduates felt supported in college because they had a mentor who encouraged them to pursue their goals, a professor who made them excited about learning, and felt their professors cared about them as a person. As a result, students are subsequently thrive in all areas of their well-being. As a result of the study, Gallup-Purdue (2016) claims it is changing the student experience with greater focus on student–faculty interaction, increased internships, on-the-job training and experiential learning, and creative use of technology. The intent of this study is better understanding of the faculty experience in this changing focus.

The Nation Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), funded by the Pew Charitable Trust, includes five questions that address student–faculty out-of-classroom interactions that include: (a) discussion of grades, assignments, and class content with faculty; (b) the frequency with which students work with faculty on activities other than coursework, such as committees; (c) receipt of prompt oral and written feedback from faculty; (d) whether students plan to work with faculty on research not required by a class; and (e) career-related discussions students have with faculty (Alderman, 2008). The last two of the five have immediate pertinence to student career preparedness. It is interesting that NSSE’s (2007) results report less than optimal student–faculty interaction frequency over the course of its years of use, despite changing focus. Attention to

career-related discussions with faculty as part of the national survey might imply its importance to overall student–faculty interactions.

Positive outcomes linked with student–faculty interactions are confirmed through the literature to improve persistence by undergraduates (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1977). Pascarella and Terenzini (1978) furthered their work in this regard by controlling for 14 pre-college characteristics to account for the largest share of explained variance when predicting college completion (Kuh & Kinzie, 2018). They found that a significant positive association exists between the extent and quality of student–faculty interaction and the following: academic achievement, educational aspirations, attitudes toward college; intellectual and personal development; and persistence first to second year (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1977). Even while controlling for pre-entering characteristics, Pascarella (1980) points to the causal direction of his findings where he asserts frequent student–faculty contact may help a student become more interested in career exploration, which subsequently leads the student to initiate more out-of-class contact with faculty (Alderman, 2008). This indirect result of student–faculty interaction and career exploration is worth exploring further.

Broadly, Pascarella (1980) is among the first to focus on student–faculty interactions outside the classroom in a well-regarded literature review, which concludes that informal contact between faculty and students helps academic achievement, educational aspirations, attitudes toward college, intellectual and personal development, interpersonal skills, clarification of personal values, promotion of critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and persistence from the first to second year of college. Other positive outcomes related to student–faculty interaction reinforce Pascarella’s work with consideration of other variables.

For example, Astin (1985) notes that maximizing personal contact between faculty members and students was the best way to involve students in learning and in college life. Additionally, Lamport's (1993) literature review on 60 studies over four decades also finds informal student–faculty interaction is related to student academic achievement, persistence, and career and educational aspirations. Lamport (1993) notes the questions on student–faculty interaction are progressing to how and why, and to the quality of student-faculty relationships (Alderman, 2008), as my study intended to explore.

Subsequent studies build on the understanding of the impact of student–faculty interactions highlighted by Pascarella, Terenzini, and Astin, including Chickering and Gamson (1987). They identify seven principles for good practice important to college student success, one of which is student–faculty interaction, found to be a key factor in student motivation and involvement (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). Along with Pascarella and Terenzini (1980), and Astin (1985, 1993), Chickering and Gamson's summary is a standard often used by scholars in the field of higher education regarding student-faculty interaction (Alderman, 2008).

Hearn (1987), in a longitudinal study using the College Experiences Questionnaire (CEQ) for freshman in 1973 and again with these students in 1976, concludes that faculty–student contact played a positive role in aspirations formation and indirectly influenced graduate school plans. He also notes that student–faculty interaction was affected positively by freshman year grades, suggesting academically talented students may have sought out or were sought out for higher levels of contact with faculty (Alderman, 2008). Some questions may remain on the nature and frequency of student–faculty interaction with less achieving students.

Pascarella's and Terenzini's subsequent analysis of 20 years of research, *How College Affects Students* (2005) found vast evidence to suggest that when student–faculty interactions

extend beyond the classroom, the impact is for faculty members to become role models for students, likely increasing social integration and persistence (Alderman, 2008).

In *What Matters in College: Four Critical Years Revisited* (1993), Astin notes that student–faculty interaction has substantial positive correlations with various outcomes and factors such as enrollment in graduate or professional school, overall college experience, degree attainment, every self-reported area of intellectual and personal growth, and peer tutoring. This work further advances and reinforces the critical importance to student development of frequent interaction between faculty and students (Astin, 1993).

Other studies add empirical evidence of the positive outcomes of student–faculty interactions with a focus on other factors. Anaya and Cole (2001) confirm findings of student–faculty interactions’ positive impact on student GPAs. In a large empirical investigation, Kuh and Hu (2001) find student–faculty interactions reported by 5,409 full-time undergraduates from 126 four-year colleges and universities had substantial positive effects on students' efforts in other educationally purposeful activities and contributed to academic and personal gains and satisfaction by students. This study also finds that *frequency* of interactions with faculty is correlated with student satisfaction (Alderman, 2008).

Others investigate factors based on race/ethnicity (Anaya & Cole, 2001; Nettles et al., 1986 as cited in Cox et al., 2010; Kim & Sax, 2007) and gender variables (Sax et al., 2005; Wawrzynski & Sedlacek, 2003). Kuh and Hu (2001) clarify that the outcomes of student–faculty interaction vary depending on the *type* of interaction, where more *substantive* interactions seem to have a greater impact on knowledge acquisition and skill development, especially when the interactions reinforce the academic ethos of the campus or focus on student development issues, such as career development (e.g., Astin, 1993; Ishiyama, 2002). Kuh et al. (2005) furthered this

premise in their *Documenting Effective Educational Practice (DEEP)* study at 20 schools, which found meaningful interactions are essential to high-quality student learning experiences.

Studies frequently highlight the positive qualities of faculty from a student point of view on student–faculty interaction. Alderman (2008) finds that high-quality out-of-classroom interactions with faculty were shown to have four characteristics from a student perspective: faculty members are approachable and personable; faculty members have enthusiasm and passion for their work; faculty members care about students personally; and faculty members serve as role models and mentors (Alderman, 2008). Bradley and Graham (2000) extend exploration of high-quality interactions to include the education ethos, career development and scientific reasoning among others. Here again, career-related outcomes are enmeshed within other overarching student-related educational outcome findings and from a student perspective.

Though empirical studies in recent decades regarding student–faculty interactions are student-centric, like Alderman’s, (2008) there are serious attempts to capture faculty perspectives. The Higher Education Research Institution Faculty Survey (HERI) has conducted triennial national surveys since the late 1980s that provide empirical detail on the nature and frequency of student–faculty interactions from the faculty point of view and other details on faculty and their work. Einarson and Clarkberg (2004) explore faculty out-of-class interactions with students from a faculty perspective with 904 faculty at a large East Coast research institution. They used four explanations of faculty engagement using OLS regression and estimated separate models for research-based and other types of out-of-class involvement. Their findings provided little support for two of the most prevalent explanations of factors that inhibit faculty involvement: competing time demands and lack of institutional rewards of supports for out-of-class interaction with students (Einarson & Clarkberg, 2004).

In addition to the HERI surveys (Eagan, Stolzenberg, Lozano, Aragon, Suchard, & Hurtado, 2014), research and reports, such as Kuh (2009), NSSE (2007), AAC&U (2004), and FSSE (2014) also connect faculty to roles affiliated with student career preparedness enmeshed with the concepts of good teaching, fulfillment of college majors, and high-impact classroom practices (Acker, 2003; Basow, 2000; FTI Consulting, 2015; Miron & Segal, 1978).

Coordinated by the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE, 2018) was designed to complement the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which is administered to undergraduate students. Since 2003, more than 250,000 instructional staff from more than 800 institutions have responded to FSSE according to the published information about the survey. The instructional staff version focuses on the following: instructional staff perceptions of how often students engage in different activities; the importance instructional staff place on various areas of learning and development; the nature and frequency of instructional staff-student interactions; and how instructional staff organize their time, both in and out of the classroom. FSSE is designed to measure instructional staff expectations for student engagement in educational practices that are empirically linked with high levels of learning and development. Several other national studies confirm the importance of student-faculty out-of-classroom interactions in helping students clarify their career and educational aspirations (Sax, Bryant, & Harper, 2005 as cited in Alderman, 2008; Iverson, Pascarella, & Terenzini, 1984; Lampton, 1993; Pascarella, 1980; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

As noted, it is the entanglement with overall student success and pedagogical practice that provides a challenge in discerning faculty's perception of their role in the higher education outcome of student career preparedness in isolation from other higher educational goals.

Nevertheless, we find a current trend in higher education outcomes tied to institutional accountability that is clearly specific to student employment, salary, and workplace readiness as judged by employers (U.S. Department of Education, 2006; Kelchen, 2016; US).

Trends in Student Career Preparedness and Faculty Behavior

In its national annual reports, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE, 2015a) identifies faculty among the most effective job-search resources for students. NACE (2015a) also strongly urges career services professionals, who are obligated in their roles to help build student career preparedness, to engage faculty collaboration as a best practice, recognizing faculty importance to desired learning outcomes and respecting faculty as essential partners. (See also Oatis-Skinner & Betz, 1998). NACE (2015a) urges faculty to consider using relevant high-impact practices to promote career readiness (University of West Florida, Career Services, 2014). While there are a variety of data from national surveys that indicate a wide range of high-impact practice as a faculty priority (Eagan, Stolzenberg, Lozano, et al., 2014), what is unknown and lacking in the literature is how faculty feel about enacting these recommendations and why, and why they may hesitate to do so.

In career development literature regarding student–faculty interactions, faculty roles are noted in studies that emphasize creating campus connections and collaborations, and promoting career, self-knowledge, and purpose within the curriculum and college communities. The University of Southern California and AAC&U’s Delphi Project (Kezar, Maxey, & Holcombe, 2015) *Changing Faculty and Student Success* report provides data suggesting faculty play a role in supporting student career outcomes without an in-depth exploration on faculty’s perception or enactment of this role (Kezar et al., 2015). It seems stakeholders outside the faculty come to

conventional wisdom on the essential faculty role in student career preparedness, without much consideration for the direct investigation of attitudes and behaviors of the faculty themselves.

Clydesdale (2015) presents longitudinal empirical work on student purpose exploration programming in which students explore their purpose across 88 campuses including large research institutions and small liberal arts colleges. Faculty roles in these studies includes engagement in interdisciplinary collaboration, fostering important connections between faculty and community, industries, nonprofits and government and mentoring and advising students in their purposeful career explorations. The experiences from faculty's point of view in Clydesdale's research are "positive impact" on more meaningful advising (p. 134). Program design staff feel strongly that faculty involvement is essential for robust student vocational exploration and important for sustainability of the career exploration programs (Clydesdale, 2015; Kezar et al., 2015). While helpful to confirm the crucial nature of faculty engagement in students' quest for purpose and direction, these reports lack the detail that could be revealed directly from a more in-depth study of the faculty's point of view and motivations specific to career preparedness.

Clydesdale (2015) places his empirical work within the context of Delbanco (2012), Arum and Roska (2010), and Keeling and Hersh (2011) and the overarching state of higher education, what it is, what it has become, and what it should be for students. This work echoes the importance and focus of the national surveys, like HERI (Eagan, Stolzenberg, Lozano, et al., 2014) that explore faculty views on the goals of higher education and the practices that support them.

Not unlike Clydesdale's (2015) study, other career development trends suggest that institutional policy should afford attention and support for career-oriented programs promoting a

campus culture or ethos that values and encourages strong ties with professional and alumni communities, and by doing so, academically and socially integrating peers and faculty members (Dey & Cruzvergara, 2014; Hollister, 2010; Dey & Real, 2010; NACE, 2015b; Xu, 2013).

Despite the very extensive research on the nature of faculty work by Blackburn and Lawrence (1995, 2002), Finkelstein (1984), Schuster and Finkelstein (2006), Finkelstein, Conley, and Schuster (2016), and Gehrke and Kezar (2015), there are far fewer qualitative studies to my knowledge regarding how faculty perceive their role in student career development. Research on student–faculty mentoring also remains sparse and focused on positive outcomes (Johnson, Rose, & Schlosser, 2010). Similarly, very few studies examine why some faculty members are more likely to interact with students than their colleagues (Cox, McIntosh, Terenzini, Reason, & Lutovsky Quaye, 2010). The limited evidence suggests that faculty members who have a student–centered philosophy of education believe that teaching is a critical part of their role as professors and consistently display higher levels of out-of-class interaction with students (Cotton & Wilson, 2006; Einarson & Clarkberg, 2004). Faculty with friendly personalities and strong interpersonal skills do as well (Einarson & Clarkberg, 2004; Wilson, Gaff, Dienst, Wood, & Bavry, 1975). The findings from the study by Cox et al. (2010) suggest that student engagement may have more to do with student–faculty interactions than with any other faculty characteristics and found to have little predictive power on the frequency of out-of-class interactions regardless of faculty gender, race, field, rank, time commitments, and pedagogical practices.

Despite the relative dearth of qualitative studies, Steven Lohr (2004) contributes to the literature on student–faculty interactions by conducting a qualitative study on student–faculty interactions. His results suggest out-of-classroom interactions assist with a variety of important

college outcomes, including clarifying career and educational goals. Lohr's (2004) work reinforces the specific career-development-related findings of Pascarella (1980), Astin (1985, 1993), Hearn (1987), Lamport (1993), and Kuh and Hu (2001). Lohr (2004) believes interactions begin with class-room related activities. Like most other studies examining student–faculty interactions, this work focuses on the student perspective. Student-noted benefits of the interactions include assistance in designing career and educational objectives, increased job opportunities, assistance with coursework, and personal development.

Most studies about student–faculty interaction affirm the significant positive influence of out-of-classroom interactions on student success. These include increased retention and graduation, and clarified and enhanced career aspirations, aspirations formation, and indirect influence on graduate school plans. Additional positive influences discovered through studies of student-faculty interaction include access to job opportunities, personal development, improved problem-solving abilities, assistance with coursework and development of interpersonal skills applicable to career preparedness. While there is extensive information about faculty work, their views on student–faculty interactions specifically related to career preparedness are still wanting.

High-Impact Practices and Student Career Preparedness

In contemporary higher education, certain high-impact practices that the faculty employ in and out of the classroom related to career preparedness by employers and institutions have been advanced considerably in the last decade by Kuh (2008) and the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U, 2004). Exploring the impact of in-class pedagogy related to student career preparedness is essential to this literature review. This is where student–faculty interaction has the potential for meaningful learning experiences and outcomes related to career preparedness. These include practices known as high-impact practices (HIPs), explored over 15

years since their introduction in the AAC&U report in 2004, where the practices were defined as especially effective for student learning, engagement and career preparation for the 21st century (Kuh, 2008). George Kuh documents the strong positive effects explained in *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them and Why They Matter*, including research that demonstrates HIPs have an impact on learning outcomes and progress toward graduation. This conclusion is endorsed by others in the literature (Brownell & Swaner, 2010; McNair & Albertine, 2012). With this HIP research comes increasing interest in faculty development to implement the practices effectively. Over the course of time when HERI Faculty Surveys have been conducted (1989 – 2018), data suggest an increase in some high-impact practices supporting career development, such as cooperative learning and group projects, with movement in a positive direction for those activities over the last three decades. (Figure 3)

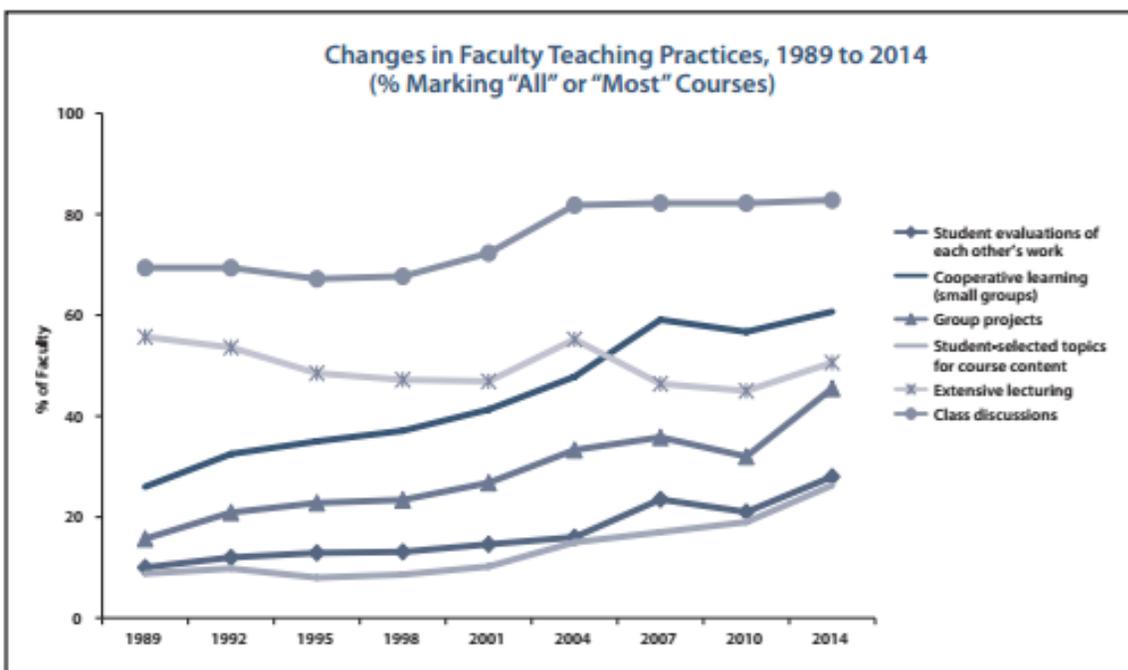


Figure 3. HERI changes in faculty teaching practices 1989 to 2014. HERI longitudinal data indicating changes in faculty teaching practices noted by faculty on the survey in “All” or “Most Courses” by %, including increase in some high-impact practices (Kuh, 2008).

Some practices are related to student career development, particularly *cooperative learning* and *group projects*. (Note the decline in extensive lecturing.) Source: Eagan, M. K., Stolzenberg, E. B., Berdan Lozano, J., Aragon, M. C., Suchard, M. R. & Hurtado, S. (2014). Undergraduate teaching faculty: The 2013–2014 HERI Faculty Survey. Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA, p. 6.

Majewski's (2018) dissertation explores college career development related to job-satisfaction after graduation. In his quantitative analysis using the National Center for Education Statistics' Educational Longitudinal Study of 2002 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015), Majewski (2018) finds that increased job satisfaction 5 years after graduation is associated with certain high-impact activities, such as research with faculty outside of a course or program requirements (Sagen, Dallam, & Laverty, 2000).

Regarding the historical development of HIPs, Kuh (2008) acknowledges several key factors. Learning communities were developed in the 1970s, and undergraduate students have engaged in research and internships for decades, as have other HIPs in various forms. What changed in recent evaluation is the collective effort to document the impact of these practices and a "sea change" in undergraduate education (Kuh & Kinzie, 2018; McNair & Albertine, 2012). Faculty's capacity to implement the practices is considered key (Kuh & Kinzie, 2018; McNair & Albertine, 2012), but the results are found to be inconsistent among institutions (Randall Johnson & King Stage, 2018). AAC&U has worked through its Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) initiative to promote the practices and work with faculty to bring HIPs more intentionally to the undergraduate experience. Kuh (2008) warns HIPs "must be done well" and emphasizes the heightened benefits from underserved populations, who historically participate less in HIPs than others (Day Keller, 2012). In fact, issues of equity and access for these populations and conducive environments to encourage faculty professional development, both full-time and contingent faculty, are essential to successfully implementing high-impact

practice opportunities for every student (Day Keller, 2012; Kuh, 2009b; Kuh & Kinzie, 2018; McNair & Albertine, 2012; Randall Johnson & King Stage, 2018).

National research initiatives support the notions that high-impact learning practices increase student achievement, retention, and attainment, all requisite accomplishments prior to career success (Brownell & Swaner, 2010; Gallup, Inc., 2016; Kuh, 2008; Kuh et al., 2005; Rhoades, 2012). These practices are believed to help develop the skills and knowledge employers in the 21st century seek and are considered essential for success in life and citizenship (Kuh, 2008; McNair & Albertine, 2012). The high-impact instructional strategies and their corresponding philosophies are institutionalized with the research that the National Survey of Student Engagement began in the early 2000s (National Survey of Student Engagement, 2007), founded by George Kuh at Indiana's Center for Postsecondary Research and the HERI Faculty Survey (Eagan, Stolzenberg, Lozano, et al., 2014) developed by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (Eagan, Stolzenberg, Ramirez, et al., 2014), at UCLA. The developers of the HERI Faculty Survey claim to have surveyed over 1900 institutions over the course of its implementation, 15 million students and 300,000 faculty. The most recent survey included over 150 institutions (Stolzenberg, Eagan, Zimmerman, et al., 2019).

Important to this discussion, 8 of 10 suggested high-impact practices, which appear on the HERI (Eagan, Stolzenberg, Lozano, et al., 2014) Faculty Survey are related to student career preparedness including: learning communities; writing-intensive courses; collaborative assignments and projects; undergraduate research; diversity/global learning (including study abroad); service learning, community-based learning; internships (experiential learning); and capstone courses and projects, including presenting work to demonstrate competence (AAC&U, 2004; Brint, 2011; Brownell & Swaner, 2010; Evenbeck & Johnson, 2012; Gallup, Purdue

University, and the Lumina Foundation, 2016; Kuh, 2008; Rhoades, 2012). The two additional high-impact practices include common intellectual experiences and first-year seminars, both enhancing knowledge building and preparation for the other HIPs and appear relevant to this study.

In examination of a specific HIP, Day Keller (2012) in her dissertation explored the qualities of effective internships from student, faculty, and employer viewpoints. Her findings are based on interviews with 19 students participating in internships facilitated by a large midwestern university. Day Keller suggests that outcomes related to student career preparedness include developing student competencies, career-related crystallization, building self-confidence, and generating capital, both social and monetary (Day Keller, 2012). A study by Narayanan, Olk, and Fukami (2010) finds transfer knowledge between academia and industry via internships is related to students' motivation to learn and that faculty mentoring is relatively important.

A recent study by Sarah Randall Johnson and Frances King Stage (2018) challenged the widely promoted and adopted high-impact practices as tools to promote completion (Valbrun, 2018). Their research is based on data from 101 institutions, some of which make extensive use of the practices while others make minimal use or no use at all (Valbrun, 2018). The study found that the graduation rates at 4-year public colleges that incorporated all the high-impact practices were not higher than those that used fewer in any of the practices (Randall Johnson & King Stage, 2018). Though they acknowledge the research linking individual practices to engagement and learning, Randall Johnson and King Stage (2018) suggest these benefits cannot be linked to timely college completion for public institutions. They also conclude that the current consensus about the institutional adoption of high-impact practices may be “misinformed” (Randall

Johnson & King Stage, 2018). Instead they recommend intentional decisions about the fit of the practices to campuses versus quantity of offerings (Randall Johnson & King Stage, 2018).

Kuh and Kinzie (2018) respond to these recent findings by stressing that simply making practices available is not what makes the high-impact practices effective, but they concur with Randall Johnson and King Stage that the specific fit of HIP practices to campus context is essential. In addition, careful and intentional implementation is what makes HIPs effective. Kuh and Kinzie offer NSSE data analysis that indicate advantages for HIP students over peers without these experiences, as offered by Finley and McNair (2013).

In their mixed-method research done for the AAC&U, Finley and McNair (2013) find historically underserved students benefiting significantly in terms of outcomes, performance, and behavior, including persistence and graduation, with cumulative effects of more than one HIP. Working with NSSE data from 38 campuses in three states, California, Oregon, and Wisconsin, Finley and McNair advance an understanding by examining underserved populations among survey respondents. They also open a new line of qualitative inquiry by introducing student voices into the HIP discussion, enriching their quantitative conclusions by interpreting results of focus groups conducted with underserved students on nine campuses, three in each of the three states. Responses from focus group participants suggest that there is strong alignment between students' views of the skills and competencies that matter for the workforce, including employers' views (Finley & McNair, 2013).

Kuh and Kinzie (2018) find fault with the Randall Johnson and King Stage (2018) study limitations and methodology for not considering the impact of students' pre-college academic preparation and family socioeconomic status, which account for the largest share of variance when predicting completion, overlooking "implementation fidelity (p. 1)," and masking the

accentuating effects of multiple HIPs. Kuh and Kinzie concede and emphasize that offering HIPs at scale does not guarantee their effectiveness, a conclusion that other literature generally supports. Indeed, implementation quality and institutional context are critical in terms of realizing the benefits of HIP participation.

Theoretical Frameworks

Blackburn and Lawrence's (1995) theoretical model is appropriate to this study because it considers faculty cognition, their self-evaluations of their efficacy (competence and ability to influence outcomes), and their perceptions of the environment (what it expects and what it rewards, p. 11). The theoretical perspective suggests that the characteristics of individuals and their employing institutions combine and lead to variations in faculty motivation, behavior, and productivity (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995). Blackburn and Lawrence place individual and environmental constructs within this framework based on the results of the empirical studies of faculty careers and cognitive motivation research and differences between direct and weaker effects. Blackburn and Lawrence define *properties of individuals* in four constructs as "antecedents to faculty behavior": *sociodemographic characteristics, career, self-knowledge, and social knowledge* (pp.15–16). These aspects of faculty attitude and behavior are foundational to the understanding I seek in my study and prove essential to the findings. According to Blackburn and Lawrence (1995), widely studied sociodemographic characteristics, including chronological age, race/ethnicity, and gender, which the literature suggests influence behavior indirectly by limiting or enhancing one's access to resources and opportunities.

The *career* construct includes several key properties of individuals: individuals' socialization experiences learned in research and conceptions of the faculty role they learned, one's academic discipline, and type of institution in which one works. The institutional and

normative structures within the academic disciplines and institutions influence a number of factors: the individual faculty's beliefs and priorities; the individual's pattern or sequence of academic or administrative positions and current position; the career age, and/or the number of years the individual held a full-time faculty position; and prior accomplishments, such as publication records, teaching awards, grants and fellowships obtained. These most salient characteristics influence decisions and the ability to acquire resources (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995).

The *self-knowledge* construct demonstrates one's understanding of self and is a measure of self-image and self-assessed competence in selected professional activities and efficacy in other situations (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995). Self-knowledge includes an individual's personal attitudes and values with respect to the importance of certain aspects of the faculty role (e.g., teaching, research, and service; Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995).

The last construct of properties of individuals is *social knowledge*, representing how individuals perceive their environment, that is, how others expect them to behave (subjective norms) and their beliefs about others in the environment. According to Blackburn and Lawrence (1995), these elements characterize an organization's social climate or ethos. As part of social knowledge, the social climate includes the prototypes or cognitive representations of other valued faculty members that individuals can carry in their heads and may use to guide their decisions on how to behave (Cited by Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995; Nisbet & Ross, 1980).

Properties of the environment are *objective* characteristics of the work environment, separate from the faculty perceptions of it, which include environmental conditions, environmental responses, and social contingencies. These constructs are also relevant to this

study. Like *properties of the individual*, *properties of the environment* conditions are also described by several properties.

Social contingencies are the last environmental construct outlined by Blackburn and Lawrence (1995). They include personal matters of the faculty, such as a family illness or the birth of a child. These conditions can be short or long term but can also affect faculty work (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995).

Also important to Blackburn and Lawrence's (1995) model are *cognitive theories of motivation*, where motivation is a function of an individual's subjective estimate of the probability of task success (expectancy) and the consequences of their actions (value); it assumes people make decisions about how to behave by evaluating their capacity to respond to situations and estimating their possible losses and gains.

Blackburn and Lawrence's (1995) model depicts environmental constructs, such as structural and normative features of the institution, as having both direct and indirect effects on behavior. Behavior is defined as specific activities a faculty member engages in and the levels of effort expended. Productivity is the specific outcomes achieved by individuals, for example, articles published, teaching awards, and grants and fellowships obtained. Blackburn and Lawrence (1995) contend that productivity affects one's self-knowledge and career.

Exploring the concepts of Blackburn and Lawrence's (1995) model including personal (red) and environmental (green) properties in terms of faculty attitudes and behaviors (gold) can uncover the relationship between faculty self-perceptions and student career development and productivity (blue). With the understanding of this theoretical framework, we can best judge and evaluate outcomes derived in this study (Figure 4).

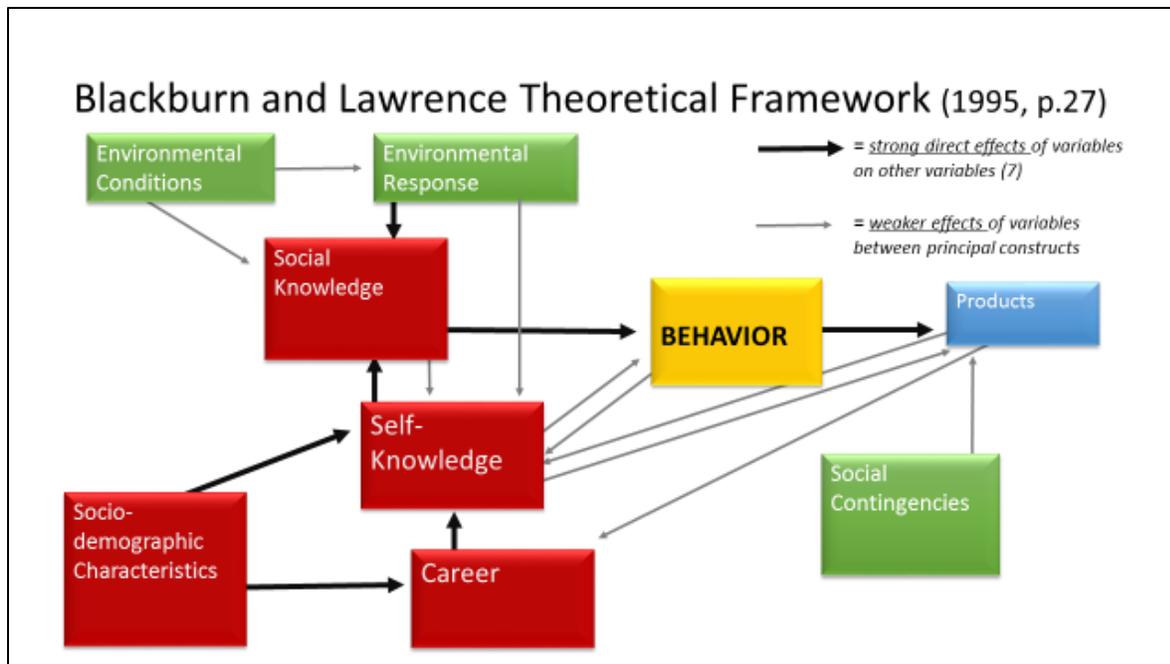


Figure 4. Blackburn and Lawrence theoretical framework (1995). This framework depicts influences on faculty behavior, both personal (red) and environmental (green) influences. Source: R. T. Blackburn and J. H. Lawrence (1995). *Faculty at Work: Motivation, Expectation, Satisfaction*. Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 27. Reprinted with permission.

Lent and Brown (2013, p. 562) offer a view of student career self-management. A foundational construct in the model of career self-management is the notion of agency (Majewski, 2018). Lent and Brown (2013) define agency as an individual's inclination to exert control over portions of their career preparation. While individuals may believe that they are in control, Lent and Brown (2013) explain that individuals often act in response to any number of internal and external factors, which directly relates to the faculty influence explored in this study.

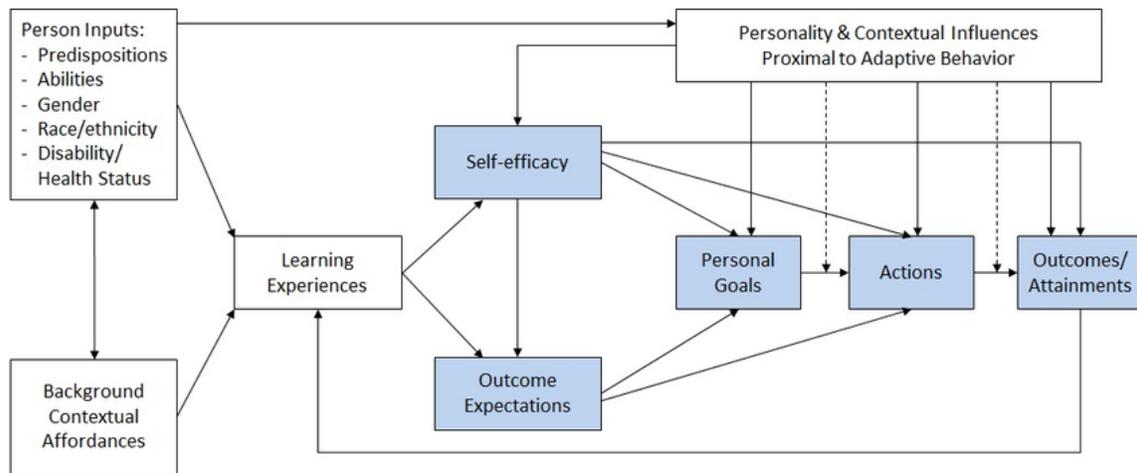


Figure 5. Model of career self-management. Adapted from “Social Cognitive Model of Career Self- Management: Toward A Unifying View Of Adaptive Career Behavior Across Life Span,” by R. W. Lent, S. D. Brown, 2013, *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 60, p. 562. Copyright 1993 by R.W. Lent, S. D. Brown and G. Hackett. Reprinted with permission.

Secondary Source: “Does College Experience Matter? A National Study Understanding Graduates’ Job Satisfaction” by K. R. Majewski, 2018, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Seton Hall University. p. 20. Reprinted with permission.

The interplay between person, environment, and behavior can influence the choices an individual makes throughout their career development (Lent & Brown, 2013, p. 562 modified by Majewski, 2018, p. 20). This modified model by Majewski (2018) frames the relationship between learning experiences and the formation of student self-efficacy, which is an individual’s belief in their ability to perform a given task in the future, regardless of their current ability. This endorses the notion that students often act in response to any number of internal and external factors. This study’s focus on faculty beliefs and behavior is directly pertinent as an external factor to student learning experiences. However, it does not necessarily consider student “person inputs,” for example, abilities, gender, race or background contextual affordances in the modified Lent and Brown model (2013, p. 562 modified by Majewski, 2018, p. 20).

Summary

In this chapter, there were four goals to accomplish. At the beginning of this chapter, there was the thorough discussion of the impact and value of student–faculty relationships broadly and deeply explored in quantitative research for decades. Some of the positive student outcomes determined by Jacob (1957); Chickering and Gamson (1987); Tinto (1987); Astin (1993); Lomport (1993); Anaya & Cole (2001); Pascarella & Terenzini (1977, 1978, 2005); Kuh et al., (2005); and Alderman (2008) include: “peculiar potency,” (Jacob, 1957, p.99); student engagement, academic achievement (GPAs), motivation and involvement, intellectual and personal growth, social integration, college satisfaction, student retention, persistence, and most pertinent to this study, clarification of career and learning goals, and enrollment in graduate or professional school.

Nationally representative student experience questionnaires discussed here provide higher education leaders with insights for meaningful performance improvements that further cement the importance of student–faculty interactions (Chory & Offstein, 2016; Gallup, Inc., 2016; Milem & Berger, 1997). Some national studies reveal career-related discussions of importance, among others (NSSE, 2007). Most often these empirical studies are oriented toward the student experience. However, the Higher Education Research Institution Faculty Survey (HERI) and Faculty Survey of Student engagement (FSSE) both give needed attention to nationally representative faculty experience, without the nuance of personal experience in first-person detail or in isolation from other student outcomes. Some of the studies reviewed here do emphasize the value of substantive student–faculty interactions that impact student development (Astin, 1993; Ishiyama, 2002).

Next, trends in faculty behavior and student career preparedness are reviewed. National Association of Colleges and Careers (NACE) is central to identifying faculty as crucial partners

and encouraging the use of certain high-impact practices, which have been emphasized in and out of the classroom as effective for many benefits to student outcomes. What is shown is through student–faculty interactions is how faculty create campus connections, collaboration, promote career and self-knowledge within the curriculum and college communities, though without an in-depth exploration of the faculty perception of their roles. Faculty involvement is deemed “essential” to the sustainability of a purpose exploration program in Clydesdale’s (2015) large-scale qualitative study. Campus ethos is also impacted by faculty connections to professional and alumni communities where social integration of peers and faculty members benefit students career development (Dey & Cruzvergara, 2014; Hollister, 2010; NACE, 2015b; Xu, 2013). Though there is a dearth of qualitative studies, Lohr (2004) contributes by highlighting out-of-class interactions that include clarifying career and educational goals, according to student perspective. While there is extensive information about faculty work, their views on student–faculty interactions specifically related to career preparedness are still wanting.

The value and use of certain high-impact practices in relation to the notion of student career preparedness and other outcomes is also critical to this literature review. Since its exploration over the last decade, the practices have been implemented and examined both quantitatively and qualitatively, sometimes chided as ineffectual if not implemented well, and defended as needing to suit the environment and implemented with intentionality versus in quantity (Brownell & Swaner, 2010; Kuh, 2008; Kuh & Kinzie, 2018; McNair & Albertine, 2012; Randall Johnson & King Stage, 2018). Since historically underserved students are shown to benefit significantly in terms of outcome with use of high-impact practices, including persistence and graduation, harnessing student perspectives qualitatively is valuable in

supporting their use. Exploring the faculty view on high-impact practices would further enhance our understanding of their value from a first-person point of view.

A last focus of this literature review pertains to the theoretical models applicable to this study including Blackburn and Lawrence's (1995) theoretical model and that of Lent and Brown (2013, p. 562) later modified by Majewski (2018, p. 20). Blackburn and Lawrence's (1995) model is applicable to this study's concerns because it frames faculty cognition and possible contributors to faculty behavior, such as sociodemographic characteristics, career, self-knowledge, and social knowledge (pp. 15–16). This study intentionally explores these factors through its semi-structured and open-ended question protocol. Lent and Brown's (2013, p. 562) modified model by Majewski (2018, p. 20) frames the relationship between experiences and the formation of student self-efficacy, which is an individual's belief in their ability to perform a given task in the future, regardless of their current ability. This endorses the notion that students often act in response to any number of internal and external factors. This study's focus on faculty role is directly pertinent as an external factor to student self-efficacy and career management.

Appendix A explores the literature review methodology and search terms I used for this study.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Given the economic and other pressures in today's higher education landscape, I am compelled to ask how higher education provides means for students to decide career direction and prepares students for good jobs. What role do today's faculty feel they have in helping undergraduates prepare for careers and transition to the workplace? We have little knowledge in this specific regard, and it is the intent of this study to contribute to the vague or indirect knowledge we do have. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to discern faculty's perception of their roles in undergraduate student career preparedness, the ways, if any, faculty feel they support undergraduate career preparedness in and out of the classroom, and the differences in perception and behavior by certain subgroups.

This chapter includes a description of the methodology and research procedures used in this study, including research questions, qualitative paradigm, assumptions and delimitations, study limitations, populations studied, criteria and selection of participants, data collection, data analysis, and the role of the researcher.

The first research question is concerned with faculty's perception of their role in the specific higher education goal of student career preparedness. The second research question explores specific behaviors in and out of the classroom that faculty perceive they enact to support student career preparedness. The last research question is concerned with the analysis of any differences in perceptions or behavior between faculty subgroups in the sample studied, including differences in discipline, rank, age, gender, longevity in academia, first-generation status, and parental status.

The contribution of this study is the qualitative understanding of faculty's perception of their roles, not only as stakeholders, but also as the direct, front-line drivers of student success in a key goal of higher education: student career preparedness (FTI Consulting, 2015; Eagan, Stolzenberg, Lozano, et al., 2014).

Research Questions

Given the lack of clear knowledge in prior research on faculty's perception of their role in student career preparedness, this study aims to address the following questions:

- Q1: How do faculty perceive their role in student career preparedness?
- Q2: In what ways, if any, do faculty support undergraduate career preparedness in and outside the classroom?
- Q3: What differences in perception and behavior exist by subgroups (discipline, rank, age, gender, longevity in academia, first-generation status, and parental status)?

Research Design

This section will describe the research design in this study and provide an overview of qualitative research methods and the phenomenological perspective. I chose a qualitative exploration because of the phenomenological focus of the research questions, which are posed to seek in-depth understanding of faculty perceptions and reflection on their behaviors in and out of the classroom related to student career preparedness and the corresponding lack of information related to these and other behavioral phenomena.

The phenomenological approach has its roots in the philosophical work of Edmund Husserl, the German philosopher who established the school of phenomenology (Creswell, 2007). To thoroughly understand faculty's point of view, this study proposes to explore college faculty perceptions and practices in undergraduate student career preparedness using interview

surveys and open-ended qualitative interviews. Additionally, I follow up with an examination of institutional websites and selected course syllabi to seek additional, contradictory and/or corroborating details. To contribute to existing knowledge on faculty roles in student career preparedness, there is a need for exploration and understanding through qualitative investigation before specific quantitative variables may be determined for future study.

Qualitative Research Paradigm and the Phenomenological Perspective

Qualitative research methods are best used when a complex, detailed understanding of an issue is needed (Creswell, 2007). A key strength of qualitative methodology is its capacity for revealing people's experiences in depth and displaying phenomena as experienced by the study population in expansive detail and in first-person accounts (Patton, 2002; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Qualitative inquiry offers the researcher a chance to "unpack" issues, to see what they are about or what lies inside, and to explore how they are understood by those connected to them (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The opportunity to dig into details is useful for examining faculty perceptions and behaviors related to their role in student career preparedness. Results of a qualitative study may help faculty, college administrators, and other higher education stakeholders understand more about how faculty perceive their roles, what behaviors they enact in and out of the classroom, and how this might align with departmental and institutional goals and the goals of higher education, both stated or implied (Patton, 2002).

Faculty behavior has been explored through research, on several factors and in relation to students' future vocations and purpose (Clydesdale, 2015). Among them are the work pressures that many faculty feel and the challenge of changing student cultures and values (Finkelstein et al., 2016). For the most part, there is little evidence of faculty perceptions specifically in terms of their role in student career preparedness. The inductive process of the qualitative approach

allows the researcher in this study to gather further detailed, specific descriptive information about faculty's perception of their roles, the behavior they enact in and out of the classroom, and differences among subgroups, which could have additional dimensions of meaning regarding faculty roles in student career preparedness.

Importantly, this study utilizes three core themes of qualitative research design used in the current study, including naturalistic inquiry, emergent design flexibility, and purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2007). Naturalistic inquiry, a foundation of qualitative research, takes place in real-world settings and the phenomena of interests (individual, group of people, event) unfold naturally (Creswell, 2007). Emergent design flexibility allows the researcher to adapt to the inquiry as understanding deepens and/or situations change throughout the investigation (Creswell, 2007), such as allowing for semi-structured interviews. The third core theme in qualitative research is purposeful sampling, where the researcher selects participants for the study because they are useful for illuminating the phenomena of interest (Patton, 2002), and in the case of this study, to select participants that reflect subgroups of interest.

Phenomenologists study the ways in which we assemble our experiences, which subsequently shape our perspective of the world (Creswell, 2007). According to the philosophy of phenomenology, there is no single, objective reality for people; there is only what they know about their experience and the meaning they attach to it (Creswell, 2007). Instead of proving or disproving a hypothesis, research conducted from a phenomenological perspective often leads to new variables or questions for future research (Patton, 2002). Patton distinguishes between the use of phenomenological *perspective* to highlight the importance of gaining information and understanding about people's experience, without conducting a phenomenological *study* that focuses on the nature of shared experiences (Patton, 2002). This study takes a phenomenological

perspective to illuminate faculty perceptions of their role and their behavior, and the specific events that contributed to their individual experiences versus a collective group experience, though commonalities and differences are highlighted among those in the purposeful sampling.

Creswell (2007) suggests that the research question that best fits a phenomenological perspective framework is one in which the researcher chooses to understand several individuals' experiences of a phenomenon. For this study, I determined this approach was an appropriate fit to the research questions regarding the perception of faculty roles and the question on the behavior faculty enact related to student career preparedness in and out of the classroom given individual faculty behaviors and motivations.

After deciding that the fit of phenomenological perspective is an appropriate one, the researcher identifies the phenomena to be studied and a group of people who have experience with the phenomenon of interest as the population to be studied (Creswell, 2007). In this study, the identified phenomena are faculty perception of their roles, the ways in which they enact this role in and out of the classroom, and an analysis of the differences among the subgroups. The group of people in which this phenomenon is explored is full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty from two major track disciplines: liberal arts and sciences track majors (social sciences, humanities and natural sciences) and professional track majors (art therapy, communications, education, business, and nursing) from a university's four colleges and three of its other academic departments.

The researcher then addresses the philosophical assumptions of phenomenology and brackets or separates his or her own experiences to fully explore how participants view the phenomenon (Cooley, 2013). This is done through the researcher's conscious reflection upon his or her own experience with the phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002). I include

phenomenological assumptions and provide a reflection of my own experience with the phenomenon later in this chapter.

Data collection involves communication with individuals who experience the phenomenon of interest and involves in-depth and audio recorded interviews with participants (Creswell, 2007). During the interviews, participants are asked broad, general questions related to (a) what they have experienced in terms of the phenomenon and (b) what events or situations influenced their experiences of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). Questions in this interview approach elicit information about the content and context (the “what” and “how”) of participant experience with the phenomenon, to provide a deeper understanding of these experiences (Creswell, 2007). The researcher gathers information about the phenomenon itself and the situational factors that influenced the participants’ experiences with the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). Additional open-ended questions are often asked for the sake of elaboration and clarification (Creswell, 2007). In this study, some questions were constructed based on related items inspired by the HERI Faculty Survey (Eagan, Stolzenberg, Lozano, et al., 2014), the literature reviewed in Chapter II, including concepts affiliated with pedagogy known as high-impact practices (Kuh, 2009a), and additional relevant questions to student career development.

During the data collection process, the researcher debriefs the interview experience by keeping a journal of personal reflections on the content and process of each interview. In this study I keep a journal of notes reflecting on each interview after transcribing and reviewing the content. I keep my email correspondence with participants in addition to my reflections. This includes any clarification or elaboration of the interviews I acquire through email from the participants.

During data analysis, the researcher reads each interview transcript and highlights significant statements, which includes sentences and quotes that provide an understanding of how each participant experiences the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). The researcher then identifies themes that emerge by synthesizing information from these significant statements (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). These themes are used to create a description of the “what” and “how” of participants’ experiences of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). In the present study, the identified themes may be grouped according to experiences, motivation, and barriers.

The researcher then writes a summary presenting the “essence” of the phenomenon, using the common experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2007). In this study, the common experience is holding a faculty role in an institution to fulfill the goals of higher education at that institution, interacting with students in a learning environment, and potentially engaging in behaviors that support student career preparedness, one of the identifiable outcome goals of higher education. Following this summary, similarities and differences among participants’ experiences are discussed with suggested explanations for these differences based on their responses.

Assumptions

The core *general* assumptions of a qualitative, phenomenological approach include the following:

1. The purpose is to contribute to knowledge and theory through exploring and describing the subjective experience of a phenomenon for a person or group of people.
2. Research designs are emergent rather than fixed.
3. Conducting research in the natural setting is the best way to achieve knowledge about the phenomenon of interest.

4. There is not a single reality; perceptions of reality are different for each person and change over time.
5. Meaning is produced through perceptually putting the pieces together.
6. The researcher's active role in data collection and analysis is valued as an important part of the research process. The researcher interacts with participants and actively works to minimize the distance between the two parties. This differs from quantitative research, where the researcher maintains objectivity to remain unbiased (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002).

The *specific* assumptions related to this study of faculty perceptions and behaviors include the following:

1. The faculty believe in varying degrees that undergraduate student career preparedness is an important goal of higher education, and they enact varying degrees of responsibility for supporting this goal in and/or out of the classroom.
2. The faculty may employ high-impact practices, such as those outlined by Kuh (2008), in and out of the classroom related knowingly or unknowingly to the goal of higher education of student career preparedness.
3. The faculty may include student career preparedness in relation to other student faculty interactions, such as advising and mentoring, and support of discipline-related learning outcomes.
4. The decision for faculty to include high-impact practices in and out of the classroom is related in some way to acceptance of the importance of the goal of higher education and its relation to using these practices, related to other influences, including personal experience, peers, department suggestions or imperatives, altruism, and appreciation of

student needs or other motivations in some way related to the theoretical model by Blackburn and Lawrence (1995).

5. Differences among subgroups of faculty, and particularly between major tracks, may be discernable.
6. The faculty can articulate the benefits of and barriers to supporting student career preparedness and their perceptions of their roles.

Delimitations

Delimitations imposed by the researcher to narrow the focus of this study include:

1. Research participants will be individuals who are full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty from two broad discipline types: liberal arts and sciences major track, and professional major track from a sampling of the institution's four colleges, three other academic departments, and a relevant administrative student support office.
2. To provide a specific qualitative study focus, research participants were selected from undergraduate faculty at one small (1650 undergraduate students) non-profit, private institution with a Carnegie Classification of Master's Colleges & Universities: Medium Programs, in the Northeastern United States with moderate research activity, Professional-dominant, with Roman Catholic affiliation (Institution's website, 2019).

Credibility

This section will discuss the methods I used to address credibility and trustworthiness in the study and a summary of my own experience related to this study. This is to practice reflexivity. Reflexivity is the process of examining both oneself as researcher and the research relationship to address or identify any possible researcher bias.

The terms credibility or trustworthiness are often used to describe validation in qualitative research (Creswell, 2007). The credibility of qualitative research is dependent upon

rigorous methods of data collection and analysis, the credibility of the researcher, and the philosophical belief in the value of qualitative research (Patton, 2002). Creswell's suggestions for documenting strategies used to verify credibility were used in the present study. He recommends that researchers use at least two strategies for any given study (Creswell, 2007). The strategies used in this study include persistent observation, prolonged engagement, triangulation, clarifying researcher bias (or reflexivity), peer review, and member checking.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe prolonged engagement (spending enough time at the research site) and persistent observation (focusing in detail on the most relevant elements of the study) as critical to trustworthiness. In this study, I practiced prolonged engagement and persistent observation to review my protocol and results. My review of the institutional website and class syllabi content for individual, departmental, and institutional priorities is another means of engagement and observation of the institution, which I continued through ongoing correspondence with participants before, during, and after their in-depth interviews.

The triangulation of methods and sources to provide corroborating evidence was employed through my ongoing consultation with faculty participants and the related campus professionals, such as the career services professionals from other institutions. These professionals provided additional information related to faculty and student behavior, which corroborated the insights I gained through the direct participant interviews and opinions on my conclusions. Lastly, I practiced triangulation by comparing participants' syllabi from selected courses and the institution's website regarding career-related factors with the information obtained from participants during their interviews.

I approached clarifying researcher bias by practicing reflexivity and acknowledging my own experience as an educator, as a career development professional, and as an adjunct professor

and academic advisor at a community college. My experience in this regard is further explained in the following section. Additionally, I practiced and recorded ongoing reflections of my experience as the study progressed by keeping a reflection journal of each participant interview. I wrote my reactions after in-depth interviews during the transcription process and thoroughly reviewed the transcripts a second time when editing them for accuracy against the audio recordings before subsequent participant reviews.

I obtained peer review by a committee member with knowledge and experience in qualitative research. This committee member served as a consultant to provide feedback regarding my data collection and analysis process. Another committee member has extensive background in student career development and serves as a subject-matter expert. A peer at the community college served to review the career preparedness system I developed.

The final strategy, member checking, involved gathering participants' feedback after providing them with their interview transcripts via email. I invited participants' comments and corrections and asked a few additional questions via email and telephone for any clarification of their comments or enhanced understanding of their responses.

Researcher's Experience

To limit any research bias, it is essential to practice reflexivity by addressing the experiences and values that I bring to this qualitative study (Creswell, 2007). This can be explained in several parts, specifically, my personal and professional experiences: (a) in my own career journey, (b) as an educator, (c) in career development, and (d) as an adjunct professor and academic advisor at a community college.

My own choice of career was unguided, and as a first-generation student, I felt anxious about my lack of knowledge on how to make informed choices while studying at Rutgers – The

State University of New Jersey. My initial interest was in writing and communication studies, but when I could not clearly discern how to make my way in these fields and some experimentation through coursework, I switched to studying English believing it would bring me closer to a writing career. I then explored a career direction by taking an education course believing teaching could be a safer path even at a time when teachers were considered “a dime a dozen.” I do not remember ever meeting with an advisor to discuss my choices. The education class experience provided a direction for me. I credit my engaging and passionate professor.

I studied education as an undergraduate and subsequently earned a master’s degree from the Rutgers Graduate School of Education upon the recommendation of another undergraduate professor who suggested I take graduate level courses to earn an additional credential; I believe this extra credential helped me to secure my certifications as a secondary English educator and a reading specialist and resulted in my securing my first teaching position at West Windsor Plainsboro Regional High School. Following a 6-year career in secondary education in these subjects at two New Jersey high schools, I transitioned to a corporate setting as a learning and development consultant for more than a decade, designing, developing and implementing employee training programs, including those focused on helping professionals manage their careers, develop personal and professional leadership, and workplace knowledge and skills. I worked with Fortune 500 companies including PricewaterhouseCoopers, BMW, Johnson & Johnson, and PSE&G. One extensive project included developing a company-wide mentoring program. These corporate experiences confirmed my value of the importance of education for personal and professional growth and development and its value to corporations. I also learned to value mentoring and knowledge-sharing, characteristic of faculty roles and the value of writing and communications skills.

Within the last decade I returned to a formal educational setting at Raritan Valley Community College in New Jersey, first as an adjunct English professor and subsequently in student affairs as an academic and transfer advisor. One of my roles in this setting was leveraging my corporate experience in conducting grant-funded career development workshops in collaboration with the New Jersey Department of Labor for job seekers who were unemployed for a length of time following the recession of 2008. I witnessed how work-finding strategies and career clarity affected individuals' progress throughout their work lives. This re-emphasized to me how vital it is to help students to make informed choices in their career development decisions and ongoing career preparedness.

I have since continued my role as an advisor while pursuing my PhD program in higher education management, leadership, and policy at Seton Hall University. My experience in a variety of educational settings and roles has given me a solid basis of understanding of the way individuals learn, understand themselves and the world, and look to others in a variety of ways to help shape their lives, including their educational and career direction. I understand the dynamics of a classroom and the range of faculty, facilitator, and advisor and mentoring roles, having done them all. I am also particularly aware of my community college students' struggles to find and prepare for educational and career paths that advance their lives in meaningful and fulfilling ways because of their lack of social and cultural capital and the distraction of financial pressures. I first became aware of this in the college classroom in my role as adjunct professor where the students often revealed in their writing and class discussions that they were directionless. This caused me to pursue advising as a career where I believed I could be of some help given my background in career development. My classroom students often sought my advice and mentoring beyond the classroom. I have come to wonder about the role of faculty

because of their consistent and broad exposure to students and their potential influence on students' career preparedness and how this could be more broadly recognized and encouraged. It is my hope this study will uncover some essential knowledge and advance this critical purpose of higher education.

I recognize my values are important to this project. I believe that due to my own personal and professional experiences that faculty contributions to student career development and preparedness could and should be critically important to students' academic success and career directions. I believe first-generation students might benefit greatly from faculty guidance and knowledge regarding career preparedness. I have great appreciation for the hard work faculty do, for their subject-matter knowledge, and how evolving demands for faculty are vast, and sometimes conflicting, but I also appreciate the potential for increasing their equally vast influence on student career preparedness.

At the beginning of each interview of my study, I shared my experience as an academic advisor, my experience as a faculty member, and previous experience as an instructional designer. I explained that the purpose of the study was to explore and gain understanding about faculty perception of their role in student career preparedness. I think this was important to gaining their trust so they would share freely their experiences and opinions. I was curious to see if faculty were resistant to a discussion of responsibilities that they may have felt belonged elsewhere, but I sensed little of this in the findings, perhaps because I was able to establish their trust. I believe my understanding of the faculty role, having been one, also helped participants feel more comfortable in the interview experience and allowed them to share their perceptions freely.

In my reflective notes during this study, required of qualitative methodology, I wondered if faculty would be less engaged with students and much more focused on course content than student career preparedness. In fact, I wondered if they would even resent my posing these kinds of questions to the faculty of a liberal arts college. As a student-focused professional, I was pleasantly surprised at the level of engagement I found among faculty and designed my protocol to allow for such candid responses. I view participants' willingness to contribute their time and ideas to my graduate student's research efforts as indicative of their professional commitment to the institution's mission and their students' success, and their personal generosity. Notably, as a result, less student-focused faculty may not be represented in this study.

Population Studied

This section provides a description of the population studied. This includes an overview of purposeful sampling and participant criteria. The sample population studied was undergraduate faculty from two disciplinary groups: liberal arts and sciences majors and professional track majors from a small, 4-year, full-time, not-for-profit, selective private, regional Northeast institution with Roman Catholic affiliation with a Carnegie Classification of Master's Colleges & Universities: Medium Programs, with moderate research activity, Professional-dominant (Retrieved from institution's website, fall 2019).

The University has approximately 2,200 students, 1650 of whom are undergraduates. There are four schools (Business and Computer Science, Education, Nursing and Public Policy, and Psychology and Counseling) and twelve other academic departments. This study included participants from all four of the schools, 3 of the 12 academic major departments (Natural Sciences, History and Political Science, and Communications and Media Studies and an administrator from the Career Planning and Development Department with relevant perspective). All participants were currently employed at the university during the spring,

summer, and fall 2019 semesters when I conducted the study. There are 80 full-time faculty and my sampling of 10 equates to about 12% of the total faculty.

The institution is particularly interesting for this study because of its ranking as a “Top Performer in Social Mobility, Ethnic Diversity and International Students” by *U.S. News and World Reports*. I learned this after I began the study, however. In this category, colleges are acknowledged for advancing social mobility by enrolling and graduating large proportions of disadvantaged students awarded with Pell Grants (US News and World Report, 2019).

My choice of study site is influenced by research questions seeking information about faculty perceptions and behaviors introduced in the last chapter. I believe examining a selective institution acknowledged for social mobility is suitable to my study where faculty role in student career preparedness may have greater value than in more highly selective institutions whose students may come with academic and socio-economic advantages, such as college-educated parents. Additionally, the small size of the institution with a low student–faculty ratio, (reported as 12:1 on the institution’s website, fall 2019), its reputation as a teaching rather research university, and its diverse and sizable first-generation student population at close to 40% of a recent graduating class, who might benefit from faculty interest in their career preparedness, also made this choice of institution desirable for my study (Retrieved from institution’s website, fall 2019).

Purposeful and Convenience Sampling

Purposeful sampling is used in this study. Purposeful sampling in qualitative research requires selecting participants who will provide in-depth information about the experience of the phenomenon of interest. Qualitative research places a priority on gaining insight and understanding, rather than empirical generalizations, as in quantitative research (Creswell, 2007;

Patton, 2002). The credibility, meaningfulness, and insights that result from qualitative inquiry are more related to the richness of participants selected and the analytical abilities of the researcher than the sample size of the participant group (Patton, 2002). In this study, purposeful sampling was used to identify 11 participants: 10 faculty participants and one administrator who met certain criteria discussed below (Patton, 2002). The population is also one geographically convenient so that I could arrange one-time face-to-face interviews with the participants.

Procedures

This section describes the procedures involved in this study, including participant selection, data collection, and data analysis. As previously explained, this study was conducted using a phenomenological approach to explore the perceptions and behaviors of college faculty related to undergraduate career preparedness. The primary measure for gathering data was a semi-structured and open-ended in-depth interview, faculty course syllabi, and institutional websites. Secondary measures included interviewing a seasoned career services professional who was knowledgeable about faculty behaviors, the importance of undergraduate career development, and the focus of this study.

Participant Selection

To represent potential differences and an adequate representation of faculty for this qualitative study, I explored the perceptions of 10 faculty from two different major track disciplines, four from the liberal arts and sciences track majors (social sciences, humanities and natural sciences) and six from professional track majors (art therapy, communications, business, education, and nursing). A general description of each participant's characteristics is included here in Table 1

The institution, located in a small, suburban town, has a total number of approximately 1650 undergraduate students, and 450 graduate students (Institution's website, retrieved fall

2019). The instructional programs are liberal arts and sciences plus professions, and graduate coexistence (Institution's website, retrieved fall 2019). The intention beyond representing different major track departments was to also consider nuances of faculty rank, time in academic positions, age, gender, parental status, and first-generation status, which I confirm via the detailed interview protocol. This selection is based on my interest in looking at a variety of faculty characteristics and experiences and proves beneficial when comparing and analyzing my results.

To determine a purposeful sample, I identified contacts at my study site who would assist me in accessing undergraduate faculty. My initial contact, the associate vice president for graduate and online studies and faculty growth, forwarded an email I prepared with a cover note indicating I had received IRB approval and inviting a total pool of all undergraduate faculty to participate in a voluntary research project (Appendix B). The administrator attached my request letter explaining that the focus of the study was to explore the role of faculty in support of undergraduates' career preparedness. The administrator also sent one additional follow-up email with my request for faculty participation. It was this communication and my subsequent, follow-up emails directly to individual faculty asking for their participation that resulted in responses for faculty participation (Appendix B). For an incentive, I offered participating faculty a chance for a donation to his/her favorite charity for their agreeing to a 60-minute, in-person interview and follow-up interchange via email or phone calls. One faculty would be selected for the donation from the total participant sample. (This donation was presented to a randomly selected participant after the conclusion of the study.) Through email and telephone calls, I solidified respondents' willingness to participate and scheduled the interviews. I invited participants to email any questions they might have about their involvement in the project (Appendix C).

For a phenomenological study the process of collecting information may involve as many as 10 individuals (Creswell, 2007). My sample of 11 participants satisfies this recommendation. Table 1 presents the participants' pseudonyms, disciplines, gender, age, (liberal arts and sciences track or professional track), first-generation status and parental status, longevity in higher education, and experience outside higher education. Table 2 provides data on the administrative participant who is a career services professional.

Table 1**Faculty Participants**

Faculty Study Name	Discipline(s)	M / F Gender⁺	Age	Liberal Arts and Sciences vs. Prof. Track	First-Gen FG / NFG	Parental Status P / NP	Years in H.E.*	Exp. Not H.E.**
Kayla	Nursing	F	55	Prof. Track	NFG	P	7	Yes
Sylvan	Communication	M	68	Prof. Track	NFG	P	11	Yes
Molly	Chemistry	F	53	Liberal Arts	NFG	P	16	No
Karl	Education	M	65	Prof. Track	FG	P	19	Yes
Alina	Biology Chemistry Physics Education Neuroscience	F	51	Liberal Arts	FG	NP	8	Yes
Anna	Art Therapy	F	52	Prof. Track	FG	P	20	Yes
Melanie	Business	F	48	Prof. Track	FG	P	3	Yes
Brian	History	M	51	Liberal Arts	NFG	P	20	No
Ellen	Education	F	85	Prof. Track	FG	P	18	Yes
Tara	Psychology	F	33	Liberal Arts	FG	P	4	No

Note. ⁺Gender indicated by participant; FG = First Generation; NFG = Not First Generation; P = Parent; NP = Nonparent; *H.E. = Higher Education; **Exp. Not H.E. = Experience Not in Higher Education.

Table 2*Administrative Participant*

Career Services Administrator Pseudonym	Background Discipline(s)	M / F Gender⁺	Age	First-Gen FG / NFG	Parental Status P / NP	Years in H.E.*	Exp. Not H.E.*
Gwen	Economics, HR	Female	55	FG	P	13+	Yes

Note. Gender indicated by participant; FG = First Generation; NFG = Not First Generation; P = Parent; NP = Nonparent; *H.E. = Higher Education; **Exp. Not H.E. = Experience Not in Higher Education.

Data Collection

I scheduled interviews at faculty's convenience on or near their campus that allowed for privacy to record the interview interactions. Nine interviews were conducted in the participants' offices on campus, one was conducted in her professional office off campus, and another at a private social club near campus.

I secured approval from Seton Hall University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), completing the necessary IRB applications, including the full interview protocol (Appendices E and F) and the informed consent form I presented to the participants before the interviews, at which point participants could decide to continue or discontinue their participation (Appendix G). In the informed consent, participants were invited to ask me clarification questions about the study.

After I secured signed consent forms from participants, I read an introduction to them clearly explaining the study, my interests, my need to record the interview, the confidential nature of the interview, and what was expected of them as participants. I informed them that I might be taking notes on their responses. Next the participants were asked 12 background survey questions to provide information including rank and tenure status, age, gender, years at the college, years in academia, discipline, and their status as a first-generation college graduate and status as a parent. This background survey also included asking faculty participants which classes they taught to undergraduates and which they believed had the most content or opportunity for activities to help prepare students for their careers.

The primary measure used to collect data in addition to the background survey and field notes was a semi-structured, in-depth interview to expand my understanding of the faculty perspectives and behaviors and an open-ended interview to determine influences and other

relevant data that could arise. An interview protocol was created to establish a standardized framework for each interview (Patton, 2002). It is derived from one used in a pilot study conducted as part of my advanced qualitative graduate course work (Brosnan, 2017).

The semi-structured nature of the interview allows room for additional open-ended questions to be asked as the interview progresses. Moustakas's (1994) recommendations were used to inform the phenomenological focus of the interview to best understand the perspectives and behaviors of the participants and examination of their subjective experiences. This focus provides a foundation for the interviews in examining two general areas: (a) what the participant experienced in terms of the phenomenon and (b) what situations or contexts influenced his or her experiences with the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

The semi-structured survey included research questions on faculty perceptions and behaviors, including: the extent to which faculty felt they could influence their students' career direction, the importance of some general overarching goals of higher education to them and to the institution, the extent of agreement regarding faculty roles in students' career preparedness, the extent to which they engaged in specific student career preparedness-related activities in and out of the classroom, the frequency of referrals made to others regarding student career preparedness, the nature of discussions with students related to career preparedness, the number of hours spent advising and counseling students, and the total number of undergraduate students faculty advised or taught.

This semi-structured survey was intended to paint a detailed portrait of the faculty participants' perceptions and behaviors related to faculty role—both individually and collectively—in students' career preparedness. Importantly, I surveyed participants to identify what they feel are the overarching goals of higher education to determine if there is evidence in

this sample to support the results of national surveys that indicate that faculty agree that student career preparedness *is* an important goal of higher education for undergraduate students. I also asked about their perceptions of the institutions' view on the overarching goals of higher education and if they agreed or disagreed with these institutional goals.

Lastly, for the purpose of this study, I elicited information about participants' experiences that may have contributed to participants' perceptions of their role in student career preparedness and behaviors that they currently enact. I asked participants up to 10 open-ended questions in hopes of identifying the experiences and influences in their own career development as professionals that seemed important to them, including career choice, skill development, and career preparedness. I asked participants to describe the experiences in detail, including who influenced them, what happened, and why they thought this was important to their professional development and career preparedness. This uncovered personal experiences with career development and preparedness that could have had some relation to their own behavior with students. I inquired about the specific kind of activities in teaching and assignments the participants feel are contributions to students' career preparedness in and out of the classroom and what might influence their choices. Specifically, I asked if there are departmental or institutional policies, practices, communications, or expectations related to their choice of behaviors or activities.

In contrast to this, I asked participants what, if anything, they feel inhibits their ability to assist students' career preparedness, what if anything the participants feel are the benefits they perceive are related to their behaviors in and out of the classroom related to student career preparedness, and to discuss their experience with and attitudes toward other resources that support student career preparedness on and off campus. Follow-up questions were used for

further exploration or elaboration as the interviews evolved, and an invitation for any additional comments related to the topic concluded the interviews.

Following the interviews, I asked participants to forward copies of their syllabi from the selected courses that they thought most supported students' career preparedness. I received either electronic or paper copies of the course syllabi from all faculty participants.

Treatment of the Data

Since I care most about individual experiences, versus shared experiences, semi-structured and open-ended surveys were paper based to keep the responses from everyone closely connected to each recorded interview. I audio-recorded each interview on an Olympus VN-541PC recorder and transcribed each interview personally, which resulted in over 400 pages of transcribed interviews. Additionally, I kept a journal of initial impressions and reactions to each interview and participant interaction and wrote a detailed, orderly reflection after the second review of the interviews using a template that I devised. After each interview, I identified the major themes that emerged from the interview.

The preliminary surveys, audio-recordings, and paper transcripts have been kept in a confidential and secured place in my home office. For member checking, I emailed each participant a copy of his or her transcribed interview once it was reviewed and edited against the recorded interview (Appendix D). Participants were asked to review the interview transcripts for accuracy, to clarify any statements, and/or add information. I asked follow-up questions as needed, customized to each participant. Participants were asked to confirm that they had received the transcript of their interview. Any clarification or elaboration became part of the final version of the transcript and was kept with the same confidence and discretion as the original transcripts.

In a follow-up emails, I asked participants for further input to confirm my impressions or expand on their responses where they needed additional clarity. Lastly, I offered them a follow-up meeting to answer any final questions and to share any of my conclusions, if they were interested in discussing them.

Data Analysis

Phenomenological data analysis involves analyzing the collected data, reducing the information to significant statements or quotes, and combining the statements in themes, moving from specifics to general levels of abstraction (Creswell, 2007). The following steps were used to analyze the data, determine findings, and develop conclusions:

1. After each manual interview transcription, I read through the transcript to garner a sense of each participant's experience with the phenomenon of interest and related subjective experiences (namely, faculty role in student career preparedness) and the general themes that emerged.
2. I compiled the participants' biographical background information on an Excel spreadsheet. (This is possible to do manually because of the small number of participants.)
3. I compiled data from the semi-structured survey regarding faculty practices in and out of the classroom on an Excel spreadsheet.
4. I listened a second time to the interviews to edit the transcripts and gain further familiarity with the content. I polished the transcripts from any errors in transcription before sending them to the participants for review and member checking. I highlighted themes from the background survey and the semi-structured and open-ended interviews. Upon review, I discovered there became a point of redundancy

- where no new information appeared to be forthcoming, confirming that my sample had produced the data I needed to answer research my questions (Lincoln & Guba 1985).
5. The raw data were condensed by eliminating any text from each interview transcript that was not relevant to the research themes, trends, and concepts (e.g., digressions away from topic questions, verbal stutters and pauses, e.g., you know, “uhs” and “uhms”).
 6. During the second review of interview transcriptions I identified significant statements, including sentences or quotes that provide information about the content and context of participants’ experience with the phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994).
 7. I recorded themes, concepts, and ideas that emerged from the significant statements on an Excel spreadsheet, compiled and analyzed them, with a focus on describing, classifying, and interpreting (Creswell, 2007) the following factors:
 - a. the general and specific kinds of activities participants enact in and out of the classroom that participants feel helps students with their career preparedness, and how or why the participants chose these activities, if expressed;
 - b. how participants refer students to outside resources to support their career preparedness and why;
 - c. inhibitors or barriers to participants’ abilities to assist students’ career preparedness that surfaced from the analysis;
 - d. the specific motivations that might inspire participants’ choices to assist students’ career preparedness;

- e. the personal experiences that influenced participants' own career development and preparedness, particularly in formative years in college; and
 - f. the career preparedness content in the faculty's syllabi.
8. I examined the thematic differences according to participants' demographic information: subject-matter discipline, rank and tenure status, years in academia, gender, age, first-generation status and parental status.
 9. I prepared a written summary of the common experiences related to faculty formative experiences, role, activities, motivation, benefits, and referrals that may occur among the participants.
 10. I devised a code based on emerging themes and applied it to all collected data, along the conceptual lines of the following: faculty perception of their role, activities faculty choose, challenges and barriers to supporting students' career preparedness, referrals to others, motivations and formative career development experiences, career preparedness content in syllabi, career preparedness content found on institutional website.
 11. I developed a conceptual model of a system of student career preparedness based on the findings of this study (Figure 6) and made suggestions regarding the application of this research to the fields of faculty development, student development, and career services policy and practice.
 12. I devised suggestions for further investigation and future qualitative and quantitative studies to advance knowledge in this area (Chapter V).

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The findings of this phenomenological study on faculty's role in student career preparedness are presented in this chapter. Whether considered through the lens of contributions, accountability, or blame, American higher education is the focus of the student career outcomes conversation. Importantly, there cannot be a conversation about higher education career outcomes without an exploratory look at the career preparation made possible through higher education institutions and the perceptions, behavior, attitudes, and motivations of their faculty. This study determined to discover a deeper understanding of faculty perceptions of their role in student career preparedness as drivers of student success and institutional effectiveness. The detailed nature of qualitative research allows for capturing additional important and informative insights that quantitative research cannot.

Through the lens of the Blackburn and Lawrence theoretical framework (1995) on faculty behavior, this study identifies possible environmental conditions, environmental response, social knowledge, self-knowledge, sociodemographic characteristics, and career influences on faculty behavior in supporting student career preparedness both in and out of the classroom. This study also offers an appreciation for Lent and Brown model (2013, p. 562 modified by Majewski, 2018, p. 20) by recognizing that students can acquire career preparedness through background contextual affordances, such as exposure to social and learning opportunities, and directly through learning experiences. Faculty can influence the model's essential factors for students through their teaching, advising, and mentoring relationships, and other behaviors that are critical to enhancing students' college experiences. Student-faculty interactions are inextricably enmeshed with students' pursuits of majors through required coursework, capstone courses, and

student advisement, faculty behaviors, and attitudes, and therefore have an extraordinary ability to influence students' entry-level and long-term careers. It is essential, then, to understand what faculty believe they do regarding student career preparedness and why.

The questions asked during the interviews were not equivalent to the research questions but provided nuanced information allowing insights into faculty perceptions, behaviors, attitudes, and motivations. I emphasized to participants that the goal of the interviews is to derive the benefit of their first-hand experience, knowledge, recollections, thoughts, and judgments regarding student career preparedness. Accordingly, the willing faculty and administrative participants in this dissertation study offered rich, generous, and honest insights, particularly about their own career choices and their genuine concern for their students' success.

The Essence of Faculty Role in Student Career Preparedness

Three research questions form the basis of the study: How do faculty perceive their roles in student career preparedness? In what ways, if any, do faculty support undergraduate career preparedness in and outside the classroom? What differences in perception and behavior exist, if any, by subgroups (discipline, rank, age, gender, longevity in academia, first generation, and parental status)?

What surfaced from the gathered data suggests important information relevant to our understanding of faculty's role in student career preparedness. Another key question arose: What barriers exist that impact faculty's abilities to support their students' career preparedness? The resulting findings are also presented in this chapter.

Four major themes emerged from the data. The participants' responses to backgrounds and to the semi-structured and open-ended questions in the study setting suggest: (a) Faculty feel strongly that undergraduate students need support and guidance in determining their career

direction, especially those first-generation students who lack social and cultural capital. Finding employment after college is an important undergraduate priority, and most faculty feel they are prepared to and willing to provide career support and guidance in and out of the classroom for their students, but particularly when students seek it. (b) Faculty feel they can influence career preparedness through high-impact class practices and assignments, advising and mentoring, and building connections to informative resources on and off campus. They understand that the extent of faculty support behavior is dependent on their disciplines, backgrounds, career knowledge, and connections. (c) The most noteworthy differences among subgroups, despite widely varying disciplines, rank, age, longevity in academia, first-generation status, and parental status are related to the disparate nature of faculty disciplines, but the participants expressed a mutual appreciation first-generation students' struggles. (d) Faculty perceive some barriers to supporting student career preparedness including the lack of faculty time due to other educational goals and institutional priorities, lack of career knowledge, the hesitation of students to take responsibility to seek help, student distractions due to academic deficits, and financial burdens, such as the need to work off campus.

Please note that throughout this work participants are given pseudonyms and a code with an abbreviation of their discipline and whether they could be considered professional track (PT) or liberal arts and sciences (LAS) as follows: ArtTh – Art Therapy; Bio – Biology; Chem – Chemistry; Educ – Education; Hist – History; Psych – Psychology; Ad – Career Services Administrator. This coding is used repeatedly to assist the reader in distinguishing the 11 participants and their views.

Q1: Faculty Perception of their Role in Student Career Preparedness

Research Question 1 asks: How do faculty perceive their role in student career preparedness? Four strong themes emerged from the data that provide insights to faculty perceptions, behaviors, attitudes, and motivations. Statements from faculty participants suggest a number of common themes: Faculty believe that students need support and guidance in determining their career direction, especially first-generation students; faculty feel the goal of preparing students for employment after college is an essential or very important priority; faculty feel confident in their ability and willingness to support students' career preparedness in varying degrees and in multiple ways; responsibility for student career preparedness is shared among the institution, students, and least of all faculty, but ultimately, students' career preparedness is dependent on students' willingness to accept responsibility for it and seek help when needed.

Students' Need for Support and Guidance

When asked to the extent that they believed students need support finding a career direction, 8 of 11 participants, including the professional track major faculty (PT), liberal arts and sciences (LAS) faculty, and the Office of Career Planning and Development administrator (Ad) agreed strongly on a 4-point Likert scale where the selection Number 1 indicated *agree strongly*, and the selection of 4 equated to *disagree strongly*. The remaining three participants answered, *agree somewhat* (Number 2 choice). The strong agreement included these additional comments by faculty: "Yes, they do need help. I agree strongly. They do need help" (Melanie, Bus-PT); "Oh, I would agree strongly. That's a 'one'" (Karl, Educ-PT); "Yes, strongly agree. I think they need help" (Alina, Bio-LAS); "Yeah, I agree with that. Strongly agree" (Tara, Psych-LAS), and "Absolutely" (Sylvan, Comm-PT), "They need guidance, a point in the right direction and a couple of kind words." He concluded, "A few words can make all the difference." In the

small institutional setting with classroom sizes often under 20, faculty familiarity with student needs seems plausible, possible, and potentially influential.

Alina (Bio-LAS), a pharmaceutical industry-experienced biologist, chemist, and neuroscientist with a master's degree in education and a PhD in molecular biology not only strongly agrees that students need help but outlines clearly why she thinks so, furthering the need for support and guidance theme:

They've just been in high school and they don't know the different paths... they just don't know what is out there... There's so many new job opportunities and careers are developing, especially in health care... and so they are just not informed... and then sometimes it's because their parents [who] ... say, "I think that's what you should be," and then they [students] just want to agree... this is the time [during college] when they [students] have to see [if], "This is really who I am."

Alina's (Bio-LAS) comment alludes to the needed support for self-discovery required for career clarification (Holland, 1997; Smart, Feldman, & Ethington, 2000; Feldman, Ethington & Smart, 2001). Anna [ArtTh-PT] echoed this belief with her comment that students need help "holistically," which presents a related theme to Sylvan's (Comm-PT) and Kayla's (Nurs-PT) regarding students' abilities to make contributions to society: "I see undergraduate [education] as a time to develop as a person... that they graduate with some skills... and that's important to have skills, but it's also important to be a citizen in society."

Anna's [ArtTh-PT] undergraduate program feeds into a graduate program mandatory for a career as an art therapist. The education path, prerequisites, and eligibility are clear and prerequisite-based for undergraduates to meet eligibility for admission into an art therapy graduate program. This may allow the kind of career preparedness that is focused on personal development at the undergraduate level. Nevertheless, Anna [ArtTh-PT] reinforces the theme of students needing support and guidance:

They (students) don't have the experience to know even what knowledge they need to make contacts (in the art therapy profession), or they're not really in a position to be able to access what they need to be able to do that.

Anna (ArtTh-PT) clarified in her interview that access to and knowledge of some careers, such as art therapy, while a seemingly obvious career path, presents some barriers students can overcome only through being made aware of and taking the prerequisite courses at a university.

The career services administrator (Ad) indicates how some faculty behavior in student-faculty relationships really depends on the type of institution. She compares her current somewhat selective institution to a more highly selective college where she formerly worked:

A lot of those students [at the former college] came from families where they just knew to come to the career office. They knew they would do at least one internship and sought us out. So they didn't need the faculty on that end. The faculty were more about, "Are you going to grad school? And how can I help you prepare you for that?" because they had an amazing number of students who went on for doctorates there.

The different kind of institution serving a student body with less cultural capital required something different of its faculty: "So it was a very different relationship with faculty than you have here where the faculty really do need to be much more hands-on about 'What are your plans after graduation?'"

Karl (Educ-PT) defined clearly one faculty role in students' career preparedness when he commented, "I think that just giving people information and allowing them to make their own learned decision(s) is an important part of what faculty is [sic] supposed to do." Sylvan (Comm-PT), described his role as a "fervent cheerleader" of students, past and present.

Ellen (Educ-PT), also appears to be a "cheerleader," which she literally was, in fact, nearly seven decades ago, a memory she proudly shared. She offered a view of first-generation student needs for education in general and alluded to an aspirational "level" she believes improves via education:

Nothing moves me more than when I go to graduation here...and I see the parents...You know their kids are the first-generation kids to go to college. I know...and so was I...I guess my own personal experience has made me realize that these kids need an education, and if they don't get an education...they're going to be at the same level, and nothing's going to change for them.

In her view, Ellen (Educ-PT) seems to equate *first-generation* with a certain socioeconomic status that is clearly improved through education, degree-attainment and career preparedness.

Tara (Psych-LAS) also presented an appreciation of first-generation students specifically needing career support and guidance because of a lack of social and cultural capital through the lens of her own experience, too:

A student who did not grow up in a neighborhood with a lot of professionals...you know that there's [a] doctor, a lawyer, a policeman, [a] teacher. You know these very specific roles that you see in children's books...but you really don't have a sense of the breadth [of career possibilities]. You may not have a sense of the soft skills, the interpersonal skills that go along with it. You might not even be familiar with professional dress.

Tara (Psych-LAS) qualifies her comment as a first-generation student:

And I say all these things as someone who grew up as a partial first-generation student where my dad had a somewhat professional job...my mom really didn't, and all the people around me, had more blue-collar sorts of jobs. And so I've gone through my 20s, I've seen lots of jobs and I'd be like, "Oh, I could have liked that...that's a path that could have been really fun for me," and I had no idea that it existed.

This experience is contrasted to someone like Tara's (Psych-LAS) spouse who was surrounded by many family and friends, "literally a dozen people he could talk to" who are doctors, "a whole resource network" to ask about the experience and logistics of medical school and the medical profession, such as:

What's it like? How do you navigate it? ...Do I really have the chops for it? What kind of specialties are there? What kind of money do you have to pay to get there? What (amount of money) do you make after?

Tara (Psych-LAS) alludes to the inequity in social and cultural capital that exists, underscoring students' need for support and guidance that faculty like Tara (Psych-LAS) seem to

understand, “There’s just so many more resources that some students have than others.” Tara’s (Psych-LAS) view of student needs may influence her willingness to share information on career resources with students though she admitted she was less familiar with paths for undergraduate psychology majors than she was for graduate school paths. Faculty are seemingly intrinsically motivated to help students “because they need it and want our help” (Alina- Biol-LAS).

The Priority of Employment after College

Among the many goals of higher education, the belief that students need assistance in finding their career direction is tied to the goal of preparing students for employment after college and consideration the skills and abilities that employers seek in their employees. The institution seems to consider student career preparedness for employment in the way it presents its messaging to the public. In the description of its core curriculum on its website, the institution supports what it believes to be important to employers:

[The University’s] Liberal Arts core provides exactly what employers want in their new employees. A recent survey of employers by the Association of American Colleges and Universities indicated that employers surveyed wanted the following:

- 81% want new employees with better critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills
- 89% want more emphasis on the ability to effectively communicate

Faculty participants voiced agreement that “critical thinking” and effective writing are “essential” priorities of their institution and for them. This is further discussed under Q2 in this chapter under the section High-Impact Practices.

Faculty participants agree that that they felt preparing students for employment after college ranges from an “essential” priority to “somewhat important” on a 4-point Likert scale where “essential” is the top priority and “not important” is the lowest. Professional track faculty most often agree it is the top priority. Melanie (Bus-PT) agrees, “That’s definitely the priority of the college.” Karl (Educ-PT) remarked enthusiastically, “If there is a number zero, above

essential priority, a 1+ [I would choose that].” Karl (Educ-PT) substantiated his beliefs that echo Ellen’s (Educ-PT) about the power of education but also notes the value to the institution when their graduates are employed:

A lot of students and their families look to higher education to improve their child’s lot in life or their own lot in life so they can develop a successful career, and so I think that’s where a lot of universities...want to be able to advertise that “98% of our student are employed within two months of graduation.”

Karl (Educ-PT) is sensitive to what the institution “advertises” to students and their families. Anna (ArtTh-PT) concurs that people pursue an education “to improve their career advancement.” Karl (Educ-PT) also chose to speak collectively for the education department about the importance of students’ preparation for employment in a practical sense related to both the economic survival of the institution itself and the high cost of higher education:

The whole department realizes the reason we exist is to get people jobs. If people are graduating...and it’s not inexpensive to come here... and if people are graduating after four years, and they’re not successful...we’re not successful in finding them...or placing them in professional positions, we’re going to dry up pretty soon and become condominiums.

Sylvan’s (Comm-PT) attitude showed some distress on the focus on the fiscal health of the institution, regardless of its truth and the necessity to remain solvent, when he says, “We’re talking a lot about pedagogy, when the institution is focused on money.” It seems for Sylvan (Comm-PT) the focus on the economic viability of the institution takes the emphasis off student learning and their futures where it belongs with equal attention. He mentioned the theme of institution’s focus on money several times throughout the interview as did Ellen (Educ-PT).

Kayla (Nurs-PT) also ranked employment after college as an “essential” priority. Ellen (Educ-PT) commented equally passionately as Karl, “Oh, it’s essential” and adds concern in a follow-up email comment about the unfortunate focus on the financial stability of the institution:

Universities and colleges are not and should not be “money making” institutions...Schools of higher education should not be content knowing that they are “just graduating” candidates. They should be graduating candidates that are thoroughly prepared for their careers or for future graduate work.

Interestingly, liberal arts and sciences track faculty and the career planning and development administrator, Molly (Chem-LAS), Alina (Bio-LAS), Tara (Psych-LAS), Brian (Hist-LAS), and Gwen (Ad) all responded that preparing students for employment after college is “very important.” Anna (ArtTh-PT) was the only professional track faculty who indicates employment after college as “very important” vs. “essential” but noted her students often necessarily have to attend graduate school for their professions, as Tara (Psych-LAS) from the same school of psychology and counseling corroborated, “When I meet with students, I do talk about... career and jobs and things making sure that they stay marketable for grad school ...” Anna (ArtTh-PT) provided an alternative perspective on student needs in pursuing art therapy for personal development rather than employment:

People see it (pursuing coursework in art therapy) for personal growth...not everybody has the same goal, but a lot of the time it is for career...People are motivated by...a child who was disabled and they feel they want to help that child.

It is interesting to note that Kayla (Nurs-PT) explained she chose to change careers from engineering to nursing for similar personal reasons but is intently focused on helping students achieve their goals to become nurses for whatever their reasons.

Sylvan (Comm-PT) took the opportunity during the interview to express that he felt preparing students for employment after college was “important to the institution,” but in follow-up emails clearly expressed that he thought another goal of higher education was of even greater importance to him and ought to be for the institution, too. He asserted that preparing students for life in general, including the ability to “work somewhere constructively and productively in our society,” required a focus on knowledge and learning despite the “challenging, difficult state” of

higher education at his current institution and the handful of others for which he had worked following a decades-long career in the communications industry: “Our focus and objectives are learning and education, not grades, not diplomas. Completing each course isn’t enough. We need to ensure that learning is received and absorbed...[or] else we failed.” Sylvan (Comm-PT) subsequently reinforced this altruistic perspective in a second email after he reviewed his interview transcript: “The important main objective [of higher education] is: education, knowledge, and personal improvement...and most importantly, the advancement of our cultures and society.” Evidence of the strength of his convictions, Sylvan repeated the altruistic theme of socializing students for the benefit of society five times within the interview including afterwards through emails and again during a follow-up phone call.

The findings in this study’s qualitative interviews echo those of the national HERI Faculty Surveys (Eagan, Stolzenberg, Lozano, et al., 2014) where nearly 82% of faculty surveyed expressed that “preparing students for employment after college” is an “essential” goal. However, this qualitative study revealed faculty perceptions behind the apparent quantitative agreement. These include empathy for students and their needs, including employment and other individual student goals; the economic survival of the institution; altruistic concerns for society as a whole; and an important emphasis on knowledge and learning beyond simply generating diplomas as the key elements of career preparedness.

Faculty Ability to Influence and Support Students

The modified Lent and Brown theoretical framework (2013 p. 562 modified by Majewski, 2018, p. 20) suggests learning experiences influenced by faculty impact on students’ self-efficacy and outcome expectation in student career self-management (Figure 2). As part of this qualitative study, I wanted to confirm faculty perception of this notion. When asked, “To

what extent do you feel you could influence students career direction?” four of the nine faculty who responded to the question replied, “to a great extent.” Three of these four were professional track faculty, and one was liberal arts and sciences track (LAS). Four others answered, “to some extent,” where two were LAS faculty, two were PT faculty; one LAS professor, Brian (HIST-LAS), was unsure. Sylvan (Comm-PT) suggested faculty have potential for “vast influence,” yet he and others feel so much “depends on the student.” Sylvan (Comm-PT) teaches a communication course required for all students, and as a result he can influence a large part of the student body. He commented that students sometimes return to meet with him “long after being graduated [*sic*]” for “further advice and direction” allowing his ongoing influence on students’ careers:

My hope is that they will succeed and live happy, productive lives. (I) just wrote another recommendation this weekend for a former student – [I] have two meetings this week scheduled with others.

Yet Sylvan (Comm-PT) also comments, like others, around the concept of “self-doubt” when he says:

Who am I to tell these people? I don’t know everything. I try to help them with their career, in their directions if they do their job well [as students]. But there are things I don’t know, or things I haven’t read, and I don’t know all the answers.

This sense of conflict was echoed by others, creating a cluster of thoughts on the concept of self-doubt among faculty. Karl (Educ-PT) acknowledges the many other influences in students’ lives, and how he is but one who can influence students somewhat:

A lot of that depends on their personal life circumstances and so we can provide some direction and provide a pathway, but ultimately, there is piece of each student that we don’t know and that might be family... history... finances. It might be all of those things.

This supports the influences outlined in the modified Brown and Kent model (2013; modified by Majewski, 2018). Karl (Educ-PT) also distinguishes between being asked for help and intruding:

Actually...if they ask, it becomes a one [strongly agree that faculty provide support outside the classroom to help students determine their career direction], but if I'm imposing...where I'm saying, "You know, I think you'd make a great X," mmmm....we're moving into different territory.

Karl (Educ-PT) feels his unwelcomed advice is less influential to students. Ellen (Educ-PT) commented similarly on the theme of "imposing" when she responded to the statement that faculty are responsible for helping students with career direction: "Only if asked. Faculty need to be careful that they do not apply their own likes and dislikes to the career choices of students."

Kayla (Nurs-PT), who earned three nursing degrees, feels one of the ways she influences students' careers is because "I instill in them the love of nursing." She added that faculty influence entails making enough education possible for students so that they become "agents of change." She expressed concern, like Sylvan (Comm-PT), for both the greater good of society and for the well-being of students as individuals. Kayla (Nurs-PT) also voiced concerns over the cost of education and its impact on students' lives. Her comments about students' career paths are still ultimately connected with altruistic goals of "making a difference" and without a trace of self-doubt other faculty expressed:

You need enough education so that it is not going to put you in such financial difficulty that you'll be working to pay that back for the rest of your life, maybe in something you really don't love. I believe that every step of the way we need to assess and we need to direct these students to make sure they're in the right direction, to make sure they are gaining knowledge that is going to assist them to be able to make a difference in the world.

In the required freshman seminar she teaches for health science majors, Alina (Bio-LAS) reiterates the theme of exploring and sometimes "liking" a career direction when frequently discussing shadowing professionals to help students determine career options: "It always comes up... how important it is [shadowing professionals] because you want to know what you like,

and...what you don't like.” Alina (Bio-LAS) gives the example of a student who changed from pre-medicine to pre-dental after shadowing a physician.

Molly (Chem-LAS) also sees limitations in her influence: “I can recommend, I can suggest, but I always tell them, ‘I can’t decide for you, what will make you happy as an adult.’” As a result of this attitude, Molly (Chem-LAS) feels she can only influence students “somewhat.”

Several faculty participants mentioned the theme of “role modeling” including Anna (ArtTh-PT) who believes students commonly look to faculty as “role models,” “to figure out...if they want to be like them or not.”

Often students will choose a path based on that [*sic*] they identified with a faculty member or someone they met who’s in the profession and they thought, “I want to be like them...I want to do the same thing they’re doing.”

The theme of “role models” was evident in Anna’s personal career path when she chose to emulate a professor in a field of which she had never heard. Karl (Educ-PT) emulated his professor’s convivial interpersonal style in his career as did Sylvan (Comm-PT) who remembered the care his undergraduate professors showed him on an intensely individual level. Their views reflect the Blackburn and Lawrence (1995) theoretical framework where “career influences” in faculty personal career paths affect and influence their current attitudes and behavior in student-faculty interactions.

Alina (Biol-LAS) similarly suggests that faculty can be “examples” to students. Molly (Chem-LAS) repeats this theme of “example” or “role model” to students, as well. When asked about the frequency of structuring courses so that students can develop emotional intelligence skills (e.g., self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, social skills), Molly (Chem-LAS) commented, “not directly, but indirectly by example.” Kayla also contributed to this

theme of role modeling for students: “They watch their faculty. We’re practitioners. They know us. We share things that have happened with us, days that I felt unsure, uncertain.” Kayla (Nurs-PT) shares her “self-doubt.” This contrasts with the confidence she expresses in supporting her students. Both could be part of her relationship-building with students. She also models the “self-reflection” she considers an important part of nursing student development.

Based on a series of survey questions that required semi-structured answers in degrees of agreement on a 4-part Likert scale ranging from *agree strongly* to *disagree strongly* and *not sure*, the majority of participants chose *agree strongly* or *agree somewhat* that faculty do help students determine their career direction, provide experiences in the classroom that prepare them for the workplace, and provide support and guidance outside the classroom to help students determine their career direction in a variety of ways. Additionally, most agreed that faculty in their departments felt prepared to guide students’ career directions and they, too, felt prepared. See Table 3 for results details.

Brian (Hist-LAS) disagrees most frequently, offering a contrasting view to the theme that faculty can and do support students’ career preparedness; some clearly do not nor feel prepared to help students with career-related issues. Brian says: “When it comes to career... I don’t feel that I’m qualified in many ways to give them particularly concrete advice.” Details of in- and out-of-class activity discussed later reveal that Brian (Hist-LAS) is more supportive than he knew, regardless of this “self-doubt” that parallels Sylvan’s (Comm-PT) self-deprecating, “Who am I to tell these people?” (See Q2.)

Table 3**Faculty Ability to Influence Students' Career Preparedness**

Possible Responses: Agree strongly, Agree Somewhat, Disagree Somewhat, Disagree Strongly, Not sure

Faculty Pseudonym/ (Gender⁺: M = male; F = female), Age, Discipline/ Years in H.E.*	1 Faculty help students determine career direction	2 Faculty provide experiences in the classroom that prepare students for the workplace	3 Faculty provide support and guidance outside the classroom that help students determine their career direction	4 Faculty in my department are prepared to guide students' career direction	5 I feel prepared to guide students' career direction
Percent Agree Strongly / Agree Somewhat	60% / 30%	40% / 60%	50% / 50%	70% / 20%	50% / 40%
Kayla (F) 55 Nurs-PT 7	Agree strongly	Agree strongly	Agree strongly	Agree strongly	Agree strongly
Sylvan (M) 68 Comm-PT 11	Agree strongly	Agree strongly	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Agree somewhat
Anna (F) 52 ArtTh- PT 20	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Agree strongly	Agree strongly	Agree strongly
Karl (M) 65 Educ-PT 19	Agree strongly	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Agree strongly	Agree Somewhat
Melanie (F) 48 Bus-PT 3	Agree strongly	Agree strongly	Agree strongly	Agree strongly	Agree strongly
Ellen (F) 85 Educ-PT 18	Agree strongly	Agree strongly	Agree strongly	Agree strongly	Agree strongly
Alina** (F) 51 Biol-LAS 8	Agree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Agree strongly	Agree strongly
Molly (F) 53 Chem-LAS 16	Agree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat
Brian (M) 51 Hist-LAS 20	Disagree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Disagree somewhat	Disagree somewhat
Tara (F) 33 Psych-LAS 4	Agree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Agree somewhat

Note. ⁺Gender indicated by participant; *H.E. = Higher Education; ** Non-parent

This table presents a visual confirmation that Professional Track faculty agree more consistently about their “ability to influence students,” and to provide “activities in and out of the classroom,” than Liberal Arts and Sciences Track faculty, with some exceptions, though the majority of the faculty agree overall on these five factors of student career preparedness.

Responsibility

Three clear conceptual ideas of responsibility for students' career preparedness emerged with strong perspectives among faculty participants: institutional, student, and faculty responsibility for student career preparedness. Themes surfacing regarding institutional responsibility include providing opportunity for student exploration. Faculty participants feel students should demonstrate willingness to seek and operationalize career-related support from faculty and others. In other words, students have the responsibility for their career preparedness. Faculty responsibility role themes include facilitating discussions, assisting, and informing students of career-related knowledge they may possess.

Institutional responsibility. When asked: "To what extent do you feel college and institutions are responsible for student career preparedness?" there was consistent agreement among the faculty that institutions have responsibility to some degree. Five of the ten faculty who responded to the question replied they "agree strongly," where three of these five were professional track faculty (PT) and two were liberal arts and sciences (LAS). Five others answered, "agree somewhat," where three were PT faculty and two were LAS faculty. The career planning and development administrator, Gwen (Ad), also "agreed strongly" but observes there is some potential conflict between career preparedness and a liberal arts education (AACU, 2004):

That's another loaded one (question). I do believe strongly in the value of liberal arts, but I think they (colleges and universities) *are* [participant emphasis] responsible (for students' career preparedness).

Tara (Psych-LAS) concurred with the concept of institutional responsibility for facilitating career exploration:

I think colleges do have a responsibility for making sure students have it at least opportunities to explore different careers and to get feedback about what their abilities and what their interests are.

Yet Tara (Psych-LAS) embraces the liberal arts college mission as “not career training:” “We’re a liberal arts college, so in part our identity is preparing students to be good citizens and so...I’m not teaching them to a specific job.” The emphasis, Tara (Psych-LAS) adds, at a liberal arts institution is “teaching students how to think.”

Anna’s (ArtTh-PT) response is tied to what might be considered common professional track thinking where “one of the goals of the program” is to “enter a career,” then “we (the institution) should allow the students to meet that goal.” Anna (ArtTh-PT) clearly perceives her role as being responsible for executing the institution’s commitment of fulfilling students’ career goals.

Alina (Biol-LAS) also considers herself and her behaviors as representative of the institution itself and feels responsive to students’ needs for emotional support:

That’s why we call college...*alma mater*...because it’s like another mother...And I think a lot of the students want to have that support [of a mother.] But I don’t feel we really have the structure. And people [faculty] who decide to be there for them, the students see [this], and they come...but we do it not because we need to, but because we want to. I think it’s essential [to provide opportunity for emotional support] because that’s what they [students] all want.

Alina (Biol-PT) is the only non-parent in the study. Regardless, her acceptance of her role as representative of the institution as “another mother” and her ability to provide emotional support for students may be aligned with the Blackburn and Lawrence (1995) model for self-knowledge as someone capable of emotional support for others as an *alma mater* (Latin for generous mother) would provide.

Student responsibility. When faculty are asked: “To what extent do you feel students are responsible for their career preparedness?” there is also agreement among the faculty. Based on

the clarity and consistency of participant comments, this was perhaps the most pronounced concurrence of the findings. Six of the ten faculty who responded to the question replied they “agree strongly,” where four of these six were PT and two are LAS; the career planning and development administrator, Gwen (Ad), also strongly agreed. Four others replied agree somewhat, where two are PT faculty and two were LAS faculty.

The qualitative comments enrich our understanding beyond the reporting of the results based solely on responses to the semi-structured survey. Alina (Biol-LAS) agreed strongly to the theme of student responsibility, and clarifies, “it (responsibility for career preparedness) depends on the students” because “eventually they are the ones who have to decide they want to work hard or want to learn something.” Molly (Chem-LAS) remarks, “I can help direct students, but it’s ultimately their choice.” Supporting that choice is something Molly (Chem-LAS) feels she can influence “somewhat.”

Gwen (Ad), the career planning and development director, feels students must do more with their advisors than sign up for classes. However, she says some faculty advisors push for students to do more:

[The faculty] really do help the students think beyond [what they’re doing]...the students have to participate in that process. So some students just show up for five minutes to get their course schedule approved before they register and they don’t form that kind of relationship, but *really* [participant emphasis] I see a lot of examples of faculty pushing the student to think, “How can I do more?”

Karl (Educ-PT) also agreed strongly with the theme of student responsibility, too, focusing on the inevitable when students realize that they will one day separate from the university and must necessarily depend on themselves:

The focus is different [once a major is declared junior year]. I think suddenly they realize they’re about to go out there...[and the student is thinking], “I have my junior year and my senior year...and once I’ve finished with my 120 credits, this university or this

college or any university is going to kick me out...so I'm going to be out there on my own."

Tara (Psych-LAS) agreed strongly with this theme of student responsibility:

I think it is ultimately up to them [students] because no matter how many resources we offer, if they don't pursue it, it's not going to happen. No matter what kind of feedback I give them, if they don't take it and go do some more research and think about it, nothing is going to change and so I think that ultimately... it's up to them.

Tara believes students will take different actions to operationalize the support available to them:

Some students are going to do all sorts of research and do lots of work. Other students are going to be offered opportunities and kind of ignore them, and some students probably are not going to seek anything out, and ... may not get offered anything.

Tara (Psych-LAS) reemphasizes the theme in her series of additional comments, "Again...if students aren't going to engage with the material, nothing I do is going to change things." Both

Melanie (Bus-PT) and Alina (Biol-LAS) reinforce the commonality of the theme of student responsibility. Melanie (Bus-PT) observes:

I agree strongly, they are responsible [for their career preparedness]... You know you can't make kids do anything unless they want to. We can only try, right? So... we can bring the horse to the water but cannot make them drink.

Alina (Biol-LAS) uses similar proverbial language: "There's a saying... 'You can take the horse to the water... if the horse does not want to drink, it's not going to drink [*sic*].' I think that's the problem." Neither Melanie's (Bus-PT) nor Alina's (Biol-LAS) first language is English, but both provided versions of this English proverb in relation to the theme of students accepting responsibility for their career preparedness, despite faculty's abilities and their willingness to offer support and guidance. This sentiment presents a simple but essential finding of the study.

Though, as previously noted, Sylvan (Comm-PT) describes himself as a "fervent cheerleader" of students, he also proposes the idea of shared responsibility with students, too, and empowering their self-advocacy: "To some degree (colleges and universities are responsible

for students' career preparedness), but "students need to be their own advocates." He added that, similar to Tara (Psych-LAS) and Alina (Bio-LAS), he feels it is essential in the context of career preparedness that students are committed to "learning" above all else; Sylvan (Comm-PT) further urges students to learn problem-solving skills to help address the problems they will encounter "in their work" and to manage all the possibilities "in the real world." However, Sylvan (Comm-PT) feels strongly students will not be prepared for careers or reap the rewards of their investment in education, if they do not focus on learning:

I make it very clear that they're not in class to please... a parent... to pass a course... or to please the rest of the faculty or the administration or get a degree. They are there to *learn*, [participant emphasis] and unless they spend time working on what it is they truly want, they may have a diploma at the end and that might get them in the door [at a job], but after two weeks the guy [employer] is going to say, "Go back to the institution and get your money back."

Sylvan (Comm-PT) focuses on applicable skills, self-reliance, and problem solving both in careers and in life:

Much more important is that they acquire knowledge, processes, methodologies, a way of solving problems by themselves, because I am not always going to be there looking over their shoulders giving them hints on which way to go and which way not.

Sylvan's (Comm-PT) view seems applicable to career preparedness with the inevitability of facing "problems of work" and "real world" that are simply too vast to be included in any curriculum:

They [students] have to be able to create problem-solving skills themselves so they can measure up to the difficulties they are going to encounter in their work. You can't cover every problem. You can do examples all day long, and you should, but you can't cover every possibility that they are going to meet in the real world.

Yet faculty feel mostly prepared and able to do their share, even while recognizing they do not operate in a vacuum and students must take a stake in their career preparedness, or outcomes will suffer.

Faculty responsibility. Despite nearly unanimous agreement that the participants feel they and their departments were prepared to guide students' career directions (Table 3) and that the faculty participants feel institutions and students were largely responsible for their career preparedness, there are more varying degrees of agreement that faculty themselves are responsible for student career preparedness (Table 4). Three professional track faculty (Kayla, Nurs-PT; Sylvan, Comm-PT; and Karl, Educ-PT) agreed strongly, while four others, two PT faculty (Anna, ArtTh-PT and Melanie, Bus-PT) and two LAS faculty (Alina, Bio-PT and Tara, Psych-Las) agreed somewhat that faculty are responsible for students' career preparedness. Three faculty participants, one PT (Ellen, Educ-PT) and two LAS (Brian, Hist-LAS and Molly, Chem-LAS) disagreed somewhat that faculty are responsible for students' career preparedness.

Table 4

Institutional, Student, and Faculty Responsibility

Possible Responses: Agree strongly, Agree Somewhat, Disagree Somewhat, Disagree Strongly, Not sure

	1	2	3
Faculty Pseudonym/ (Gender⁺: M = male; F = female), Age Discipline Years in H.E.*	Colleges and universities are responsible for students' career preparedness	Students are responsible for their career preparedness	Faculty are responsible for students' career preparedness
Percent Agree Strongly / Agree Somewhat	50% / 50%	60% / 40%	70% / 30%
Kayla (F) 55 Nurs-PT 7	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Agree strongly
Sylvan (M) 68 Comm-PT 11	Agree somewhat	Agree strongly	Agree strongly
Anna (F) 52 ArtTh- PT 20	Agree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Agree somewhat
Karl (M) 65 Educ-PT 19	Agree strongly	Agree strongly	Agree strongly
Melanie (F) 48 Bus-PT 3	Agree somewhat	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat

Ellen (F) 85 Educ-PT 18	Agree strongly	Agree strongly	Disagree somewhat
Alina** (F) 51 Biol-LAS 8	Agree strongly	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat
Molly (F) 53 Chem-LAS 16	Agree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Disagree somewhat
Brian (M) 51 Hist-LAS 20	Agree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Disagree somewhat
Tara (F) 33 Psych-LAS 4	Agree strongly	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat

Note. †Gender as indicated by participant; *H.E. = higher education; ** Non-parent

This table presents a visual confirmation that faculty strongly agree that responsibility is shared for students' career preparedness between the institution, students and faculty. Liberal Arts Track faculty appear to disagree that faculty are responsible more so than Professional Track faculty.

Melanie (Bus-PT) qualifies her response of agreeing somewhat that faculty are responsible:

I don't know if they're [faculty are] responsible, but they should be facilitating the discussions and definitely assisting. I would say they [students] were responsible... We can only do so much. I don't say we are responsible for it? [*sic*] But we should definitely play a big part in it. And definitely there should be an emphasis on having the faculty being engaged.

Melanie's (Bus-PT) response indicates faculty should be involved by "assisting" students, "facilitating discussions," and "being engaged," but by qualifying that faculty are not fully responsible, indicates the small tension that exists between the ability of faculty to be supportive of students' career preparedness and the persons who bear the bulk of the responsibility. She gave a clear example of engagement as the required for student internship advisor where she meets with students to discuss the experiential learning, checks in with employers, sometimes visits the employer site to determine progress, and sees the students' evaluations and outcomes. Melanie (Bus-PT) commented, "We're very engaged in the (internship) process."

Despite thinking students' career preparedness is important, Tara (Psych-LAS) feels that she understands the limits of her faculty responsibility, citing a lack of specific training, and inability to do "it all," while also recognizing the value of making referral to other resources:

One of the things that's difficult is when I look over my career, there is no point that I get trained on how to give career advice...I don't have particular training on how to help students shape the resumes, ...[and] “what's everything you can do with the Psych degree.”[sic]

She expresses a clear perception of her role:

I see my role is more of helping students understand that there's a lot more out there than they may realize and helping connect them with resources. But I think as a faculty member it just doesn't feel realistic to do it all, even though I think it's important.

Sylvan (Comm-PT) comments, “We take on the responsibility of their future lives,” but also says he communicates to students that they must have a serious stake in their futures and seek information, too:

I tell them, “I can’t even teach you everything. You’re going to have to take a strong role in this. In order to do that, you’re going to have to pick tips, techniques, cheap tricks, anything that will help you use the information and be able to recall it later on”... *and* [participant emphasis]... I tell them they have to read...read until the day they’re planted.

Tara (Psych-LAS) cites the need for a balance between societal needs and a practical access to work:

So I think that there needs to be a balance. I think that it's important to focus on having broad, global citizens, who have critical thinking skills and things like that, but I also think we need to make sure that what we're preparing students with, translates into the work world and they have a sense of how to do that.

This opinion seems to reflect the notion of attaining a balance between the liberal arts and sciences track and professional track objectives and outcomes.

Summary Q1 Findings

Within the student–faculty relationship there is an opportunity for faculty to be supportive of students’ career preparedness in many ways. Research Question 1 asks: How do faculty perceive their role in student career preparedness? Four themes emerged. First, faculty and the career services administrator felt strongly that students need support and guidance in determining their career direction, especially given the inexperience of their students and

particularly first-generation students who may lack social and cultural capital. Data include comments that students without social and cultural capital lack knowledge on career possibilities and pathways, even when the pathways are fairly prescribed as in art therapy. Participants who are first-generation students themselves are sensitive to students' needs for direction, recalling in detail inspirations from their own formative years (7 of the 11 participants) and intrinsically motivated to do the same for their students. Providing information, directing students to resources, and providing support as "cheerleaders" are behaviors faculty suggest are part of their faculty role given students' apparent needs.

Secondly, faculty agree that among the goals of education, that employment after college is an essential priority to them and for the institution. This echoes a national faculty survey on the same question where much of the faculty agreed "preparing students for employment after college" was "essential" (Eagan, Stolzenberg, Lozano, 2016). This sentiment created some tension for those participants who also felt employment was important but only among other essential goals, such as pursuit of liberal arts and sciences studies, which seemed counterposed to career preparedness to some participants. The institution's website academics page cites a connection between liberal arts core and what "employers want." Echoing this belief, faculty also felt it essential for students to not only be able to work productively but to become socialized as life-long learners with problem-solving, writing, and critical thinking skills and able to make contributions to society as good citizens, as well. Faculty tie employment and career advancement to the goals students themselves establish and among the benefits families believe will be achieved through investment in higher education and degree attainment. Several faculty participants tie the need to support students to the economic survival of the institution itself. Others see the emphasis on the institution's financial health a distraction from the focus on an

overarching goal of education and learning as the primary outcome. The granting of degrees without substance behind them seemed abhorrent to a few of the faculty.

Beyond recognizing student, institutional, and societal needs, faculty discuss their ability to influence and support students. The results endorse the modified Lent and Brown theoretical model (2013, p. 562; modified by Majewski, 2018, p. 20). Faculty feel they do have the ability to influence students to a great extent or at least to some extent, most often depending on the students' willingness to seek support and be influenced. A few, however, express self-doubt that they do not know everything there was to know or even enough about career possibilities to be of any help to students. Liberal arts and sciences track faculty express this sentiment more often compared with professional track faculty. Faculty also note the many other influences students have in their lives and feel cautious about imposing their views if not approached to do so. This also endorses the modified Lent and Brown career self-management model where other student influences are recognized (2013, p. 562; modified by Majewski, 2018, p. 20). Some faculty feel they can inspire love for their fields, as in nursing, encourage opportunities for students to discover what they like and do not like through job shadowing, and express some hesitancy, too, in asserting how much influence they have because they could not know what would make students happy as adults. Other ways faculty felt they could influence students was through role modeling and as examples of professionalism in some soft skills, such as interpersonal communication. In a brief semi-structured survey, faculty mostly agree strongly or somewhat that they: help students determine career direction, provide experiences in the classroom that prepare students for the workplace, and provide support and guidance outside the classroom that helps students determine their career direction. They also feel prepared to guide students' career directions and feel their departments are prepared as well.

The last theme that dominates this research question was the concept of responsibility, including institutional, student, and faculty responsibility. Faculty largely agree the institution is responsible for providing opportunity for career exploration and for students to get feedback about their abilities and interests and guidance into careers to which students are suited. However, faculty stopped short of accepting the liberal arts institution's primary purpose is necessarily career training for a specific job but more about preparing good citizens and teaching students how to think, write, and problem-solve, too, in alignment with the Catholic liberal arts institution's mission. The institution provides freshman seminars organized by subject and taught by subject-specific faculty where career exploration is possible. Nursing, education, business, art therapy, and even natural sciences connected to health sciences faculty are more inclined in this study to see professional objectives on par with achieving liberal arts objectives, while liberal arts faculty in history and psychology saw liberal arts objectives as prominent with the professional objectives to be determined by the student's self-efficacy and career self-management. Professional track faculty see students as seeking a particular career and feel the institution's role as necessarily having to provide the most up-to-date information, deliver guidance, and offer thorough preparation for the careers students seek. In some cases, the responsibility of the institution poised as *alma mater*, responsible for providing holistic 360 degree emotional, personal, and moral support some faculty feel students want and need, and they as faculty are willing to provide.

Faculty and the career services administrator also strongly agree that students are responsible for their career preparedness because students ultimately make the decisions to engage, work hard, and enact career guidance. Participants observed faculty can be catalysts for students, facilitate conversations, provide information, and recommend resources, all prompting

students to think about what they can do to be responsible, given they will eventually leave the institution. Faculty observe varying degrees of student effort in research, seeking and taking advantage of opportunities. Faculty recognize a “take the horse to water” relationship with their students who must necessarily act, be self-advocates, take a stake in their futures, and place learning and problem-solving above all else since not every possible problem can be presented via their curriculums. Some faculty feel they must wait to be asked for guidance or otherwise thought to impose their unsolicited views, though they feel prepared, in most cases, to be supportive of students’ career preparedness when asked.

Nevertheless, faculty agree the responsibility rests with faculty to be engaged with students in this regard but feel that responsibility rests more with students to seek help; that is, faculty are responsible for assisting rather than initiating career preparedness support. Some liberal arts track faculty feel they had little to offer since it seemed outside the scope of their teaching roles, they had little training in guiding students in this way, and the focus on liberal arts skills is more essentially their goal. However, inherent liberal arts curriculum research skills are applicable to the circumstance for some faculty when they encourage students to understand they need to explore options more than the students realize exist and the faculty role is to connect students to necessary resources they know students should research on their own. For professional track faculty, career conversations come more naturally. Generally, faculty feel they are prepared, willing to communicate information, facilitate discussion, and empower students’ self-advocacy.

In this study, given the help participants feel students need in finding a career direction, the priority of employment after college, the responsibility for students’ career preparedness is believed to be shared among three partners: the *institution*, as it provides opportunities for

students to “explore” and fulfill their career goals and learn practical logistics of managing career-related life skills; to the *faculty*, who are prepared and “willing” to assist students in and out of the classroom by “communicating information,” “facilitating discussions,” and empowering students’ “self-advocacy;” and ultimately and primarily, the *students*, who when brought, taken or led to water, must do their best to drink it up, that is, think critically about their direction, research, read, learn problem-solving, access resources, and take a stake in their career preparedness in these and other ways.

Q2: Faculty Support of Students’ Career Preparedness in and Outside the Classroom

Research Question 2 asks: In what ways, if any, do faculty support undergraduate career preparedness in and outside the classroom? I sought participants’ perceptions, behaviors, attitudes, and motivations via a semi-structured survey with a series of items, asked for comments on motivations for use of the practices, and reviewed syllabi to corroborate and complement their survey responses. The faculty responses are clustered most often around the following themes: use of certain high-impact and related practices, career-related “advising and mentoring,” “connection to resources,” and other career preparedness behavior.

High-Impact Practices

When asked about activities in and out of the classroom that support students’ career preparedness, Alina (Chem-LAS) uses the term *high-impact practices* she had encountered recently at a conference to describe her efforts that she feels are helpful to students’ career preparedness. High-impact practices (HIPs) are those widely tested and shown to be beneficial for college students to increase institutions’ rates of student retention and engagement. Kuh (2008) and The American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU) defined these practices over a decade ago and endorses them as methods for enhancing students’ skills and

abilities that employers desire in college graduates (American Association of Colleges and Universities, 2004; Humphreys, 2009). These practices include: first-year seminar, common intellectual experiences (sometimes known as common core), learning communities, writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, undergraduate research, diversity/global learning, service learning, community-based learning, internships, and capstone courses and projects.

Of these HIPs, five significant activity trends emerge in this study clearly clustered around: experiential learning such as credit-bearing internships, including clinical rotations, observations, shadowing, practicums and student teaching; writing skills (e.g., research, reflective writing, journaling, briefs, essays, other writing assignments); problem-solving skills (e.g., technical, ethical, methodological, other problem-solving skills); undergraduate research opportunities; capstone courses and projects.

Other themes clustered around experiential and global learning through study abroad and “soft” skills such as emotional intelligence skills (e.g., self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, social skills), interpersonal skills (e.g., communication, decision-making, assertiveness), and problem-solving. These are also considered important to employers according to the literature (American Association of Colleges and Universities, 2004; Humphreys, 2009).

The questions in the semi-structured survey designed to determine which practices faculty felt they use in their pedagogy did not directly reference high-impact practices but rather inquire about individual faculty activities associated with the *concept* of high-impact practices (Kuh, 2008). Faculty responses indicate that they employ several of the known high-impact practices in some measure. Some are embedded within the curriculum common for some majors, but not necessarily for others. While the HIPs are in alignment with the goals and mission of the

institution, they are sometimes practiced but without the awareness that the practices are considered high-impact or had relevance to students' career preparedness. Instead, they are simply considered to be pedagogical practices faculty use to fulfill curricular objectives or satisfy their areas of interest, for example, study abroad by Brian (Hist-LAS). Other concepts related to career preparedness, for example, soft skills desired by employers (emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills, and problem-solving) are endemic to faculty behaviors and beliefs.

Experiential learning. All 10 faculty respondents, representing the range of academic disciplines and tracks, unanimously strongly agreed that “experiential learning helps prepare students for the workplace.” However, they have varying experiences and levels of engagement in assisting students with experiential learning at the undergraduate level. The institution asserts the value of experiential learning through its electronic catalog on its website in its “Academic Internship Program.” This is the program through which academic credit is awarded:

[The institution] recognizes the valuable role that work experience can play in helping students understand and integrate theoretical and practical knowledge. Students interested in pursuing an internship for academic credit work with an internship faculty advisor and the Office of Career Planning and Development. Students must receive approval for the proposed internship, develop learning objectives and goals in consultation with the internship faculty advisor, work under the supervision of the employer and complete related academic assignments.

This suggests a collaboration between an academic department, faculty, the Office of Career Planning and Development, and students, with the responsibility for seeking the internship residing with the student. Faculty contribute to the student advising, establishing of academic goals and objectives, and assessing student learning and achievement as Melanie (Bus-PT) and Alina (Bio-LAS) confirm are among their faculty roles in students' experiential learning

The theme of whether the practice of experiential learning is naturally embedded in the curriculum emerges in this study. Experiential learning is embedded in the health science,

business, education, and some natural sciences and nursing curriculums and is sometimes essential to licensing requirements that are well-known to accompany professional track majors, particularly nursing and education. Experiential learning like internships are less available, or “not embedded” or optional according to other liberal arts and sciences faculty, in majors like psychology, chemistry, and history or even the professional track major of art therapy at the undergraduate level for a variety of reasons but may be established by other means within the curriculums. Another theme that emerges is evidence of the increased level of institutional conversations on experiential learning internships in relation to curriculum development. Though internships are not embedded in the psychology major, Tara (Psych-LAS) recognizes their value in providing students with exposure to possible careers and access to mentors:

I think students who are able to get internships, that probably influences a lot because they see some of the options that are out there, and I think that's one of the most important things is just even knowing what your options are. And...if they have mentoring relationships there, that's going to be very influential.

Alina (Bio-LAS), who coordinates health science majors whose career goals are attending health-related professional school comments, “The health science majors must complete one internship during their four years...where the capstone seminar (another HIP) is actually preceding [*sic*] that internship, so that prepares them.” Alina serves as “in-house advisor” for students who earn credit for their internships as does Melanie (Bus-PT) for business student internships.

Internships and other forms of experiential learning, such as shadowing, are not necessarily required by other undergraduate natural sciences majors beyond the classroom laboratories, which are helpful to prepare for careers, according to Molly (Chem-LAS). However, internships and other forms of experiential learning are highly recommended when related to professional career goals aligned with both chemistry and health professions, such as

medicine, dentistry, chiropractic, physician assistant, pharmacy, and physical therapy. This is where the liberal arts and sciences track majors intersect with professional track and adopts some of the practices of experiential learning more commonly found in professional track majors, that is, both encouraged by faculty and/or embedded in curriculums.

In the capstone class for the health professions, Alina (Bio-LAS) assists students in preparation for the internships by requiring them to write their resumes. She also invites health science professionals and research professionals to the capstone classes to inform students of career possibilities and logistics and facilitates conversations about internships. She collaborates with career-services professionals to help students develop the scientific CV format and personal statements that differ from traditional resumes and essays. She sees these activities as necessary preparation for students:

That's why we [*sic*]write their resumes and a personal statement[s] so when they apply for their internship, it's already ready for that...[seeking an internship]...and also we talk about internships, and...we have physicians, ... physical therapists, occupational therapists, chiropractor(s)...pharmacists...come in and talk about their life experience and why / how they became a physician, [or] physical therapist.

Alina (Bio-LAS) believes that internships broaden students' awareness and confirm or crystallize their career choices (Day Keller, 2012), "And right now they are working there (at the internship) and (students can determine) is it what they thought it is? [*sic*]." Alina (Bio-LAS) initiates conversations about required shadowing hours in her first-year seminar for health professions and advises students to "get started" because so many shadowing hours are required in some professions, like physical therapy,

In contrast, Molly (Chem-LAS) says, "We don't have internships here (in chemistry), but we help...[and] encourage students to look for internships." She recognizes the value of

internships and distinguishes which internships can be most helpful for chemistry students to determine the best career direction:

The thing that I think that would help our students the most is having the opportunity to do an actual internship at a...research facility and then also a company so they can see both sides...They both use the basic knowledge content [needed to be successful] but there are two different environments...some students would do very well in one environment and not so well in the other...it would help them [to] know before they're actually applying [for jobs] what kind of position would be better for them as a person.

Molly (Chem-LAS) discusses the lack of chemistry internships and how competitive they were to obtain, perhaps implying a lack of demand for chemists or industry circumstances that do not support any internships. The limited access to internships may restrict the department's ability to require internships to be embedded in some natural sciences curriculums, instead making them optional, but nonetheless they are considered essential to student career preparedness by Molly (Chem-LAS):

There are not a lot of internship opportunities. It's very competitive. So like Pfizer or Merck...they have say 25 internships. They are getting 1000 applicants from all over the country, top people from all these big schools, MIT, Harvard, Yale, Princeton. It's hard for our students to compete, because we don't have that big a name. It doesn't mean that they can't, that they're not good students, some of our students are really good, and some of them are competing with these people getting these internships, it's just there's not enough [internships in the marketplace].

Interestingly, Molly (Chem-LAS) works as a mentor to a high school summer internship program on campus through an Army Education Outreach Program Grant she was awarded:

I just started...being a mentor for the Army Education Outreach Program...
...of bringing high school students to do research with me over the summer.
... Last year I had one college student of ours that volunteered to do that with me... this year I have two students who are going to volunteer. They get the experience, but we don't have the means to pay them, so they're doing it as a volunteer.

Molly (Chem-LAS) recognizes the value of experiential learning for her students but does not consider volunteering with the high school researchers as an internship because her college students are not paid. Nevertheless, students seeking experiential learning in laboratory settings

garner valuable career preparedness knowledge working alongside the chemistry faculty in the lab nonetheless.

Melanie (Bus-PT) mentions that internships are discussed in the freshman seminar for business majors and feels “the school does a pretty good job” with starting to talk about it early in the undergraduate experience. Melanie (Bus-PT) confirms faculty are very engaged in the process especially since the college awards up to six credits for internships, “which is a great benefit” for students. She believes that internships are, “not required...but ...emphasized as part of the curriculum.” As Melanie (Bus-PT) reports, some faculty are required to play a very specific role because of the academic credit awarded for internship experiences:

If they [students] have an internship...we are the advisors for internships from the academic perspective...We check in with the employers, we see their evaluations. I’m not saying we go and visit every student, but I went to Manhattan, I visited my student at the place of the internship [*sic*].

Faculty like Melanie (Bus-PT,) Molly (Chem-LAS), and Alina (Bio-LAS) communicate clearly to students in their freshman seminar the value of experiential learning. Awarding credit for internships is a way the institution acknowledges their value as well. Molly (Chem-LAS) feels her chemistry curriculum includes practice of marketable laboratory skills, like titration, and unknowingly provides valuable experiential learning via the summer volunteer opportunities she hosts.

Kayla (Nurs-PT) is proud of her department’s 100% placement rate of graduating nurses and even more the 100% retention rate when according to Kayla, the rate is typically 36–30%. She credits the experiential learning embedded in nursing programs: “I think it’s because we give them experiential experiences [*sic*] throughout nursing school, so they know what they’re getting into.” Junior nursing students conduct externships in the summer, 13 of which were facilitated by Kayla (Nurs-PT). The experiential learning includes extensive clinical rotations:

Every student has an experiential clinical experience that runs for 15 weeks, 12 hours a day. So one day a week, they're paired with a nurse and they're working in acute care units within the hospital. I arrange observation experiences for them across the curriculum [in the]... ER [emergency room], ICU [intensive care unit], OR [operating room], PACU [post-anesthesia care unit], so that they can see every area.

Kayla (Nurs-PT) also credits her connection to the community for developing and keeping contacts with nursing students' employment in mind: "We've developed education dedication units with community partners so that they [the student nurses] are immersed in doing these experiences." Students' experiences and employment are top of mind for Kayla. She also believes her personal professional contacts as a practitioner create inroads for students in settings where they will want to work:

I think in every class we're always worried about career preparedness, so we put our clinical experiences [for student nurses] in community facilities where we want our students to work...magnet certified, community facilities that are supported and respected. That's how they get their magnet designation. Because we are all practitioners, we kept our contacts.

Having the contacts proves important in other activities Kayla (Nurs-PT) and her colleagues enact to help students find their first nursing jobs. "It's that initial 'get' (employment) that they need to have," according to Kayla (Nurs-PT).

Engagement in future employment settings through observations and student teaching is also embedded in education curriculum as natural internships. Prior to actual student teaching, Karl (Educ-PT) assigns several assignments where students observe classroom dynamics including: how often the teacher interacts with students by gender, the number and nature of the interactions with what level student (below, on, and above level), and how the teacher interactions align with higher or lower levels of critical thinking according to Bloom's taxonomy. Another assignment focuses on the layout of the furniture in a classroom and how Karl's (Educ-PT) students might rearrange the classroom and why it makes pedagogical sense to

them. Karl assigns the observations and thoughtful assignments because he feels that “at the end of the semester the lights go on because they typically don’t look at these kinds of things.” For the class students also have to do 30 hours of classroom instruction. When asked about his motivations for devising his curriculum, Karl (Educ-PT) is hopeful in his intentions that students will recall and apply what they learned in his assignments to the workplace:

Well, ultimately, if I’m doing my job...and they’re getting their money’s worth, it benefits them [students] because when they enter the classroom they say, “I remember that assignment, I remember... I remember how I organized the furniture, well now, guess what...I just got hired, it’s my classroom, I can organize the furniture,” or “I am sensitive to the types of...the levels of questions I’m asking students. If I espouse that I focus these higher order thinking skills, let me remember, limit the number of recalls, limit the number of comprehensions, and let’s get to the substance...let’s get to the meat...”

On the other hand, Tara (Psych-LAS) and Brian (Hist-LAS) feel they are more connected to access of graduate studies than undergraduate internship opportunities, workplace market trends. While sharing knowledge of graduate studies provides career direction for students who seek that path, both Tara (Psych-LAS) and Brian (Hist-LAS) did not feel knowledgeable about experiential learning at the undergraduate level, nor feel prepared or “trained” to help students in career preparedness. Brian (Hist-LAS) speaks for the History and Political Science Department on both the lack of internships and the focus on them:

I think that in my department...for sure...we could do a better job with internships...it's one of those things that comes up every few years, and then it never seems to go anywhere...I do feel like we're not doing a great job there [with internships]... that maybe as a department...we should have more conversations about types of internships that might be helpful for students.

Brian (Hist-LAS) adds the focus on internships has surfaced recently, and he is honest about the undeveloped state of internships in his discipline:

We're looking at our core curriculum...at one of our [curriculum] meetings, this very subject came up. I said, “In my department I feel like we've had students who do internships, but...I don't think the internships our students do are really all that great.”

Despite the negative view of his ability to support experiential learning and assisting students with finding internships job opportunities, Brian (Hist-LAS) shared a striking example of assisting a former history student in securing an internship at PBS that requires an engaged student–faculty relationship and motivation to help that can result in career preparation success for students. He said the occasion was “fluky” and “rare,” and wished “rarely” were a category of response on the survey to describe his practices in supporting students’ career preparedness. Brian (Hist-LAS) often honestly replied “never” or a forced “sometimes.” The PBS internship was the result of a PBS representative contacting him about the contents of his 20-year-old dissertation. In the course of their conversation, he inquired about the caller’s career path:

I asked, “How did you get into this line of work?” We had an alum who had just graduated and was interested in something to do with [the] media...very strong student. She didn’t go to grad school and I knew she was kind of looking around...wasn’t sure what she could do. And I said, “You know...I have this student who I think would be interested in this field...” I wasn’t even thinking she could get a job there, but [wondered if] “... could she talk to you [*sic*]...or something?” And she ended up going in and they ended up offering her an internship. And so she did internship there for six months or so I think...but that’s [helping students find an internship] pretty unusual.

Brian (Hist-LAS) qualifies the relationship with the student as one of the stronger student–faculty relationships he has experienced, where he and the student spoke often, saying: “She took a lot of my classes...we had a good rapport...we talked about all kinds of stuff.” As a result Brian (Hist-LAS) seems familiar with the student’s interests and motivated to connect her to an internship that would enhance her resume and build her network: “It didn’t get her a paying job, but it got her some experience.” Brian recognizes that replicating this internship “success story” is challenging and unusual for him given his general lack of market knowledge but helpful for the student.

Other undergraduate majors have difficult access to internships. Anna (ArtTh-PT) explains internships in art therapy are much more available and common for graduate students than undergraduates:

We used to have a small internship [for Intro to Art Therapy], but we found that nobody would take the undergraduates. Now most facilities because of HIPAA will not just let an undergraduate just come in and observe, so it's almost impossible [to have undergraduate internships].

Because of the limitations in the field, Anna (ArtTh-PT) describes a means of “experiential learning” executed within the confines of the Intro to Art Therapy classrooms. She considers the classrooms a “laboratory for learning about it” (art therapy). She explains:

We do experiential learning...we have two wonderful classrooms that were... developed through grants... they have a full studio set up in there... so they...do their own art making...part of it might be lecture, videos (of art therapists working with different populations)...they're actually doing a simulation of art therapy with themselves there, so that they start to understand...the process.

Creating a simulation to imitate the workplace for chemists is what Molly (Chem-LAS) also does in her chemistry labs with students. However, she laments that a small college lab cannot possibly keep as technologically current with its equipment inventory as students can experience in a commercial laboratory through internships; it is simply too expensive. But Molly (Chem-LAS) expresses her excitement that she teaches and helps students to achieve mastery of the concepts, content and context of chemical laboratory testing that students can “add to their resumes as marketable skills” and “apply to any chemical laboratory environment.” Familiarity with more up-to-date equipment as graduates’ careers and technologies evolve.

In general, students’ experiential learning appears well served at the institution based on the data I analyzed with most faculty participants fully engaged in many experiential learning activities and even for less familiar faculty to rarely help students connect to experiential learning.

Writing, research skills, and capstone classes. Writing, research, and capstone classes are high-impact practices that the data show to be integrated in coursework at this study site. Undergraduate research and capstone courses, which are culminating classes in a major, are both high-impact practices outlined by Kuh (2008). These practices were often naturally mentioned by faculty participants enmeshed with writing skills believed to contribute meaningfully to students' career preparedness, which is why they are presented here together in one sub-category of high-impact practices, rather than individually. As mentioned, on its website, the institution ties writing skills to the "communication skills" employers seek.

Of all the HIPs, writing skills (e.g., research, reflective writing, journaling, briefs, essays, and other writing assignments) were virtually unanimously embraced by faculty as something they did "often" when surveyed on a 4-point Likert scale for frequency (*Often, Sometimes, Never, Not Sure*). At this institution, writing was particularly emphasized in research seminars and capstone classes. When asked how the participants as individuals and then the institution ranked writing as an essential priority on a 4-point Likert scale for (*Essential, Very Important, Somewhat Important, Not Important*) participants tied this HIP to a seemingly widely known institutional goal of intensive writing courses throughout the curriculum and a strong mutual priority for both faculty and faculty view of the institution's priorities. Sylvan (Comm-PT) agrees that writing is "taken very seriously" with "writing across the curriculum" with "extra courses...required" so students can develop writing skills. Yet Sylvan (Comm-PT) feels while writing is "institutionalized" writing is "not yet effective" for several reasons. Ellen (Educ-PT) also views writing as an institutional priority central to the core curriculum effort at the institution:

We have a Core Curriculum Committee that takes [writing] samples every semester. They determine which classes they're going to use [for writing intensive course], and then they analyze how the writing has been going. They're working hard at it [writing].

Ellen (Educ-PT) explains that she practices writing as a priority in her classroom: "I think it's really, really important and my undergraduate students know it...One doesn't grow as a good writer unless one writes." She is often a resource for students at the graduate level as well: "The doctoral students will come to me to be their first reader...they know I am very, very fussy as far as writing goes." Ellen (Educ-PT) maintains writing as a priority aligned with institutional goals and high standards, which are particularly aligned with her own values.

Alina (Bio-LAS) and Brian (Hist-LAS) similarly reinforce the institution's focus and assessment of writing skills and applicability to the workplace. Alina (Bio-LAS) reports:

It's very important [here]. They have to take at least two writing intensive classes during their career [at the college] and so [at] the institutional level it's very, very important...we also have an assessment...of the same students when they're freshman, [and at] the [sic] different times... There is a rubric [and] they [assessment team] grade[s] their [student] writing and see whether or not they are improving, and how is it compared to their grade[s]. So it's like the full assessment goes around [sic] the writing.

Alina (Bio-LAS) connects the imperative around writing to the requirement in her labs for students to produce detailed, hand-written lab reports modeled after the what she believes are the most stringent "standards in performance experimentation" from her experience in the pharmaceutical industry. She has also expanded research opportunities for students since she arrived at the institution 8 years ago and works side-by-side with students pursuing laboratory inquiry. She says she "spends the time" with them and sees this as an investment that pays off in student success and students' willingness to return and pay it forward:

If we put more effort and attention to students [sic], they will be successful and in the long run ...they will take care of this institution because we are their alma mater.... The students that grew out of this department since we started to do research, take them out for dinner and we spend time... and not only me, but new faculty who are so invested in the students...the students feel our department is the best just because we invest our time

and effort in them...and if we ask anything of them, they come...and they give presentations [about their fields].

For Alina (Biol-PT), writing skills are enmeshed within research skills she teaches in her biology classes. She says she deliberately encourages student relationships to support their research efforts and treats students as research peers when in the lab.

Brian (Hist-LAS) feels research, writing, time management, and managing a large project are skills practiced in his capstone history class in research seminar, which will likely be useful in workplaces. Students must produce a major research project to pass the class and earn their degrees. Students are required to meet with Brian (Hist-LAS) individually three times, or more if needed, during the semester for support and editing:

In terms of career skills, they need to know how to write, and of course we develop the writing in all kinds of courses. [In] Research Seminar...that's where they're working independently, most of the time [and] they're producing a major research project... they have to have time management...They are practicing skills presumably that they'll need in the workplace as well...coming up with a topic, following-through.

Later in the interview when asked further about the capstone course Brian (Hist-LAS) explains how the research seminar project could possibly be supportive of students' career preparedness. During the semi-structured survey Brian (Hist-LAS) was the least enthusiastic of the respondents about his ability to support students, replying that he did not feel prepared to guide students' career directions and "disagreed somewhat" that faculty were responsible for students' career preparedness. In fact, prior to the interview, he questioned why I would want to interview someone in his discipline. Nevertheless, he articulated clearly how the work his students produced in the capstone research seminar did, in fact, contribute to skills he thought could be helpful to students' career-preparedness:

[The research project requires] choosing a topic, defining a problem, doing research...gathering information...organizing it and presenting it...[and] answer[ing] questions about it. None of it is directly career-oriented, but I think there certainly are

skills that they are working that will be useful to them.

I am not certain if the long-term, work-related benefits of their assignments are clearly explained to students or if Brian (HIST-LAS) thinks of these skills as transferable to the workplace. Eight of the 10 faculty participants have taught capstone classes or are responsible for capstone projects with either research, writing, and/or another form of culminating practice. Capstone activity was particularly more evident for professional track faculty: Melanie's (Bus-PT) business project was a simulation exercise; Anna's (ArtTh-PT) art therapy project included a mandatory community service project required for admission to the graduate program; Ellen (Educ-PT) and Karl (Educ-Pt) teach capstone classes that are designed as preparatory for student teaching; Kayla's (Nurs-PT) nursing students must conduct research and present at the college's Research Day; and Alina's (Bio-LAS) students conduct research in a capstone course and write industry-standard lab reports.

Kayla (Nurs-PT) believes that the research assignment, which includes a quality improvement aspect, is connected to career preparedness because students can then "discuss current research" from their project in their job interviews.

I know what they need to have in their skill base to be successful in obtaining a job. When I was in consulting, I was working in HR [human resources] so I've done hiring. I've done so many interviews, so I know what they need, and I feel it's my job [to help students find employment].

Kayla (Nurs-PT) considers her prior experience outside of academia working as a consultant in human resources as an asset that gives her insight on how her students can interview successfully. This "career knowledge" from Blackburn and Lawrence's model (1995) impacts her attitude and confident behavior with students. She connects students' capstone research writing by helping students to connect its purpose to their career preparedness and their ability to interview well for nursing positions by being able to discuss their recent research.

Table 5 provides the frequency of writing, additional rich examples of writing assignments in selected courses participants mentioned, and related faculty comments regarding writing, research, and capstone classes. See also Faculty Capstone status as further evidence of writing assignment practices offered by study participants.

Table 5

Writing Skills in Practice: Survey of Frequency, Sample Assignments, and Commentary

Possible Responses: Often, Sometimes, Never, Not sure

Faculty Pseudonym/ (Gender ⁺ Age Discipline Years in H.E.*	Frequency of Writing Within the Course Curriculum	Capstone Faculty Sample of Writing / Research Assignments	Comments on Importance, Purpose and Value of Writing / Research and Faculty Role
Kayla (F) 55 Nurs-PT 7 years	Often	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capstone course (Senior Nursing students) • Evidenced-based research including quality improvement aspect 	“Every senior in my class does an evidence-based practice project presented at [the university’s] Research Day...they can discuss [the research] in interviews.”
Sylvan (M) 68 Comm-PT 11 years	Often	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capstone course (Advanced Communications) • Finely edited two-page editorial based on research 	“[Students] must focus, research the topic thoroughly, and then write with passion. It forces them to dig deeply inside themselves, write, and re-rewrite – until they feel comfortable with the results.”
Anna (F) 52 ArtTh- PT 20 years	Often	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capstone project (community service) • Academic writing (papers), self-reflection, journaling • Creating art on one side of a 5x8 work, reflective writing on the other 	“In our program [we look at] knowledge, skills and self-awareness...just related to who they are as a person, because...being an art therapist... there has to be some personal motivation. [The writing assignment] helps them develop their self-reflective capacity.”
Karl (M) 65 Educ-PT 19 years	Often	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capstone (preceding student teaching) • Cover letter and resume writing for mock interviews • Freshmen Seminar reflection on attendance 	<i>[Q. Why is writing an essential priority?]</i> “Simply because in many instances a person’s perspective of you... that first window...is a written window. It’s your letter of introduction. It’s your resume. And from my previous experience as a principal... and I have many colleagues [who would do the

			to two campus activity experiences.	same]...if there's a typo, we're not even considering that person."
Melanie (F) 48 Bus-PT 3 years	Often	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capstone Business Simulation • Writing done in relation to the business simulation exercise during the capstone course where students articulate the strategy for their "company" profitability. 		"From the core requirements, that (writing skills) is high on the list. [It's] very important."
Ellen (F) 85 Educ-PT 18 years	Often	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capstone (preceding student teaching) • Unit of study, including philosophy, goals and objectives. 		<p>"What a unit of study does for them it talks about a philosophy [for the unit]."</p> <p>"I've ripped their papers apart, and I think to myself, 'They don't read. They're not writing well, and they're teaching kids how to write.'"</p>
Alina** (F) 51 Biol-LAS 8 years	Often	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capstone course for Health Sciences • Lab reports • Freshmen Seminar reflection on attendance to two campus activities experiences. 		<p>"The Capstone Class for Health Science majors...they have to write a proposal for a grant for their project and submit it to an outside source."</p> <p>"In my labs we ask them to write a...handwritten lab report. They have to write all the details down ...it's a standard format of the current good laboratory practice(s), which is the highest standard in performance experimentation."</p> <p>"In one of my labs...Cell Biology [they have] to write six [lab reports] and in Immunology they have to write seven [lab] reports. I feel we ask them to pay attention to details."</p>
Molly (F) 53 Chem-LAS 16 years	Sometimes		None noted	None noted
Brian (M) 51 Hist-LAS 20 years	Often	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capstone Research Seminar Project 		"I'm trying to teach them the [research] tricks that I learned because I want to grad school. I'm a pretty efficient user of a database...I also worked in the library... that was my job when I was an undergrad."
Tara (F) 33 Psych-LAS 4 years	Often	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undergraduate research with faculty • Advanced writing course to support undergraduate research, APA journal article format. 		"We're working on creating an advance writing class to support [multidisciplinary] research."

Note. †Gender as indicated by participant; *H.E. = higher education; **Non-parent. Writing practices are frequent.

Study abroad. As a high-impact practice researched by Kuh (2008), study abroad in the context of higher education gives students first-hand exposure to multicultural perspectives. They often develop a level of respect and acceptance of different cultural perspectives while also practicing soft skills related to travel in environments other than their own. The one-week study abroad opportunity is one that Brian (Hist-LAS) says he “enjoys teaching more than others.” He teaches the 7-week history content course that precedes the travel in collaboration with an art history professor, who teaches the art component. The faculty partners sponsored a credit-bearing trip to Vienna, Austria recently during the spring break with over a dozen students and faculty and including the University president. Though identified as a high-impact practice and known to help students in clarifying their career direction (Kuh, 2008), Brian (Hist-LAS) recognizes its value for “life-skills” development:

I’ve done this four times now with a colleague in art history. They get a lot out of that because there’s another component to it [in addition to the class]. I don’t think it’s career related, I think it’s more life related. Some of our students this past semester said they thought that one of the things they learned was how to travel...we try to prepare them for that [traveling]...aspect of it.

Brian (Hist-LAS) suggests that students gain a lot from the experience but does not connect the soft skills and social and cultural capital students gain to potential career preparedness. Brian (Hist-LAS) shares his perception of the value and impact of study abroad for students in this way:

I think the study abroad can have a more profound impact on a student in all kinds of ways...students look back on it would see that [study abroad] as...a more transformative course in their careers. For a lot of our students I think it builds their confidence... we have a lot of students who...[it’s their] first time on a *plane* [participant emphasis]...first time out of the country, first time in Europe...so it’s a lot [of new experiences] for them in that sense.

Brian clarifies what might be considered simple or common to students who have traveled more extensively, whereas for first-time international travelers with less cultural and social capital,

they are developing their problem-solving skills.

They [students] feel like, “Wow, I went to this city, and I rode the subway by myself.” It seems mundane, in a way, but to them it’s a big deal, that “I navigated my way through this city that I’ve never been to before.”

Brian (Hist-LAS) has worked in academia for his entire career and says he is at a distance from the needs of the job market and does not feel he can give “useful” career advice. As a result, he may not recognize the qualities employers desire, such as the problem-solving that he says students develop in navigating travel. In his study abroad out-of-class activity, Brian (Hist-LAS) contributes more to students’ career preparedness than he knows, including adding to students’ social and cultural capital.

Soft skills. I ask faculty respondents about specific career preparatory soft skills that could be developed through their course structures on a 4-point Likert scale based on frequency of practice (*Often, Sometimes, Never, Not Sure*). I also ask them to rank the priority of the skills as higher education goals for both themselves and the institution. Soft skills themes relevant to curriculum that emerged with deep discussion included three dimensions: interpersonal skills (e.g., defined as communication, decision-making, and assertiveness), emotional intelligence (e.g., defined as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills), and problem-solving skills (e.g., defined as technical, ethical, methodological, other problem-solving skills) see Table 6.

There is largely agreement among the faculty participants that the noted soft skills are practiced within their curricular structures either “often” or “sometimes.” Four of the professional track faculty believe they practice all three dimensions of soft skills “often” (Kayla, Nurs-PT; Karl, Educ-PT; Melanie, Bus-PT; Ellen Educ-PT), while two PT faculty practiced two of three soft skills “often” and two indicated they did “sometimes” (Sylvan, Comm-PT; Anna,

ArtTh-PT), as did two of the LAS faculty (Molly, Chem-LAS; Tara, Psych-LAS). None of the LAS faculty feel they practiced all three soft skills dimensions “often,” though two LAS faculty felt they “sometimes” practiced all three soft skills dimensions to a lesser extent (Brian, Hist-LAS; Alina, Bio-LAS).

As with other factors of career preparedness, it is the commentary by faculty participants that enhanced my understanding of faculty perceptions about the use of soft skills within their courses beyond the survey measure. Sub-themes that emerge are universal need for communication skills, need for understanding of self and others, emotional wholeness necessary for the certain professions, and the importance of getting along with others.

Table 6

Soft Skills Practice: Interpersonal Skills, Emotional Intelligence and Problem-Solving Practices

Frequency Scale: Often, Sometimes, Never, Not Sure

Faculty Pseudonym/ (Gender⁺: M = male; F = female) Age, Discipline/ PT or LAS Years in H.E.*	Interpersonal Skills <i>(e.g., communication, decision-making, assertiveness)</i>	Emotional Intelligence <i>(e.g., self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, social skills)</i>	Problem Solving Skills <i>(e.g., defined as technical, ethical, methodological)</i>
Kayla (F) 55 Nurs-PT 7	Often	Often	Often
Sylvan (M) 68 Comm-PT 11	Often	Sometimes	Often
Anna (F) 52 ArtTh- PT 20	Often	Often	Sometimes
Karl (M) 65 Educ-PT 19	Often	Often	Often
Melanie (F) 48 Bus-PT 3	Often	Often	Often
Ellen (F) 85 Educ-PT 18	Often	Often	Often
Alina** (F) 51 Biol-LAS 8	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes
Molly (F) 53 Chem-LAS 16	Often	Sometimes	Often
Brian (M) 51 Hist-LAS 20	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes
Tara (F) 33 Psych-LAS 4	Sometimes	Often	Often

Note. ⁺Gender indicated by participant; *H.E. = Higher Education; ** Non-parent

This table presents a visual confirmation that soft skills are practiced more so for Professional Track faculty in the classroom than Liberal Arts and Sciences Track faculty, with some exceptions.

On a most basic level, Molly (Chem-LAS) believes she promotes “professional”

interpersonal behavior and social and communication skills when the need arises:

We also work on that [interpersonal skills] with them, correct them...when they are perpetually coming to class late...if their email communication is not [demonstrating] of

enough professionalism or getting a little too casual, too comfortable. [I say] “I’m glad we’re friends. I’m all for that, but we need to practice being professional in your communications.”

Addressing soft skills is incidental, it seems, for Molly, but the most basic skills could be deemed important for career preparedness.

As mentioned, Sylvan’s (Comm-PT) communication skills course is required of all students at the university. The stated course objective is for students to master this soft skill. The campus-wide requirement for this course is evidence that the institution values communication skills as a priority. Its mention on the institutional website as skills employers want corroborates this value. Sylvan addresses interpersonal communication with a problem-solving approach:

It’s the one [class] that teaches them how to interact with people in their departments and the company and the world at large....I call the class a “helping class”... a class where they need to learn how to deal socially with the rest of the world and how to prepare themselves to do it, so that anytime that they come across these kinds of problems in the future, they have a mental checklist to go through...to help them address the problem.

Sylvan emphasizes he communicates what “students are going to need” to communicate effectively in all aspects of their lives, including their careers.

Ellen (Educ-PT) feels strongly that interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence are essential for educators, even though teachers exercise a great deal of autonomy in their work:

So you don’t like the teacher next door to you who’s been teaching there for 35 years? She thinks you’re doing too many games? You say to her, “Yes, I understand where you’re coming from...,” and you try to adjust. [Students say] “Dr. X, can’t we...?” [and I reply] “No, because you have to get along with everybody [when] in the classroom.”

Alina (Bio-LAS) expresses her concern that there is no “structure” at the university to support the development of emotional intelligence for students:

I feel the only structure we have is the Counseling Center...you know which is just only for crisis....There is no emotional wellness center....We have a gym...to stay fit physically, but we don’t have a gym to stay fit emotionally.

Despite this lack of an institution structure beyond academic requirements, most faculty participants feel that providing for students' emotional development is an "essential" (4 of 10 faculty) or "very important" (5 of 10) priority for higher education and even "somewhat important" priority (1 of 10).

Alina (Bio-LAS) explains that the freshman seminar "actually has content within the curriculum dedicated to it" [emotional intelligence], but other classes within the major may not. This could account for the mixed perceptions of how this soft skill is addressed by the institution and its faculty, though a curricular emphasis in the mandatory freshman seminars suggests the institution sees it as a priority in alignment with the views of the faculty in this study. Several participants gave examples of how they utilized some activities and discussion to develop students' emotional intelligence and specifically how it connected to students' career preparedness.

For Kayla (Nurs-PT), Anna (ArtTh-PT), Karl (Educ-PT), and Ellen (Educ-PT) discussion of emotional intelligence and emphasis is embedded in their curriculums for their professional track students. Like Melanie (Bus-PT,) Kayla (Nurs-PT) discusses emotional intelligence in "moral" terms including the "moral distress" that nurses must prepare for in their fields. Kayla (Nurs-PT) emphasizes how nursing is "different" from other undergraduate fields and majors

I care about these people [students] so much and I need them to be whole [emotionally]... because the moral distress is not present in many of the jobs....The abuse of alcohol, the amount of death, trauma because of alcohol in our youth and use of drugs, and peer pressure and suicide and bullying, and you can just go on forever. So that's the moral distress [nurses face].

Kayla (Nurs-PT) offers poignant examples of the demand nurses face with tricky moral situations where emotional "wholeness" is required in order to be successful nurse. She asserts

that student nurses must learn self-regulation and how to communicate in ways that do not judge patients or families or compromise their actions:

That's why I spend so much time with my students... not just teaching them what they need to know nursing... which is a lot... the content...but the content of their person and how they have to be stable... that's why we use mental health services so often, to catch it [emotional and psychological issues] early and develop coping skills. Be resilient, because if you're not, you're not going to be successful here.

Kayla (Nurs-PT) invests time to help students develop the emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills she feels they need for success and survival as nurses, noting that without “resilience,” nurses can be subject to burnout. Anna (ArtTh-PT) notes similar emotional intelligence requirements are mandatory not only for preparation for a field that is “a long road” for students, but also as intrinsic to the profession itself:

We always look at in our program...knowledge, skills and self-awareness related to who they are as a person, because I think being a psychotherapist or art therapist, any therapist it [*sic*] has to be some personal motivation...they have to be motivated to listen to people and have empathy and interpersonal skills...As a therapist you're really the tools, so [to prepare for the career we ask them]: How...they understand their personalities? Are they able to reflect on themselves?

Emotional skills and interpersonal communication are equally important in preparing for succeeding in the art therapy profession in Anna's (ArtTh-PT) view.

Karl (Educ-PT) also spoke clearly of the empathy he feels educators need to develop:

For many students [in K-12 educational settings], the best part of their day is the time that they're in school....Where do they treat you fairly every single day, and they respect you every single day? And I used to say...[before vacation breaks] “Listen, we have to understand this. For them [K-12 students], this is the best part of their lives. For some kids this is a vacation, but...some of them are going to go home for ten days of insanity.” So I think that [structuring education courses so students develop emotional intelligence skills] becomes an essential priority.

As a principal for several decades, Karl (Educ-PT) says he always encourages an environment of “fairness” and “respect” for students. This reinforces that Karl (Educ-PT) sees the importance for future educators to develop empathy. He sometimes organizes mock debates on challenging

topics to help students develop communication skills and emotional intelligence in accepting varying points of view:

Sometimes people...are steadfast in their convictions, and my convictions are not yours, and it's an interesting dynamic in class...[to discuss them]... We can dig down from there.

Ellen (Educ-PT) feels her education students should develop some emotional self-awareness and restraint as educators, like the resilience Kayla (Nurs-PT) indicates that nurses require:

Oh...oh...all the time [we discuss emotional intelligence]! All the time....You are now standing in front of a group of third graders...you cannot cry about things...because somebody told you that you can't go to the auditorium today. Suck it up and think of something else to do. It's what you have to do when you're in front of a class.

To encourage the development of interpersonal communication and emotional intelligence, Melanie (Bus-PT) has students work in groups for assignments in her courses. Working in groups on "collaborative assignments and projects" is another high-impact practice Kuh advocates (2008). She feels students work on their emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills simply in getting along with others through these assignments inside and outside the class: "I think because they work in the groups and some of them don't like it...yes, they definitely do [work on emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills "often"]."

Melanie (Bus-PT) shares her workplace experience and communicates why she feels it is important to develop all the soft skill dimensions, especially problem-solving, interpersonal, and emotional intelligence skills:

I like when the students complain...I say to them, "Welcome to the real world." It's a blessing when you get a team that you love...but there will be times when you have to flex yourself and flex your style and you have to fit, and you have to learn to work with different people.

Melanie distinguishes between petty and real issues but emphasizes how important it is to “figure it out” using problem-solving, interpersonal, and emotional intelligence skills, like maturity; she warns of consequences of failing to do so:

You’re not getting married with your team...you’re not going to be friends...this is a work team...but you still have to make it work. You can’t just walk away. You can’t just go to our boss, “Oh, you know what...he said this, she said this.” You’re not going to keep working for too long like this.... You have to figure out, you can go [to your boss] with real issues, but you kind of have to work it out.

Like Kayla (Nurs-PT), Melanie (Bus-PT) also connects students’ emotional development to moral development and enmeshed and aligned them with overall goals of education. She even alludes to what she seeks personally for her own child, and what she feels education is for all students:

I think the school for me and...I feel the same about where I send my son to school... the school is more than just education to me...the school is about the entire 360 [degree] experience...it’s going to be personal, emotional support, the moral character and the values as well....everything is important.

Melanie (Bus-PT), like other participants, including Alina (Biol-LAS), Molly (Chem-LAS), and Gwen (Ad) acknowledge the Catholic mission of the college and its relevancy to the college’s priorities. Gwen (Ad) reinforces Melanie’s comments from a career services administrator’s point of view when asked about how college increases students’ “earning power.” She offered the following as one of two concluding comments after the interview:

The question that threw me was about earning power. I feel so strongly that our mission is to educate the whole student and I know that so many people go to college to increase their earning power, and here I am on the career side, but I feel like there has to be a much bigger outcome than that.

This comment aligns with the previously expressed concerns by Sylvan (Comm-PT), Kayla (Nurs-PT), and Anna (ArtTh) for higher education’s priorities: not just the learning and knowledge obtained by students but also their potential or obligation to make “contributions to

society.” This perspective is particularly meaningful coming from the career services administrator who seems equally devoted to helping students find their “higher purpose” in addition to jobs and careers.

The mission of the college states (website, Retrieved September 2019):

[Name] University promotes intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic growth to a diverse population and welcomes all cultures and faith traditions.

Inspired by St. _____ and our Catholic heritage, we transform students’ lives by preparing them through the liberal arts and professional studies to think critically, pursue truth, and contribute to a just society.

The attitudes of this study’s sample seem to align with the institution’s stated mission. That is, participants appear to reflect the mission statement in their thinking judging by the frequent mention of Catholic heritage, critical thinking, and focus on enabling students to make contributions to society. Emphasis on both liberal arts and professional studies also feels prominent in faculty comments.

According to faculty participants, the degree to which problem-solving skills receive attention in course structures depends on the course content and objectives. Alina (Bio-LAS) offers, “If it’s the lab or the research it’s often [focus on problem-solving], but if other classes, not all the time...maybe it’s sometimes.” As mentioned, Sylvan’s (Comm-PT) approach to his courses in communications skills is directly and intentionally problem-solving focused: “Much more important [than finding work] is that they acquire knowledge, processes, methodologies, a way of solving problems by themselves.”

With or without awareness by participants, high-impact practices are enacted by this small but important cross-section of the faculty sample; intentionally or not, they are connecting and contributing to students’ career preparedness with their use in varied courses.

Advising, Mentoring, and Providing Career Guidance

As established in Research Q1, participants strongly perceive students as needing a good deal of support, particularly first-generation students who might lack social and cultural capital. Faculty support of students' career preparedness would logically be provided through advising and mentoring behaviors made likely through formal advising requirements. Practiced since the founding of the first universities in Europe, student–faculty mentorships have only recently become the focus of research efforts (Allen & Eby, 2010). Mentoring has not been clearly differentiated from other common faculty roles, such as role modeling and advising (Allen & Eby, 2010), and the blurry definition of mentoring from the faculty perspective is evident from the participants' perspectives in this study. Student–faculty mentoring studies often view the relationship from the protégés' perspectives (Allen & Eby, 2010), while this study's qualitative methodology of faculty views provides additional insight to the mentoring relationships that might specifically support student career preparedness.

The institution requires faculty to advise students as part of faculty duties, as they often do, though the reality of this student-faculty relationship at the study site varies from minimal engagement for course registration approval for students' majors to much more thoroughly engaged faculty in students' academic success and career preparedness that might be more accurately characterized as “mentoring.” For example, sometimes faculty perceive their role *in loco parentis* (i.e., in place of a parent), according to both Sylvan (Comm-PT) and Alina (Bio-LAS). This is seemingly a more intimate and responsible role than required, routine academic advisement. Because the term *mentoring* was purposely undefined for participants, faculty responses in this study included any relationship with students that could be characterized as advising, sponsorship, role modeling, or mentoring as long as the participants felt they were

related to their perceptions, behavior, attitudes, and motivations regarding their students' career preparedness.

To arrive at the essence of their student–faculty relationships as related to student career preparedness, I asked participants among other questions, about the frequency (Often, Sometimes, Never, Not Sure) with which faculty participants: 1) mentored undergraduate students, 2) provided career guidance to students, 3) discussed students' career and post-graduation goals, 4) discussed ways to prepare for an interview, 5) discussed ways to prepare for the workplace, 6) discussed market trends in their fields, and 7) helped provide internship or research opportunities. Results are summarized in Table 7 excluding internship and research opportunities since this was previously discussed in detail in the High-Impact Practices section in this chapter.

Table 7

Advising and Mentoring Students Related to Career Preparedness

Possible Responses: Often, Sometimes, Never, Not sure

Faculty Pseudonym/ (Gender ⁺ : M = male; F = female), Age, Discipline/ Years in H.E.*	1 Mentored Students	2 Provided Career Guidance	3 Discussed Students Career and Post-graduation Goals	4 Discussed Ways to Prepare for an Interview	5 Discussed Ways to Prepare for the Workplace	6 Discussed Market Trends in My Field
Kayla (F) 55 Nurs-PT 7	Often	Often	Often	Often	Often	Often
Sylvan (M) 68 Comm-PT 11	Often	Often	Often	Often	Often	Often
Anna (F) 52 ArtTh- PT 20	Often	Often	Often	Sometimes	Often	Often
Karl (M) 65 Educ-PT 19	Often	Often	Often	Often	Often	Sometimes
Melanie (F) 48 Bus-PT 3	Often	Often	Sometimes	Sometimes	Often	Sometimes
Ellen (F) 85 Educ-PT 18	Often	Often	Often	Often	Often	Often
Alina** (F) 51 Biol-LAS 8	Often	Often	Often	Often	Often	Often
Molly (F) 53 Chem-LAS 16	Often	Sometimes	Often	Sometimes	Often	Sometimes
Brian (M) 51 Hist-LAS 20	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Never	Never	Sometimes
Tara (F) 33 Psych-LAS 4	Often	Often	Often	Sometimes	Often	Sometimes

Note. ⁺Gender indicated by participant. *H.E. = Higher Education ** Non-parent

This table presents a visual confirmation that Professional Track faculty practice advising and mentoring related to student career preparedness than Liberal Arts and Sciences Track faculty, with some exceptions.

Molly (Chem-LAS) observes, “I think a lot of this we almost innately do [talk about career-related content]” in class. The small class size at the study site allows faculty to get to know their students well, while others despite the size, are not as likely to engage in strong

student–faculty relationships. Previously discussed data reveal that faculty strongly feel that they “help determine career direction,” agree they “provide experiences in the classroom that prepare students for the workplace,” “provide support and guidance outside the classroom that helps students determine their career direction,” and for the most part “feel prepared to guide students’ career direction” (Table 3). Participants were asked to provide comments surrounding these questions, which led to the emergence of several themes related to advising, mentoring, and providing career guidance and other forms of student support.

This section elaborates on the following themes that emerged from comments on the perceptions, behavior, attitudes, and motivations of the faculty with regard to advising and mentoring students: relationship building with faculty; motivations, which include rewards of positive feelings; normative structure of their department; helpful practices; and connection to resources.

Relationship building. As noted, the terms mentoring and advising are sometimes seen as synonymous by participants. For example, Karl (Educ-PT) made a point of asking me when I inquired about his mentoring behaviors, “Is there a difference between mentoring and advising?” To probe further in line with qualitative inquiry methodology, I asked Karl (Educ-PT) how he would define the difference and seeing mentoring and advising as the same, he replied, “I wouldn’t.” He explained how the freshman seminar contributed to the possibilities for connecting with students and building relationships, which occurs in seminar classes. The institution describes the seminar program on its website catalog in general student development terms:

The Freshman Seminar is a one-credit course required for all freshmen. This course is designed to assist students with their transition to college and to enable them to grow intellectually and personally. Through weekly goal-oriented sessions conducted by an academic advisor, students learn academic and personal life skills.

The faculty participants revealed in their interviews that the seminars may also be organized by major pathways where the academic advisors are major-specific faculty. For example, all the students in Karl's (Educ-PT) freshman seminar have some interest in the field of education. These 14 students become his advisees until they declare a specific education major. Alina (Biol-LAS), Tara (Psych-LAS), Melanie (Bus-PT), Molly (Chem-LAS), and Gwen (Ad) all note the role of the seminar class for career exploration related to specific fields of study, too. For example, Alina's (Biol-LAS) students had some interest in health science, in Melanie's (Bus-PT) some fields in business. Those with undeclared majors would attend a general freshman seminar and explore careers via a career assessment known as FOCUS 2, an assessment tool commonly used in career exploration, which guides users through a reliable, intuitive career and education decision-making model to help them choose a college, select a major, explore occupations, make informed career decisions, and take action in their career development (FOCUS, 2019).

Karl (Educ-PT) takes pride in the continued "connection" after the assigned advisement evolves to a personal and professional relationship:

I am really proud of the fact that I have students who are sophomores and juniors who will come in and say, "Dr. [name], can I meet with you, because I am going to meet with my formal advisor, my newly assigned advisor, but I want to just check...[in] with you." ...And I always say when they walk out and they say, "Thank you," I say, "No...wait...thank you...because if you thought that much of the relationship or the advice I gave you in the past...it's nice that you came in informally."

Karl's (Educ-PT) attitude aligns with his previously expressed belief that he waits to be approached for advice, so he does not impose his attitudes on students. Nevertheless, he is willing to provide direction and guidance to students regardless of his obligation to do so, in fact, is both flattered by it and grateful for it.

Gwen (Ad) the career planning and development administrator confirms career preparedness benefits of the student–faculty relationship and notes the small campus environment is conducive to it:

Oh...[with emphasis] so many benefits because you [students] interact with their faculty and a lot of the students here...[because of] our small size but...will allow the students to form a good relationship with faculty...this is a trusted person... a mentor... in some ways, someone who has an ongoing relationship, rather than them coming once to the career office and not seeing them again for a few years.

Gwen (Ad) notes the benefit of the “ongoing” relationship with its success:

I think that’s really helpful that ongoing relationship. They [faculty] get to notice their interests, what are their strengths, what are their weaknesses, talk about career goals [*sic*], but it can vary from student to student from [faculty] advisor to advisor.

She qualifies that there is not any directive to faculty advisees regarding their conversations with students about career preparedness or plans: “I don’t know that we tell advisors, ‘Discuss career with your students,’ but I think a lot of them just do think about [discussing with students], ‘Where are you going to do in the future?’”

Sylvan (Comm-PT) appears to be among the more dedicated faculty in actively supporting students’ career preparedness and his relationships with his students. He provides a comprehensive detailed definition in a follow-up email after our interview of what it meant for him to advise, mentor, and offer career guidance to students. His comments speak to his self-professed engagement in students’ needs and his willingness to be available to students, seemingly without limits:

[I] ensure that they know, they come first!! They can count on me to guide, mentor, and coach them both in their academic and professional careers. [I] assure them that they can contact me whenever they are frustrated or require guidance -- that their future is important to me -- and that their concerns and need[s] will be taken seriously without regard to time limitations. They should feel free and confident to call on me to assist them regardless of how complex or how simple they feel the problem or their concerns may be.

Sylvan (Comm-PT) discusses his “bona fides” for providing career guidance, and also takes pride in his relationship building, and the “positive feelings” he derives from helping students, like Karl (Educ-PT). Sylvan elaborates:

More than 30 years in theatre, TV, video, and film provide me with the bona fides and understanding of what our profession requires of our students. My contacts allow them easy access to internships and establishing nascent careers. They often return to me for years, long after being graduated. They seek further advice and direction. In truth, it makes me feel good to be able to help them.

Karl (Educ-PT) also continues the “connection” to students after they graduate:

But again much like the undergraduates walk in, I still get either emails and/or phone calls from people who...I got one this morning...he just wrote me, he said, “You wrote me a letter of recommendation, can you write me another one?...I am about to apply for a different [position].”

Both examples demonstrate how faculty offer help, maintain connections beyond requirements, and “positive feelings” they derive from doing so.

The advising model also facilitates relationships for other participants when students seek them out, too. Ellen (Educ-PT) sends her advisees her cell phone number and accommodates their schedules for advisement.

Kayla (Nurs-PT) commented at the end of the interview that she appreciated the “mentoring aspect” of the study because “that’s huge and that’s the part that’s intangible.” Fulfilling the role of mentor is what she feels is “what takes your time” beyond the requirements of content teaching. She feels the role is ever evolving: “You make your syllabus and you can do your content. That’s done. But every year there’s something new that you have to do. So for me this [mentoring] is really where it comes down [i.e., has importance; is the most important aspect of a situation or problem].” As assistant dean, Kayla (Nurs-PT) says she interacts with all of the nursing students.

When prompted for additional comments via the interview protocol, the career services administrator Gwen (Ad) observes further the benefit of faculty relationships with students and the connection to student career preparedness:

The faculty often can be very beneficial because they know what their grads have gone on to do. So they may be connected with their alums in a way that we [Career Services] are not. They develop that good relationships [with faculty] while they are here.

Gwen (Ad) provides a specific example of relationship building that benefits students' career preparedness:

A faculty member sent us recently a job opportunity from someone who had graduated where he said, "Hey Prof, I wanted to let you know our company is hiring." So they may stay in touch on that level. So yes... they have a nice relationship with their alums, and they can use that to inform their advising of students. I think that is really rich. It's very helpful.

While the practice of relationship building with students and alumni is not formalized by the institution, its occurrence within faculty behavior is important to understanding faculty's role in student career preparedness and its benefit to students. As Karl's (Educ-PT) and Sylvan's (Comm-PT) behavior and apparent motivation might suggest, faculty have formal advising relationships with students because they are required to, but they sometimes extend, sustain, and thereby build the relationships with an increasing focus on career preparedness because the faculty are trusted for their advice, and students pursue them for it. The connection flatters the faculty, makes them feel valued for their support. This reinforces the faculty behavior and may inspire its repetition with other students.

Additionally, autobiographical details reveal that the participants' advising, mentoring, and career guidance behaviors often appear to reflect and model the behavior of faculty from participants' own career influences, confirming this aspect of the Blackburn and Lawrence's theoretical framework (1995) as potentially impacting faculty behavior. With evidence of deep-

seeded self-knowledge both Karl (Educ-PT) and Sylvan (Comm-PT) discussed inspirational faculty who supported their own career preparedness as undergraduates. They offered detailed and touching narratives. Karl (Educ-PT) spoke fondly about a dean who remembered everyone's name, including his wife's, kept in touch for decades and influenced Karl's (Educ-PT) current ability to connect to students and "build relationships:"

[Name] was the dean ...or maybe the chairman of the Physical Education Department at [prestigious East Coast institution] and he was...well...he knew every single person who ever went through the department and on an annual basis each person would receive...this kind of a flyer...of what's going on campus and he consistently, for decades would write a note: "Dear [participant's name], How are you and [participant's wife's name] doing? If you stop in [at the alma mater], give me a call. Here's my phone number."

Karl (Educ-PT) was impressed with the relationship that lasted decades:

[He sent the newsletter] to everyone who graduated with a degree in physical education [from the alma mater]. And that personal touch, really did...it resonated with everyone, including me. And... when people were back on campus, you could be walking along...and it was Mr. [name]...and he'd say, "[participant's name! participant's wife's name]!" and that could be 15 years after.

Karl (Educ-PT) shared examples in the interview of how he connected the institution's students to jobs over his 19-year career as both an adjunct and full-time professor, directly impacting students' abilities to find employment. He also practiced learning students' names while a principal for several decades and currently as a professor at the study site:

I say I have 802 children, two with my wife. [The rest are the high school students.] Before you came...I just opened my door and said, "[student's nickname]," who was in my freshmen seminar two years ago..."How are you doing? Are you getting ready for exams?" I think people need to know that people know their names. And I think that touch...is really important.

After our interview, Karl walked me to the building where I was going to conduct my next interview so I would not get lost. The kindness he may have learned in part from his own inspiring academic and administrative mentors is securely part of his social skill DNA. This is in

line with Alderman's (2008) study on characteristics of faculty mentors as approachable, personable, evidencing care, and reflecting the behavior of their own role models and subsequently becoming mentors for their students, too.

Sylvan (Comm-PT) found his undergraduate faculty hugely influential to his current behaviors in supporting students. He describes a group of four faculty in a newly formed drama department at his undergraduate institution he attended nearly five decades ago, each of whom he recalled by their first and last names. Sylvan (Comm-PT) describes all four faculty as "magical" saying they "talked to us as if we were people" and had "incredible expectations" for their students. He thinks of them as "wise old men," though he now surpasses their ages at the time, and says he "doesn't feel as wise," evidence his reverence remains in place for these career-shaping faculty. When I asked why he thought they influenced him he replied with great emphasis, "Because they *cared!*" He tells how one of the faculty allowed him to take oral exams separate from the class because he panicked on written tests. Sylvan adds with apparent deep appreciation: "Who does that?" When I asked what he believed to be the faculty's motivation, he was clear and passionate:

Academic freedom. The [pause] arrogance, the passion, the sureness of spirit and soul to know that he knew something was wrong [for me] and he wasn't going to allow it to affect my grade, my life or what I learned in his curriculum. That he *cared* [participant emphasis]!

Sylvan (Comm-PT) offers how it influences him still in his pedagogy and relationships with students:

And I have made that my mantra. [caring] All my students know...that I eyeball them, I say hello to them, I walk around. We sit in a circle. I talk to each one individually. They know that I care, they know that I am invested in their futures. And that's where I learned it, in that department [as an undergraduate].

Molly (Chem-LAS) talks about professors that influenced her direction in similar ways through relationship building:

I think they all influenced my career in that they were all really good teachers. They cared about their students... They didn't shy away from interacting with us.... The professor lived literally a half block from the school and he invites all the chemistry students to his house once a year. And ... all the professors were there, and we got to talk to everyone. So very open, social and so you got to know them not just as a professor, but as a person...that was really, I think, special.

Simple conversations in talking to professors created connections and special relationships for her. Molly (Chem-PT) who has taught in chemistry for 19 years explains how these faculty relationships influence her current approach to students:

They do their job, they care about their students, so that taught me... I didn't at that point want to go into teaching ...I was thinking more of going into research, but it did... on hindsight [*sic*]... [it] is directing how I teach [and] why I chose to go to [teach at] a small school. I wanted to have that interaction with my students, like I had as a student...I try to give to my students what they [my professors] gave to me... that interaction, that support, and being there for them [my students].

It is not only the more seasoned professors who demonstrate advising, mentoring, and career guidance with a focus on relationship building. Tara (Psych-LAS) has been at the institution only 4 years and has no experience in other professions. She feels competent discussing various graduate school routes with psychology students:

Many of my students are planning to go to grad school... so that's most of the conversations I have with them, but also trying to talk with students about options, opportunities with a bachelors in psych, because not all of my students are going to go to grad school, even if they think they will.

Yet Tara (Psych-LAS) believes her views are among many that students absorb from their peers, families, and the media that influence them. She feels the student may have aspirations that may not be in line with her assessment of the student's abilities. Nevertheless, she does not doubt her influence in her advising relationships with students:

I think that the things I say matter. The preparation I give them matter. The feedback I give them about their abilities and the information I give about opportunities does matter. I also think often students are getting information from a lot of different sources and they often have a strong career path in mind and even if I am not sure that it's a good fit for them, or that they are really prepared for it. In my experience that doesn't always matter that much. I think their families, their friends give them a lot of feedback that shapes things.

Tara (Psych-LAS) explained how she was misadvised as an undergraduate to attend a certain graduate school program because another shorter program might have allowed her to enter the workforce sooner, earn money, and still satisfy her career goals. This demonstrates one risk in faculty advising, mentoring, and career guidance. However, this does not stop Tara (Psych-LAS) from encouraging students to do research so they are better informed than she was as an undergraduate.

Alina (Biol-PT) also speaks about her motivation to care for students through advising, mentoring, and career guidance, too. As mentioned previously, since her arrival at the institution, she has expanded research opportunities for students and works side-by-side with them to seek the answers to research questions; she extends the student–faculty relationship by taking students to dinner and to relevant science conferences and connecting current students to alumni by inviting them to speak about their successes in the workplace and graduate studies. She says outside activities encourage good relationships among them. She noted that students mentor each other, often recommending that younger classmates pursue internships, for example. She also talks about the department’s having developed a known reputation for openness and availability to students and reinforcing the importance of the theme of willingness to seek support:

They [students] seek out people who could be their mentors...not only academically...because that is one thing...but mentors in a sense of being a wiser person who has lived through it...and those students who come, then we can provide it to them. And I think here in the science department we are all very open and the students know it, so they come.

Alina (Biol-LAS) appears proud of the reputation of student support she feels she and her department maintain. Molly (Chem-LAS) corroborates the supportive environment when asked what she feels her peers think of her role with students’ career preparedness: “I think we all look at each other and go [agree] ‘We’re all doing the right thing.’” Blackburn and Lawrence’s

theoretical model (1995) depicts environmental constructs, such as structural and *normative features* of the institution, as having both direct and indirect effects on behavior. Normativity is the phenomenon in human societies of designating some actions or outcomes as good or desirable or permissible and others as bad or undesirable or impermissible. In Alina (Biol-LAS) and Molly's (Chem-LAS) case, the normative feature of their department, Alina (Biol-LAS) feels, is that she and her peers continue to behave in ways that maintain its reputation for student support. They want to attract students and have them spread the word that the department is open and inviting. Molly (Chem-LAS) sees department members agree to do "the right thing;" maintaining this normative feature is something that appears to motivate Alina (Biol-LAS) and Molly (Chem-LAS), at least enough to mention proudly in an interview.

Sustaining relationships with current students and connecting them to former students is another natural part of Alina's [Biol-PT] relationship building behavior. The same could be said of Karl's (Educ-PT) and Kayla's (Nurs-PT) departmental norms that support students' career preparedness. Molly (Chem-LAS) mentions Alina's (Biol-LAS) work with students in the health science area, corroborating and acknowledging the relationships and network Alina (Biol-LAS) has been fostering on campus. This aligns with Blackburn and Lawrence's theoretical model (1995) regarding normative behaviors at the institution. Molly (Chem-LAS) may see Alina's behavior as having influence on the social knowledge of approved behavior of the natural science department members, who strive to create a network and experiences that support students' academic and career preparedness development.

Helpful pedagogical practices. With professional track majors, art therapy, business, education, nursing, and incidentally health sciences (biology and chemistry), advising, mentoring, and career guidance are embedded within their curriculums, with objectives for

specific career paths in mind. For example, in most cases, faculty participants often bring workplace experience narratives into their discussions that enrich students' career knowledge. This was corroborated by the professional track faculty including Alina (Biol-LAS), Anna (ArtTh-PT), Ellen (Educ-PT), Karl (Educ-PT), Kayla (Nurs-PT), Melanie (Bus-PT), and Sylvan (Comm-PT) whose career influences impact their current teaching behavior. This may have influenced the results of this study since all but two of the faculty spoke with students about their post-graduation goals often; the exceptions are Melanie (Bus-PT) and Brian (Hist-LAS) who discuss post-graduate goals sometimes. Melanie (Bus-PT) spoke of her work experience in classes but does not advise students with a focus on their futures as often as I expected. She suggests that her newness to the college makes her different from those faculty who have more longevity and know more students and graduates, and even their parents as students, facilitating closer relationships with them than Melanie (Bus-PT) has yet to establish with her students.

Career preparedness can take the form of skills required to secure employment, for example, resume and CV writing and interviewing skills that are not necessarily included in course content. They are, however, treated as closely tangential activities according to some professional track faculty. The nursing, education, and health science faculty provided examples of department-specific efforts to support resume and CV writing and practice with interviewing skills. In education and nursing the efforts were almost exclusively separate from the institution's career services operations, but with health sciences and chemistry, the faculty (Alina, Biol- LAS and Molly, Chem-LAS) speak of collaborating with campus colleagues. They arrange for their students to meet with The Office of Career Planning and Development counselors for the generalized interview and work with department faculty in biology and chemistry for the detailed, subject-specific mock interviews that students might encounter for professional school

admission (i.e., medical, dental, or physical therapy school) or direct employment with scientific organizations in research or corporate-based positions.

Molly (Chem-LAS) says the natural sciences department interact with colleagues in career planning often to help prepare students for interviews:

We have sometimes had Career Services meet with our student to help them start writing resumes and whenever a student tells us that they have an interview...whether it be for medical school or job...we tell them to go to Career Services to go through the mock interview and then we actually do mock interviews with them also. So they get the initial from the HR [through the] Career Center and then we do the more technical side...so they get both sides...they're talking with an HR person first ... [so] they can get through that door to the next [level interview] to the technical [interview].

Karl (Educ-PT) has participated on panels for mock interviews collaboratively with other faculty members in the education department. This kind of mock interview practice is part of the normative structure for the department, an activity that can influence faculty behavior as depicted in Blackburn and Lawrence's theoretical model (1995). He offers, "When I was a school administrator and an adjunct here, I was asked to...do these mock interviews....[for undergraduates]. The students are told, 'It's an interview. Bring your resume...look the part.'"

Karl (Educ-PT) also integrates interview skills in his own curriculum. The in-class activity allows for the peer review process so students can learn about their strengths and weaknesses.

Students benefit from the knowledge:

I do from start to finish a real live interview and at the end of the interview something they've [students] said is really awkward, but really beneficial is, "Okay...best answer? Answer that needs help? What did you notice about just their physical demeanor during the interview?"

Karl's (Educ-PT) in-class interviewing skills exercise gives students a chance to practice and review social and cultural job-finding skill norms and knowledge of interviewing skills they may not previously have encountered. Karl (Educ-PT) explained how this practice of mock interviewing led to employment for more than students like the following:

I did a mock interview with someone, a young lady who was certified math and special education. [NOT in the participant's class.] I said to her, "At the end of this interview I am going to take this resume home with me. Tomorrow morning, my administrative assistant is going to call you and set up an interview with me tomorrow at whatever time you are available, and 15 minutes after your interview with me I'll send you to the superintendent and tomorrow afternoon you'll have a contract."

Karl (Educ-PT) says his own network is helpful for students but feels the network has diminished somewhat since he retired. Ellen (Educ-PT) also relies on campus resources and her own professional network, too, to enhance students' career preparedness knowledge and connections to practicing professionals:

The person who is in charge of Career Development came in. I have principals who are friends of mine that come in and tell them what they're looking for...so having taught for 34 years, I didn't realize, gave me a lot of help. I bring in teachers with whom I used to teach who are learning specialists, LT [learning technology] people, someone who was a chemistry teacher. I would bring in speakers all the time...people who had the expertise that I didn't have in a particular area. So that helped...you "call in your chits," as they say.

Alina (Biol-LAS) explains a mock interview process for health science and biology majors that echoes Molly's (Chem-LAS) comments:

We do have mock interviews for students. Every student who wants to go to medical school has an interview with us...and so the students know about it...and so they come...even students who go for internships... then we talk about it.....but even if not [no mock interview] we go through the questions and what the questions mean, how to answer it [*sic*] truthfully, but also how to understand the questions.

Kayla (Nurs-PT) shares confidently that the nursing department also has a normative structure of preparing students for interviews and connections to employment and hosts employers to hire the college's nursing students. The outcomes her department achieves with student employment is a source of pride.

Connections to resources. I asked faculty about referrals they might make to support student career preparedness with semi-structured frequency-based survey questions on a 4-point

Likert scale (*Often, Sometimes, Never, Not sure*). Specifically, I asked participants about the frequency with which they referred students to: 1) on- and off-campus career support services, events, or connections; 2) mental health counseling; 3) campus faculty or administrative colleagues; 4) professional organization memberships or conferences. As is typical of qualitative methodology, to arrive at the essence of faculty referrals and connections to resources that would support students' career preparedness, I encouraged faculty to elaborate on their responses. Referral themes that emerged from the more in-depth discussions and comments include on- and off-campus referrals, professional organizations, and professional conferences or conventions.

On campus. The data provided ample support that faculty made referrals to career-related events and resources on campus more often than not. Five participants, three of whom were professional track faculty, responded that they referred students often to Career Planning and Development (Sylvan, Comm-PT; Ellen, Educ-PT; Melanie, Bus-PT). Two were liberal arts and sciences track faculty (Alina, Biol-PT and Molly, Chem-LAS), who established at other points in the interview that they maintained ongoing relationships with Career Planning and Development to support their students' career preparedness through mock interviews and resume development. Three others responded "sometimes," two of whom were professional track faculty (Karl, Educ-PT; Anna -ArtTh-PT) one of whom was a liberal arts and sciences track faculty (Tara, Psych-LAS). Two faculty responded they never referred students to Career Planning and Development for very different reasons. Brian (Hist-LAS) is less engaged in student career preparedness efforts because he deemed them less relevant to his teaching role than he viewed other professional track majors like nursing would be connected. But he identifies how he can be supportive by discussing graduate school with students:

I feel like students will talk to me about grad school, but not about other career options. It's funny when you mentioned it...so the student who got the internship with PBS, I

talked to her a lot about what she was going to do after college and never occurred to me to say, “Have you spoken to Career Services?”

Brian (Hist-LAS) admits an ethical obligation to tell students there are very few jobs in academe for history majors and has seen a significant waning of numbers in his department since he began teaching twenty years ago.

In contrast, Kayla (Nurs-PT) asserted she is entirely engaged in her students’ career preparedness in her professional track major, including assessing and remediating students who derail from required nursing courses. Kayla’s (Nurs-PT) department maintains their own career preparedness efforts including arranging clinical experiences, resume development, summer internships, providing interviews with potential employers, and reporting not only job placement results, but also data on retention of graduates in their employment positions as well. They also require relevant nursing research which students can discuss during interviews. Kayla (Nurs-PT) knows there is market demand for nursing but says she would expand or shrink the program as the market required. It is similarly true for education faculty, though Karl (Educ-PT) is more in line with Kayla’s (Nurs-PT) view of her self-sufficient department, while Ellen (Educ-PT) made referrals to Career Planning and Development often, inviting them and other professionals in her network to supplement class knowledge on career preparedness:

While I was teaching ...the seminar course, I invited people in who would talk to them about interviewing and what they needed to do to write a resume ... So...I made sure that they had enough background on that. But I myself don’t sit and [review resumes] because resume acceptance [acceptability?] changes every single year.

Ellen (Educ-PT) seems focused on course content and preparing her students for the classroom. She also is cautious that her reputation is not solely focused on helping her students find work: “I don’t want anyone reading this to think I spend my class talking about this. It just comes up.”

Gwen (Ad) confirms faculty frequently make referrals to her office:

Some [faculty] I think do very well [in referring to Career Planning and Development]. Some realize if a student is struggling with their choice of major, or having a hard time figuring out what to do with it, there are faculty who will call us, who will bring the student over...who make sure that we see that student. Some don't because I might get that student through other means. That student may find his or her way here or counseling may refer that student to us.

As a less experienced faculty member, Tara (Psych-LAS) is aware she does not have all the knowledge her students might need. Hence, she refers them to Career Planning and Development for certain things but also encourages other means of research for students seeking career preparedness advice, something she did on her own when she was exploring her own career:

When students are interested in internships at all I certainly refer them to Career Services. If students have absolutely no idea what they're doing, what they want to do... I may refer them. I often encourage them to do their own searches online. Usually they have ...some sense of what they want to do and so then I say, "I really encourage you to learn more about what that job actually does, what kinds of qualifications they're looking for," and so I'll mention Career Services, but it's usually not a super strong referral.

On the other hand, Tara (Psych-LAS) is confident she can help students make graduate school decisions in her field:

My students are usually trying to narrow down between two or three different graduate programs, or they have a specific career in mind and I'm wanting [*sic*]to support them and figuring out how to get there.

Assessing that students may lack a realistic sense about a professional path Tara (Psych-LAS) will help direct students' career knowledge research:

A lot of people want to be an FBI profiler, which is a very rare job to get, and not terribly realistic for a lot of students... That's one of the ones that I [say]... "Well, why don't you go see how many jobs there are?" and I try to explain some of the reasons that it's not quite like what you see on *Criminal Minds*.

This clarity and advice may come from no other source for some students than their professors. It would be unfortunate for a student to mistakenly pursue an unrealistic path without this kind of guidance, only to be disappointed when the job market does not support even the most earnest student's aspiration.

Several faculty participants mentioned walking students over to Career Planning and Development: Ellen (Educ-PT); Molly (Chem-LAS); and Alina (Biol-LAS). They may also walk them over to counseling if a student is in distress, though Melanie (Bus-PT) indicates she refers students to counseling sometimes, explaining, “I don’t have many opportunities to do it. It feels like it’s not my place.”. Nonetheless, 4 of the 10 faculty participants said they referred students often to counseling, while the remaining participants replied they did at least sometimes. Alina (Biol-LAS) expounded on her approach and role in advising students:

The students feel comfortable to come to talk to me...and I listen to them...and...you know they cry... I told [the student], “Please go,” [to counseling] and so when it's needed, I say it. But it's also in our syllabus. All new syllabi contain their phone number and [recommends students] [to] please go [to counseling]. In the orientation we actually tell them...“Don't be afraid to go.” But when they come to my office... they just really need someone to listen to them, and they're fine, but sometimes it's not...[I'll say],“I'm not a professional and so you need someone who actually help you to feel better.”...With some I actually walk them over.

Several faculty convey there was an increased need for mental health counseling in the last few years. Kayla (Nurs-PT) and Anna (ArtTh-PT) both urged students to be aware of being emotionally “whole” or “stable” in order to be able to pursue their career paths. Tara (Psych-LAS) says she refers students to counseling “a little more than I do the Career Services.”

Some faculty will refer students to other colleagues on campus as needed for career path discussions. For example, Brian (Hist-LA) refers students to education department peers when they are seeking teaching credentials, business colleagues if students are interested in a minor, or the political science professor who serves as the pre-law advisor. Likewise, Ellen (Educ-PT) and Karl (Educ-PT) will refer students to English or science faculty when seeking advice on teaching credentials in these subjects. Anna (ArtTh-PT) will redirect students to counseling psychology who mistakenly think art therapy is conducted in school settings:

We have some people who want to be art therapists, but...when I talk to them...they say they want to work in a school and then they realize... this is common... art therapists don't typically work in schools. So I say, "Well, maybe you should find out about school counseling and you might be able to integrate the two, or you might want to be a school counselor," and then I'll send them to the school counseling coordinator.

Another on-campus resource that faculty participants noted was campus events like a major/minor fair or the Health Sciences Professions Fair, where students are awarded assignment credit for attending and writing about what they learned. Molly (Chem-LAS) feels this is supportive of students' thoughts about the future and career preparedness.

In the fall [colleague name] arranges a health care fair on campus... He brings in the various local and not-so-local schools, so then the students that are interested in the health area get to see what would be maybe [*sic*] the next step or possible other institutions that they didn't know about....They have to talk to three people, take notes and ask them three questions and write down the questions and their answers...even as freshmen [I] get them to start thinking about, "What's the future?"

In describing her role in referring students to on-campus resources, Alina (Biol-PT) says she recommends students join the on-campus Health Sciences Club. She feels that it supports career preparedness by allowing students with similar interests to gather and share information. She attends meetings and was invited to present to them. Besides already mentioned visiting alumni that Alina (Biol-LAS) also invites her PhD mentor from a large East Coast university who visits with Alina's (Biol-LAS) classes and other students to share molecular biology research and career information with health science majors. This kind of exposure to discipline professionals enhances students' career preparedness knowledge beyond what the faculty provides.

Faculty on-campus career preparedness referrals includes the Office of Career Planning and Development in varying degrees by faculty and mental health counseling to a lesser degree. Faculty referrals on campus all include those to other faculty colleagues when students are exploring a career path that needs further information or clarification. Faculty incentivize

students to attend campus events to increase their exposure to career knowledge. Lastly, but importantly, faculty role includes referrals for students to pursue self-guided research about valuable market information on careers through Internet resources faculty themselves can recommend.

Off campus. On some occasions, off-campus partners and associations come to the campus for conferences and seminars, some in collaboration with faculty. Anna (ArtTh-PT) is active in the statewide association in her field, and the campus hosts not only the state association conference, but the university hosts its own professional conference as well. Students seem to have ample opportunity to immerse in their field, and the college appears to be a hub for it. Additionally, the state counseling association also has a conference every year that Anna (ArtTh-PT) encourages students to attend. She also urges students to attend the two national conferences, too. She added that students can present at the conferences, and the university pays for them to attend. The education faculty both mention their department requires students to attend their state education association convention and sponsors transportation. Ellen (Edu-PT) adds that her department requires the education students to review two conferences they have attended, tying into the writing across the curriculum goals while encouraging engagement in professional organizations.

Alina (Biol-PT) also connects her students to the statewide Independent College Fund (ICF), a grant and scholarship organization. She assists them in writing small research grants. She also personally drives students in the campus athletic team van to local life sciences symposia and a larger East Coast university's conference. Alina's (Biol-PT) self-perception as a mentor who encourages research is endorsed in a campus publication article where it gives her

credit for “expanding research, inspiring students” (Retrieved from the study site University website, October 2019).

While Molly’s chemistry department is rather new without ingrained career preparedness activities as prevalent as the biology department’s, her referral to the American Chemical Society is potent with career preparedness resources for her students that the campus and her nascent chemistry program currently lacks:

I have helped a couple of our students become student members of the American Chemical Society...and they provide a lot of resources for looking for jobs and mock interviews, and all sorts...of resources that only a big organization would have. [Students] can access those resources....As a student member they can attend local meetings, national meetings, so they can start networking with professionals. There are career websites and the career resources are phenomenal, amazingly good, so a lot of resources. Plus, as I tell my students, “You can say you are part of a professional organization. Having that as an undergraduate when you apply for your first job, shows that you know what you’re doing.” And they go, “Oh, okay, we’ll join.”

Molly (Chem-LAS) brings awareness and legitimacy to professional organizations that students might not otherwise know, trust, or pursue.

Summary Q2 Findings

Research Question 2 asks: In what ways, if any, do faculty support undergraduate career preparedness in and outside the classroom? Through a series of semi-structured survey and related comments, and review of syllabi and institutional websites, this question culls faculty pedagogical practices through a focus on high-impact practices and others faculty see as beneficial to students’ career preparedness. Some faculty employ these as a matter of fulfilling curricular objectives and requirements with incidental connection to students’ career preparedness, while others are more intentional to support students’ social and cultural capital development that deliberately supports their career preparedness. Faculty responses reveal

repeated endorsement for some of Kuh's (2008) high-impact practices, advising and mentoring behaviors, and connecting students to career preparedness resources, among other behaviors.

High-impact practices. These practices are known to improve students' retention and engagement (Kuh, 2008), are applicable to career preparedness, and largely in evidence for the faculty participants. This includes the business problem-solving based capstone course; deliberate writing assessment and other designated writing-intensive courses in all disciplines; research opportunities in the natural sciences, nursing, and required for history majors degrees; experiential learning in and out of the classroom, particularly in the professional track majors, art therapy, business, education, nursing and health sciences; global learning through study abroad in history; soft skills in most disciplines, achieved through the freshman seminar curriculum and collaborative projects in business. These high-impact practices are otherwise emphasized throughout the curriculum by faculty as essential to student development and preparation for careers, and most notably by professional track faculty. Intentionally or not, faculty enact high-impact practices with great frequency and variety.

Some faculty have familiarity with the notion of high-impact practices. Of these, five important activity trends emerge including: experiential learning activities and the lack of them, such as credit-bearing internships, clinical rotations, observations, shadowing, in-class studio practice and student teaching; writing skills, research skills, capstone classes; study abroad experiences, which enhance global learning and confidence-building; soft skills important to employers such as emotional intelligence (e.g., self-awareness, empathy, social skills), interpersonal skills (communication, decision-making, assertiveness), and problem-solving; first-year seminars where career and self-exploration are possible with subject-matter faculty leading the courses.

Faculty acknowledge some of the HIPs are in alignment with the stated institutional goals and mission to integrate theoretical and practical knowledge (Institution's website retrieved October 2019). More specifically, high-impact practices are in use in the courses of most faculty participants, including Melanie's (Bus-PT) problem-solving based capstone course; deliberate writing assessments and other designated writing-intensive courses; research opportunities in the natural sciences; research requirements for history majors; experiential learning in and out of the classroom, particularly for the professional track majors in art therapy, business, education, nursing and health sciences; global learning through study abroad in history; soft skills in most disciplines, achieved through the freshman seminar curriculum; and collaborative projects in business and other disciplines. With or without awareness by participants, high-impact practices are enacted by the faculty sample; intentionally or not, they are believed to connect and contribute to students' career preparedness.

Experiential learning. Faculty support experiential learning in several ways, with strong agreement among all faculty that it helps prepare students for the workplace. There is collaboration between faculty, students, and the Office of Career Planning and Development for credit-bearing internships, initiated by the student with faculty engagement throughout the process, outlined in the college catalog on the website and mentioned by several faculty. Experiential learning is embedded and required more in some curriculums than others, most dominantly in professional track than liberal arts and sciences track majors, though there is crossover emphasis in the liberal arts and sciences track health sciences majors, where two internships are required; shadowing and career path knowledge is critical. In capstone classes for health professions, faculty bring workplace experts into class to increase students' career knowledge, require students to prepare CVs and resumes, and provide mock interviews for

professional school admission. Faculty believe these practices help students crystallize their direction and prepare for it. Freshman seminars by subject-matter faculty communicate the importance and necessity of experiential learning, too. Nursing faculty credit their carefully curated experiential learning with 100% placement rate and high retention rate after graduates secure jobs. Education faculty devise practical assignments that prepare students and can be applied to 30 hours of classroom instruction required in the curriculum. The art therapy faculty has full classroom studios dedicated to experiential learning since undergraduates do not have access to experiences outside of the classroom due to certain professional restrictions. The exception is with other liberal arts and sciences track faculty who provide guidance and discernment to graduate school study programs with which they are experienced and familiar but admit they lack knowledge on internships and career paths for undergraduates in their majors. Pursuit of career paths is left to the students, though these faculty realize the challenge for students who might lack social and cultural capital to do so. Some liberal arts and sciences track faculty acknowledge an increased attention by the institution in curriculum committee meetings and admit they could do a better job in their departments.

Student career preparedness appears well-served by most faculty through experiential learning at the study site. The data of this study indicated experiential learning is simulated in the classroom via laboratory settings and meaningful, useful assignments that can be applied to the workplace. It is promoted out of the classroom via internships and clinical settings with faculty involvement, modeling, or advisement. Experiential learning is embedded within some curriculums as part of introductory and capstone classes to expose students to introductory or practical knowledge of professions and licensing requirements. At a minimum, the faculty in this study demonstrate awareness that experiential learning is essential to student career

preparedness, even if those less engaged faculty do not currently have the knowledge or training to support students' career preparedness within their classrooms or in advising students.

Writing, research and capstone projects. The data from this study show writing, research, and capstone classes are high-impact practices that are well-integrated in the curricula. On its website the institution suggests employers seek graduates with communication skills, including writing. Participants in the study tie this HIP to a seemingly widely known institutional goal of intensive writing courses throughout the curriculum and a strong mutual priority for both faculty and faculty view of the institutional priorities. Writing is emphasized in research seminars and capstone classes and is assessed regularly. Some faculty feel despite the emphasis and continued assessment, writing is “not yet effective” for several reasons, particularly because of the financially fueled lowered admissions standards, which participants feel result in students with academic deficits. Additionally, the Core Curriculum requires all students to take a communication class. Capstone classes, some of which require research projects, are required more prevalently in the professional track but also found among liberal arts and sciences track major faculty curriculums. The psychology department is seeking ways to expand research writing skills by collaborating with other departments to garner enough students for this effort. Nearly all participants have examples of writing activity strongly infused in their curriculums.

(Table 5)

Study abroad. While study abroad is conducted by only Brian (Hist-LAS) at the study site institution, what is notable is that did he did not see the experience as related to career preparedness. He does acknowledge the life skills the experience develops for students. In his credit-bearing study abroad program, operationalized both in and out of class, Brian (Hist-LAS) contributes more to students' career preparedness than he knows, including adding to students'

social and cultural capital and soft skills that students may have previously lacked before traveling abroad with him. Students develop problem-solving in navigating travel and confidence that may support competent work performance academically and in any workplace. Not least of all, students develop an appreciation of multicultural perspectives and other interpersonal skills that students can develop in study abroad travel with peers, faculty, and administrators, including the current president of the institution.

Soft skills. Soft skills themes relevant to faculty curriculums and activities that emerged with deep discussion include three dimensions: interpersonal skills (e.g., defined as communication, decision-making, assertiveness), emotional intelligence (e.g., defined as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, social skills), and problem-solving skills (e.g., defined as technical, ethical, methodological, other problem-solving skills). (Table 6) As with other career preparedness activities, professional track faculty emphasize them more frequently than liberal arts and sciences track faculty do, but faculty with prior industry experience appear to have greater awareness of soft skills. Sub-themes that emerge are “universal need for communication skills,” “need for understanding of self and others,” “emotional wholeness” necessary for the certain professions and “getting along with others.”

The institution requires a course Communications Skills for all undergraduates where one responsible faculty participant says he emphasizes problem-solving. The freshman seminar includes the topic of emotional intelligence embedded in its curriculum, though some faculty feel there is no other structure for emotional wellness beyond the counseling center and this class. Education, art therapy, and nursing faculty emphasize emotional intelligence skills in career-related conversations within their curriculums. In some instances, emotional intelligence is embedded in curriculum in moral terms, particularly for nursing and art therapy students, to

prepare them for their work environments where faculty feel their emotional “wholeness” is required of successful nurses. The faculty participant says this accounts for why she invests time in mentoring students, so they develop resiliency and coping skills. The art therapy faculty feels similarly, especially about self-awareness and the ability to self-reflect. Education faculty feel students need to develop empathy and understanding for their students and an appreciation for fairness and respect. Another dimension revealed is appreciating differences in convictions during education classroom discussions. The business faculty assigns group projects where students face the discomfort of adjusting to working with others as they would in the workplace. Some faculty link their encouragement of soft skills to the Catholic mission of the college of educating the whole student and the “360 degree” student experience, including help developing personal, emotional support, moral character, and values. Others align with this thinking when they support the development of contributions to the well-being of society.

Professional track and liberal arts faculty say problem solving skills are honed through research efforts and particularly by the communications faculty who deems it “much more important [than finding work] is that they [students] acquire knowledge, process, methodologies, a way of solving problems by themselves.”

Advising, mentoring, and career guidance. Faculty feel strongly that students need career preparedness support, particularly first-generation students who might lack social and cultural capital. While advising is formally required, faculty feel extended mentoring relationships evolve with their students, too, in which case faculty have a chance to further influence students’ career preparedness. Faculty in the study engage in varying degrees of advising and mentoring with students; some of them engage minimally for course registration, others to the point of assuming *in loco parentis* (i.e., in place of parent). Semi-structured survey

results show that both professional and most liberal arts and sciences track faculty feel they mentor, provide career guidance, discuss students' career and post-graduation goals, and ways to prepare for the workplace often and at the very least sometimes, with scant exception.

Relationship building and helpful pedagogical practices emerge as important themes from faculty commentary.

Relationship building. Freshman seminar gives faculty a chance to know students interested in their subject matter and the first chance to explore related careers. Faculty take pride in and are flattered by the relationships they develop and are rewarded by them. They also hesitate in imposing their views on students and prefer to wait to be asked for their advice. Nevertheless, the small college environment allows students to form good relationships with the faculty, who are trusted as mentors with potential for ongoing relationships. Though it varies from student to student and advisor to advisor, participants consider the student–faculty relationship helpful because faculty get to notice students' interests, strengths, and weaknesses and are available for direction and guidance in some cases beyond graduation. Most of the participants have had professions outside of academia and offer valuable insights from their career experiences. Connections faculty maintain to alumni also help current students connect to workplace opportunities. The faculty maintain connections with students beyond what they are required to do but derive positive personal feelings from these connections. The faculty's autobiographical details reveal their advising, mentoring, and career guidance behaviors model those from their own formative years, confirming an aspect of Blackburn and Lawrence's theoretical framework (1995). The faculty participants' inspirational narratives of their influential faculty seem to impact their relationship building with students decades later. The theme in common for more than one narrative is demonstrating kindness and apparent care and

support for students. Some faculty invest in relationships outside of the classroom by taking students to conferences, conducting research with them, and spending time socially. They take pride in their department reputations for openness to student needs as a normative feature of the department. Connecting students to alumni/ae and other professionals that can inform students about career direction is a natural part of their behavior.

Helpful pedagogical practices. Advising, mentoring, and career guidance is embedded within professional track faculty curriculums. The faculty participants also often bring workplace experience narratives into their discussion to enrich students' career knowledge and use their professional networks to help students, particularly in professional track majors. The faculty also provide opportunity to practice job-finding skills required to secure employment, such as resume and CV writing and interviewing skills for internships, professional schools, or employment not typically thought to be included in course content. Some departments, like nursing and education, have a normative structure to connect students directly to employment opportunities. Other departments collaborate with the Office of Career Planning and Development for job-finding skills. Job placement and retention rate is another source of pride for some of the faculty.

Connection to resources, on and off campus. The faculty connect students to resources on and off campus to professional organizations, conferences, and conventions to enhance their career preparedness. Several of the faculty referred students to the Office of Career Planning and Development, while some rarely or never did. Some of the faculty direct students to individual research online to find market trends in fields of interest to gain a better sense of reality. Some of the faculty provide specific guidance to graduate school programs because that is their main area of expertise. A few faculty bring distraught students to counseling, while another does not feel it

is her place to do this. The faculty note that emotional and psychological wellness is particularly important for some professional tracks, like nursing, art therapy, and education. The faculty will routinely refer students to colleagues in their own and other departments for additional clarity on career direction. They refer students to on-campus major fairs and health care fairs that feature graduate programs students might seek and they ask students to report on what they learn from these activities.

On some occasions, off-campus partners and associations come to campus for conferences and seminars in collaboration with faculty. Some faculty are essential to the statewide association in their field, hosting conferences giving students ample opportunity to immerse professionally in their field. The institution pays for students to travel to national conferences and financially supports their presenting at them. Some faculty connect students to a statewide Independent College Fund for grants and scholarship funding. The faculty also refer students to national professional societies that have rich career-related resources.

Q3: Differences and Similarities Among Subgroups

Research Question 3 asks: What differences in perception and behavior exist by subgroups (discipline, rank age, gender, longevity in academia, first generation status and parental status)? This question required observations across the entire qualitative interview and focused on differences and similarities in perceptions or behaviors. The data outlined in an Excel spreadsheet facilitated this analysis. Faculty responses via the semi-structured and open-ended surveys revealed subtle differences and more similarities than I expected. Gwen (Ad) observes a general difference in faculty relationships and notes what she perceives as differences within the business faculty, as one example. She does not qualify any characteristic that differentiates them except in their approach to relationships:

I see differences in faculty approaches here and especially in our School of Business. Some of our faculty really push students to get that experience and will sit down and they will form relationships with students, and they will have conversations with them about their career goals and, [ask] “How are you going to achieve those goals?” The best faculty–student relationships I see here go into that.

Other differences were clustered most often around the theme of engagement in student career preparedness by discipline. Similarities include agreement on the goals of higher education, student need for support, and faculty willingness to care for support students’ holistic development needs and society as a whole.

Disparity in Engagement by Discipline

Professional track vs. liberal arts and sciences track. Supporting what might be considered commonly held beliefs in higher education, this study found that professional track faculty most consistently seemed to perceive student career preparedness as part of their role as faculty, as clearly demonstrated by embedded behaviors and student assignments in their curriculums to validate this perception. As Anna (ArtTh-PT) notes, most PT students pursue an academic program to pursue career goals, and the faculty have a responsibility to provide experiences to facilitate these goals for their students on behalf of the institution. Karl (Educ-PT) comments about “Ultimately if I’m doing my job...” students get jobs. Professional track faculty appear to have a more pronounced focus on high-impact practices, such as writing that would support career preparedness, as in nursing, art therapy, and education; emphasis on soft skills such as interpersonal, communication, and problem-solving skills required for specific professions; and embedded experiential learning via clinical settings, student teaching, and highly recommended credit-bearing internships in business. All these focused activities seem to support students’ career preparedness in a deliberate way. The professional track faculty offer activities that support job-finding skills, such as resume writing, interview skills, and referral to

helpful professional organizations, conferences, and professional contacts in the field that led to internships and employment. These job-finding skills are enhanced and made possible by the prior experiences in professional fields by PT faculty, like Kayla in nursing, Karl and Ellen in education, Sylvan in communications, and Melanie in business, giving them a natural advantage in supporting students' career preparedness.

A surprising finding are the collective efforts by some liberal arts and sciences track faculty that were equally deliberate in supporting student career preparedness, despite a less clear expectation of responsibility. I could argue that Alina (Biol-LAS), and Molly (Chem-LAS) to a lesser degree, worked as diligently as professional track faculty on high-impact practices via writing lab reports, encouraging research, facilitating students attending professional conferences and joining professional organizations, and encouraging experiential learning through shadowing of health science professionals. There were additional career preparedness activities such as engaging alumni and other scientific community professionals to share career knowledge, hosting graduate studies health sciences fair and incentivizing attendance, and providing an open environment to seek emotional and academic support facilitated by advising and mentoring relationships. Both Alina (Biol-LAS) and Molly (Chem-LAS) describe their efforts in hosting mock interviews for students in collaboration with the Office of Career Planning and Development. Molly (Chem-LAS) admits that time constraints prohibit her from searching for and generating more internship opportunities for her chemistry students, but it was a goal she hoped to pursue in the future. She has a sense she could accomplish this via connections to an alumnus who is established locally in the field and potentially accessible to students.

The greatest disparity in beliefs and behaviors between professional track and liberal arts and sciences track faculty is found with both Tara (Psych-LAS) and Brian (Hist-LAS) who

naturally lean on their backgrounds and graduate school experiences to advise and mentor students or those who were considering advanced degrees. This is a common role for Tara (Psych-LAS) whose students often seek counseling degrees but less so for Brian (Hist-LAS) who feels ethically compelled to advise students of the lack of employment potential for graduate students in history. Brian's (Hist-LAS) view of his advising role is diametrically opposite to professional track faculty who feel that career advising is part of their jobs. Brian (Hist-LAS) does not refer a student whom he knows well to campus career planning because it simply is not within the scope of his job. Nevertheless, he supports the student in connecting her to a valuable experiential learning internship. He also notes an important shift in the conversation on the institutional level in curriculum committee and the need for his department to put into action a better effort in supporting students in their career explorations. Most importantly, the research and writing skills that define his discipline and are embedded in his curriculum activities do, in fact, support career preparedness for his students in an important way, despite its lack of intentionality. Tara (Psych-LAS) seems more sensitized to the need for student guidance despite her lack of training or knowledge. She feels she could be helpful in advising research tactics she employed herself to support students' career exploration, recognizing the inequity in sociodemographic backgrounds that compromise their career preparedness.

Similarities in Faculty Attitude and Behaviors.

There were several areas of strong agreement among faculty perceptions and attitudes in this study regardless of subgroup classification by discipline, rank, years in academe, gender, first-generation and parental status. When it came to the goals of higher education, there was unanimous agreement (*strongly* or *somewhat*) that employment after college was a priority. Critical thinking and writing skills generate considerable support by all subgroups. Faculty also

agree that students need career preparedness support and that faculty should and do provide that support in and out of the classroom to some degree, and the institution has some responsibility in providing opportunities for career exploration. Frequent discussion of the freshman seminar demonstrates a clear effort by the institution to help students with career-related knowledge. Regardless of subgroup classifications, the faculty who participated in freshman seminars reaped the benefits of developing important mentoring relationships with students that continued in their majors beyond the confines of the classroom. Despite subgroup classification, faculty also agree that responsibility for student career preparedness rests ultimately with the student who must be willing and motivated to seek the many available supports and resources.

Most common among the faculty was their care and concern for students' success and well-being. All 11 participants want to ensure that students develop holistically beyond career, not only as successful employees but also as contributors to the well-being of society. This solicitude for students and altruism for society is apparent in the participants' comments on advising, mentoring, and career guidance, connections to resources that would be helpful to students, and their concern for the development of skills and abilities, including soft skills, writing, critical thinking, and research skills that would serve students well in their lives, no matter what their career direction. These attitudes varied in their degree of intentionality but were clearly present in faculty behaviors and attitudes, nonetheless, with professional track faculty more intentional than liberal arts and sciences track faculty.

First-generation subgroups had similarities to their approach to students' career preparedness. These similarities are sometimes shared with those faculty not first-generation who had inspirational faculty in their career development, which seem to inform their career knowledge and what could be expected of the faculty role (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995). Tara

(Psych-LAS) feels she could be helpful in advising research tactics she employed herself as a first-generation college student to support students' career exploration. In contrast, when discussing the path to his 20-year profession in higher education, Brian (Hist-LAS) does not recall any particularly influential faculty. Instead, he receives his father's guidance, who was also a faculty member at liberal arts college, and that of another faculty in his father's network, who was knowledgeable about graduate programs in Brian's (Hist-LAS) field. By virtue of these sociodemographic characteristics and its advantages, he possesses the cultural and social capital to access a career direction guidance separate and apart from his undergraduate experience beyond the content of his subject. He mentions but one faculty who comments he was moderately talented, which Brian (Hist-LAS) acknowledges neither inspired nor deterred him. (He did recall it, so it had some emotional impact.) Brian (Hist-LAS) and Tara's (Psych-LAS) sociodemographic characteristics informed both their career and self-knowledge, aligning with Blackburn and Lawrence's theoretical model (1995).

Other first-generation faculty recall their need for support as students and note their sensitivity to their students' needs, including Anna (ArtTh-PT) who was introduced by a faculty member to the field that would become her life's work; Alina (Biol-LAS) who sought to investigate her father's mysterious illness was guided by influential faculty in the biochemistry, neuroscience, pharmacology, and microbiology fields; Karl (Educ-PT) was inspired by convivial coaches and faculty at his prestigious East Coast college; Ellen (Educ-PT) named a literature professor as inspiring her integration of the arts in all of her work with children and encourages students to engage in liberal arts in order to do the same; and Melanie (Bus-PT) whose no-nonsense fact-based business professor inspires her clear-cut approach to business.

Faculty who were not first generation, both professional track and liberal arts and sciences, did offer extraordinary sensitivity to student needs for other reasons: Sylvan (Comm-PT), Kayla (Nurs-PT), and to a lesser degree, Molly (Chem-LAS). The later faculty share narratives of their own inspiring faculty, which aligns with the self-knowledge aspect of Blackburn and Lawrence's theoretical model (1995), where individuals' personal attitudes and values influence perceptions of themselves and the professional activities they enact. Each of these participants identified faculty inspirations as among reasons they behave as they do to support their students.

Lastly, one finding that is not surprising concerns the most senior subgroup of faculty. Ranging in age from 66 to 85, all strongly encourage students to become life-long learners, to engage in reading "until the day they're planted" in order to be able to solve the problems that life inevitably will present, as they all continue to do. These mature faculty had careers outside of academics. Their long, active careers, vast experience with students, and long lives indicate they have wisdom to share. They are bold in encouraging students to take this guidance and see them as ongoing role models of life-learning.

Summary Q3 Findings

Research Question 3 asks: What differences in perception and behavior exist by subgroups (discipline, rank, age, longevity in academia, first-generation, and parent status)? I found differences in the abundant interview data more subtle among subgroups and similarities more pronounced, the most prominent of which were differences between liberal arts and sciences track disciplines and the professional track disciplines. As might be commonly expected, professional track faculty perceived student career preparedness as part of their role as faculty, with career guidance and preparation in mind throughout their curriculums in addition to

course content. This subgroup of faculty selected high-impact practices and assignments deliberately, including writing, research, and reinforced soft skills such as interpersonal, communication, and problem-solving skills as might be applied to their disciplines. Experiential learning was embedded in curriculums, including clinical settings, student teaching, and credit-bearing internships in other disciplines, like business. Professional track faculty were also likely to support job-finding skills within their activities and curriculums such as resume writing, interview skills, and referral to professional organizations. Professional track faculty are advantaged by prior work experience in other fields that informed their activities, which was true of most of the faculty. Nevertheless, liberal arts and sciences track faculty, to some degree, were equally concerned about students' career preparedness, particularly in the health science disciplines who also deliberately focused on high-impact practices like writing, research, and experiential learning when possible, which was less the case in chemistry because of the size of the program and internship availability, and especially if the faculty had industry experience. These faculty also facilitated connections to alumni, scientific community professionals, professional organizations, and a campus health sciences fair and demonstrated interest in helping students prepare for related careers.

Lacking background or feeling it was part of their role, some liberal arts track faculty were less active in their approach to their relationships with students regarding student career preparedness and far less intentional in their behavior. Their focus was enacting the liberal arts and sciences track curriculum. Faculty practiced high-impact practices, including critical thinking, writing, and research skills, but these were inadvertently related to career preparedness though clearly acknowledged for their value in preparation for any profession. Also, these faculty were likely to offer graduate school knowledge that helped those students interested in

graduate school degrees, including an honest caution not to pursue graduate school for history because of the lack of potential employment in that field. Some faculty considered it rare that referrals to other campus career resources or experiential learning was ever part of their faculty role. Liberal arts and sciences track faculty recognized the increased attention to career preparedness at the institutional level and were more sensitive to the first-generation faculty than those who had cultural and social capital in their formative years.

The similarities among faculty subgroups included strong agreement regardless of discipline, rank, years in academe, gender, and first-generation and parent status. Faculty strongly agreed about the goals of higher education regarding the priority of employment after college, critical thinking and writing skills, and shared responsibility for students' career preparedness but responsibility ultimately rests with the student who must be willing to seeking available support. I found strong solicitude for students' well-being and success and the need for students to develop holistically beyond career preparation in an altruistic way, in support of societal well-being.

First-generation subgroups had similarities to their approach to students' career preparedness that was sometimes shared with most not first-generation who shared narratives of inspirational faculty in their career development that informed their career knowledge of what could be expected of the faculty role. Mature faculty ages 65–85 encourage lifelong learning and served as role models in this regard.

Q4: Barriers that Prohibit Faculty's Role in Student Career Preparedness

What surfaced during data gathering was important information relevant to my understanding of faculty's role in student career preparedness. This resulted in the formation of a fourth research question: What barriers exist that impact faculty's ability to support students'

career preparedness? The data surfaced throughout the interviews, but specifically when I asked faculty, “In an ideal world without barriers or limitations, what do you think would help students prepare for their careers in today’s workplace?” faculty not only responded with ideas about an ideal situation but delineated what they perceived as barriers. Themes emerged around the concepts: student distractions and deficits and other institutional and faculty priorities that impede faculty focus on student career preparedness.

Student Distractions and Deficits.

Several consistent themes emerged from faculty, specifically, students “have academic deficits from lack of preparation,” “suffer busyness because of financial obligations and pressures,” and “lack the ability to do hard work.”

Kayla (Nurs-Pt) feels that ideally students would not have to work the number of hours they are currently working to pay for school and the resulting emotional pressure:

Many of our students ...are pulled to work part time, some of them full-time, some of them are parents. They don’t have a stable family unit, so in an ideal world, the student would just be allowed to be a student these four years...have it be a time of learning without the pressures they have.

Gwen (Ad) adds to this by speaking about the inaccessibility of students to campus resources because they work, commute, and lack time on campus so they do not develop the good relationships with professors that could help them. Ellen (Educ-PT) also comments students lack time with each other and the benefit of peer interaction because, “so many of them are working that they don’t have a chance to sit with each other in the dormitory and talk about life in general.” Gwen (Ad) also feels the prevalence of adjuncts is a barrier to students since they can be less available than full-time professors to schedule meetings and develop the influential relationships relating to career preparedness. She clarifies, conversely, that adjuncts can also

provide helpful career connections for students because they can sometimes have other professional work that enhances their ability to support students' career preparedness.

Sylvan (Comm-PT) worries about student academic deficiencies, too, because of lowered admission standards and lack of student preparation and engagement:

College is not the be-all-and-end-all for every single citizen... We need to start rethinking who is allowed to participate in higher education. I think what happens is that high schools haven't finished the jobs sufficiently and many colleges these days are mostly finishing off high school and not truly institutions of what I would think of as higher education.... One of the difficulties is the level of the students entering... they don't have enough of a background.

This deficit is one of great concern for Sylvan (Comm-PT): "There is a whole group who are left behind and are graduated from here without those abilities (writing)." Because there is a focus on remediation, attention to career preparedness may become less of a priority. Ellen (Edu-PT) also attests to the quality of student abilities:

We don't have high SAT kids. That's another issue. We're starting from ground zero in many instances. Their background is so limited... and when we pigeon-hole into so many [teaching] strategies courses it doesn't give them an opportunity to think about life... I would like them to have much greater opportunity to have liberal arts courses.

It's clear to see why Ellen (Educ-PT) feels this way. She mentions an inspirational faculty at the state teachers college she attended who inspired her life-long appreciation for literature; it continues to impact her career knowledge and faculty role she plays (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995). Ellen (Educ-PT) has run conferences on children's literature at the college and says she encourages education to "intertwine" literature in their teaching.

Gwen (Ad) and Alina (Biol-LAS) agree with Sylvan (Comm-PT) regarding comments about unprepared students. In addition, they both feel students lack an understanding of their role in their career preparedness, their overall success and willingness to work hard to achieve their

goals. Alina (Biol-LAS) assesses this limitation, specifically citing the lack of preparation students experience in high school:

I think what would prepare them better if they would understand how big a role they play in their own future. I truly feel that they don't know how much depends on them. If they fully understood that, even [the] first semester is...important for them. I feel that in a way in high school they are babied too much.

Alina (Biol-PT) mentions that the lack of preparation impacts students' college success and their inability or unwillingness to work as hard as she expects them to especially students who aspire to challenging professional graduate programs such as medical school:

They don't learn how to learn. They don't learn how to study. And I think everything is just told them what to do and then here they come and they feel they are adults, but they are not adults. And so they still want to get away with things as they did in high school, so the least amount of work, for the best grade or get a grade the way like [in high school]....The only true happiness comes from sincerity and hard work...I ask them to work hard...and they are upset (by this).

Alina (Biol-LAS) feels students lack a sense of reality about the hard work that academic and career paths require, but she also embraces the difficult role faculty can take in helping students understand and accept their own responsibilities:

They're not living in the real world...and I think that we have to pick them up from the little they know and try to make them a person that is able to go to medical school, able to become a PA, or whatever they want to do...It's hard work on our part. They don't understand it at the beginning, that how hard work it is [*sic*]... and so I think if they would understand...how much a role they play in their own development [for their] future, I think that would be better for them.

Gwen (Ad) feels students do not understand their role because the institution does not communicate it to students:

We don't make that clear...to students [that they are responsible for their career preparedness]. They should be responsible, but we're so busy...we do a lot for the underprepared student...that we don't convey that [responsibility] clearly.

Anna (ArtTh-PT) feels gaining career path information is key for students, too. Many students do not have clarity about regulatory requirements in her profession and the prerequisites required.

She feels compelled to communicate with students:

They have to know a lot about the profession before they begin...They have to take the right courses so early in order to get on the path...It's another reason why I am really motivated to help undergrads so they don't end up wanting to do it and then have these barriers that they have so many pre-reqs...and they [say], "What? I'm going to be here for four years and then I graduate and it's not over?" So they have to know if it's not for them...[and] what else could they [choose to] do.

Ellen (Educ-PT) also cites state mandates and teacher testing as barriers to student career success as future educators:

I would love for them to take more liberal arts courses to open their minds. But the state requires them to have certain course and strategies, which I think are very important [too]....we have to have standards...but this standardization is bothersome to me.

Tara (Psych-LAS) offers an additional relevant assessment of students who may believe they will go to graduate school even though they do not have the academic strength to do so. The dilemma for these students is having majored in psychology, a discipline where graduate work is often required for specific career paths, like school or mental health counseling. There are relatively few opportunities in the psychology field for those with only bachelor's degrees. Tara (Psych-LAS) admits she does not have enough knowledge of options for these students.

Karl (Educ-PT) believes student limitations can be overcome with support but empowering students to rise to the occasion when it comes to their careers:

I think if we create these barriers and challenge the people to overcome the barriers, and overcome the limitations, and providing as much support as necessary...but not doing it for them... hence the question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" and having them come up with it, "Here's what I'm going to be," and then challenging them to do that. I think that ultimately [this would work to help students]...There's an interesting turn of a phrase: "He gave me an 'A', or he gave me a 'C.'" That's decidedly different than, "I earned a C." [They need to] Earn it. Just earn it.

Karl (Educ-PT) speaks of his own college education story where his full football scholarship was compromised when he suffered a serious illness and he spent days in a coma. When he recovered, he overheard a conversation among his coaches doubting his return. He took the doubt as a personal challenge and prevailed, earning Cs in challenging courses, feeling deficient compared to classmates, and acutely aware of his first-generation status in a prestigious East Coast college; in kind with the Blackburn and Lawrence's theoretical model (1995), Karl's (Educ-PT) sociodemographic characteristics influenced his self-knowledge as one who prevailed over barriers. This experience appears to impact his current attitude and behavior with clear expectations that students be challenged to prevail as he did with every belief that they can do so.

Institutional and Faculty Priorities.

Several themes emerged from the faculty that would impact their role in student career preparedness, including, "fiscal health of the institution," "lack of time," and "tension among priorities."

Sylvan (Comm-PT) was told truthfully by his inspirational college faculty that he is not cut out to be an actor, that he needed to "find something else," which he did. He compares the current institution, which he feels lacks this moral courage to be honest with students because of money pressures:

We don't tell people the truth like that. We lie to them to keep them in the department... to keep them paying... the admissions [tuition]. We need the money. So we tell them it's going to be okay, [and] "You're just going to have to work harder and try harder."

This belief is somewhat in contrast to Karl's (Educ-PT) and Alina's (Biol-LAS) belief that working hard will suffice; unlike Karl (Educ-PT), Sylvan (Comm-PT) thinks sometimes the students' deficits are too deep for hard work to overcome. Sylvan (Comm-PT) also repeated the concerns that the institution's fiscal health is a priority over a focus on learning and education,

even for individual faculty: “We’re discussing pedagogy [in the interview]... We’re really about money. We’re really not about education. Some [faculty] don’t really care. Many of them [faculty] fear they’re not being paid [to mentor].” Sylvan (Comm-PT) suggests there is discussion of increasing class size as a cost savings measure. He is strongly opposed to increasing class size, feeling this will inhibit his ability to develop strong mentoring relationships with students he feels they need and were once so helpful to him. He further feels that about half of his department is helpful to students’ career preparedness while the other half is not.

In contrast, Molly (Chem-LAS), Alina (Biol-LAS), Anna (ArtTh-PT), Ellen (Educ-PT), Karl (Educ-PT), and especially Kayla (Nurs-PT) all speak of department unity and mutual support for one another in enacting student career preparedness support of one another, indicative of the department cultural normative behavior that reinforces the behavior in the faculty (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995). Neither Melanie (Bus-PT) nor Brian (Hist-LAS) made mention of unified department views. Tara (Psych-LAS) spoke of recent initiatives in her department and involving other disciplines in order to get the class filled to develop research writing class for undergraduates to facilitate this high-impact practice and allow students to practice the skill. The motivation of departmental peers within certain departments in the organization aligns with Blackburn and Lawrence’s theoretical model (1995) where normative structures within the disciplines of the employing institution influence individuals’ beliefs and priorities, in this instance supporting students’ career preparedness, but I found it to be inconsistent in the data among the departments.

Ellen (Educ-PT) also mentions the focus on institutional priority of making money, let alone remaining solvent:

Universities and colleges are not and should not be “money making” institutions.... Schools of higher education should not be content knowing that they’re

“just graduating” candidates. They should be graduating candidates that are thoroughly prepared for their career(s) or for future graduate work.

In this study, a clear tension surfaces between the fiscal health of the institution, requiring lowered admission standards believed by faculty to allow the institution to remain solvent, and the challenges this brings to bear for faculty. Faculty need to “work hard” according to Alina (Biol-LAS) to help students overcome their academic deficits and barriers they bring because students being admitted are unprepared for rigors of college work and the career paths they choose. Nevertheless, some faculty also take seriously their role in preparing students for the students’ own fiscal well-being by helping students make ready for their professional lives after college when, as Karl (Edu-PT) suggests, a student realizes, the college or university “is going to kick me [the student] out” and a student will be “out there on my own,” Beyond the reality of becoming self-supporting after college, faculty, including Tara (Psych-LAS), Sylvan (Comm-PT), Kayla (Nurs-P), and Anna (ArtTh-PT), all specifically mention that for them, a priority should be for students to learn how to be active participants in society as contributing global citizens, “working constructively and productively in society,” and “learning how to think.” This was emphasized clearly by both and Sylvan (Comm-PT) and Ellen (Educ-PT) who have had long careers in and out of higher education.

In her equally clear-thinking comment as the faculty participant who most recently experienced her own career deployment within the last 5 years, Tara (Psych-LAS) admits she lacks the knowledge and training about “what’s everything [students] can do with a Psych degree” at the undergraduate level. As important, she thinks, “as a faculty member it just doesn't feel realistic to do it all, even though I think it's important” to help students with every aspect of career preparedness. “Doing it all” includes developing and implementing the course content of their subject matters, as Kayla (Nurs-PT) and Brian (Hist-LAS) note. Tara (Psych-LAS) alluded

to another responsibility perhaps related to the lack of preparation students bring to the institution, that of retaining students when they fall into academic peril. This circumstance appears to confirm concern for students' academic abilities and adds to faculty responsibilities:

We...do a lot of kind of keeping tabs on students in terms of... if a student isn't coming to class, if I have any concerns, there someone in the registrar's office [a retention specialist] I can call, and sometimes I'll get emails, "Hey, can you tell me how such and such person is doing?"... There have been a few times where I've been part of...coordinating and trying to get a person caught up, get them moving forward in their courses again and I send a lot of emails to students saying, "Hey, I saw that you're not doing well in this course, can you come in and meet with me?" She's also the person I notify if a student tells me that they're thinking about withdrawing or transferring.

While understandable that retention is important to the institution, especially given financial concerns, it is one more thing that keeps faculty busy and perhaps less focused on possibilities in student career preparedness in and outside the classroom. It is logical that if students are not performing well academically, they cannot focus on career preparedness as an immediate goal. However, it would be interesting to know if a lack of career knowledge and direction contributes to lack of student performance and related retention issues.

Summary Q4 Findings

Research Question 4 surfaces in analysis of the data. It asks: What barriers exist that impact faculty abilities to support students' career preparedness? I find that participants believed student distraction and deficits prevented students from accessing resources and faculty who could positively influence students. First, students have work obligations off campus due to pressing financial needs; more than one faculty wished students did not have to work so much and felt it inhibited their academic performance, access to resources, the ability to form good mentoring relationships with faculty and other peers, all of which could negatively influence their career preparedness. Secondly, participants feel that students are unprepared for college-level work because of the inadequate preparation in high school, that the bar for admissions is

low as indicated by low SAT scores. They argue further that students have limited academic backgrounds and that some students would be best suited to seek other career paths besides college. According to several faculty, students lacked study skills and the motivation to work hard because they did not have rigorous high school experiences. Students are particularly challenged by the rigors of curriculums like the natural sciences and do not have realistic expectations of the difficulty of some career paths, such as medical professions. Participants felt resources were dedicated to remediating underprepared students, making communication about their career preparedness responsibility less of a priority. Students seem not to understand their role in their career preparedness, their overall academic success and willingness to work hard to achieve their goals. Some faculty believe hard work will allow the students to overcome deficits, while others feel some students should not be admitted in the first place.

Other institutional priorities also present barriers that impact faculty ability to support student career preparedness. The institution's fiscal health is top of mind for some faculty and how this is emphasized by the institution over other priorities, like student learning and education. There is some sense among faculty that awarding degrees and keeping students in majors where they will not succeed to retain tuition dollars is more important to the institution and hints at some dishonesty in the practice. One faculty sees some peers concerned about compensation for extra duty involved in mentoring students, while others at the institution relish their reputation as being the best department for being open to supporting students and recognize the hard work faculty assume in bringing students up to academic par. Some departments, such as education, nursing, art therapy, and natural sciences have a more unified normative behavior (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995) according to faculty participants in supporting students than communications or history. The psychology department is making efforts to institutionalize

research writing skills across academic disciplines, according to the faculty participant from this discipline.

Some faculty admit a lack of career knowledge they wish they had to share with students but also see the additional responsibility unrealistic when compiled with other faculty duties, including keeping up with students whose academic performance stimulates retention efforts, of which the faculty is a part. Retention efforts are also linked to the institution's financial stability, since retaining students secures tuition. Logically, lack of student academic performance will preclude any conversation on career preparedness as an immediate goal, but the next question is if clearer career direction might inspire better academic performance and retention.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION and IMPLICATIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the findings of this study. It considers the current literature on understanding faculty perceptions of their role in student career preparedness, student–faculty relationships, use of high-impact educational practices, the theoretical models that depict influence on faculty attitudes and behavior (Blackburn and Lawrence, 1995), and the importance of learning experiences on the formation of student self-efficacy related to career self-management (Brown and Lent, 2013 as modified in Majewski, 2018). It provides a proposed student career preparedness system model, a conclusion, and implications for future research, policy, and practice for those stakeholders interested in student career preparedness and the role faculty play as front-line drivers of student success.

Discussion of Findings

We know student career preparedness is an important goal of higher education. We know stakeholders care. While much research has been dedicated to college student development, career decision-making, and student–faculty interaction from a student perspective, little is known about the faculty perspective on their role in student career preparedness. This study seeks to find out what faculty feel, what they do, and what the differences are among them. These aspects have not been previously studied or known in a specific, articulated way. Discovering a deeper understanding of faculty perceptions of their role in student career preparedness confirms and advances our understanding of *faculty* as the drivers of student success and institutional effectiveness in this specific and important goal of higher education.

This study provides rich and detailed illustrations of faculty perceptions, behavior, and attitudes inspired by these research questions:

- Q1: How do faculty perceive their role in student career preparedness?
- Q2: In what ways, if any, do faculty support undergraduate career preparedness in and outside the classroom?
- Q3: What differences in perception and behavior, if any, exist by subgroups (discipline, rank, age, gender, longevity in academia, parental and first-generation status)?
- Q4: (Surfaced from data.) What barriers exist that impact faculty ability to support students' career preparedness?

Based on the findings of this study, faculty feel strongly that students need guidance in finding their career direction. They agree that employment after college is a priority among many other goals of higher education. Faculty feel they can influence and support students' career preparedness through high-impact practices and assignments (Kuh, 2008), advising and mentoring, and connections to useful resources on and off campus. Importantly, the effectiveness of these types of student–faculty relationships and potential outcomes is largely dependent on an understanding of shared responsibility that the institution, faculty, and most critically, students must mutually grasp and enact but also related to faculty disciplines, careers, backgrounds, and connections. The most noteworthy differences among subgroups, despite widely varying disciplines, rank, age, longevity in academia, and parent and first-generation status are related to the subtle but disparate behavior by faculty disciplines of professional track faculty as compared with liberal arts and sciences track faculty. There are, however, occasions of overlap between these subgroups. Faculty indicate that they have an appreciation for first-generation student

struggles, especially those faculty with their own first-generation experiences, as was the case for most of the participants. Faculty with longevity in their careers and life (ages 66–85) urge the importance of students to embrace an attitude of life-long learning that has served each of them well.

As a result, faculty's role in student career preparedness is viewed as an essential element of the student–faculty relationship and has the potential to be highly influential in achieving the student career preparedness outcomes higher education stakeholders most desire. Addressing the barriers thought to exist that impact faculty's abilities to support students cannot be overlooked to maximize the powerful potential of faculty's role in student career preparedness. Lack of student academic preparation, distractions students endure from having to work to support their academic and financial needs, which diminish their ability to develop mentoring relationships with faculty and access resources, and institutional priorities fixated on the institution's fiscal health seem to impede the influence that faculty might bring to bear through their student–faculty relationships.

The following are summaries of the major, detailed findings from this study.

Students' need for support. This study finds that the majority of faculty and the career administrator strongly agree that students at their institution need support and guidance in determining their career directions, particularly first-generation students who not only look to higher education to advance their careers and socioeconomic standing among other goals but may also lack the social and cultural capital such as knowledge of career possibilities and pathways to them. Participant agreement on student need is well-established in this study through many comments captured during the semi-structured interview. Many students at this institution are not aware from the outset about the need and benefits of seeking career support and

internships, in contrast to students from more selective colleges. Participants who are first-generation students themselves appear sensitive to students' needs for direction (7 of 11 participants). The faculty offer poignant personal narratives of how they needed and found direction themselves in their formative college years, often with faculty inspiration as role models and mentors; they seem to be intrinsically motivated to help "because they [students] need it and want it (help)" as Alina- Biol-LAS stated. The faculty identify student inexperience and youth as other reasons for needing support. Providing information, directing students to resources, and providing support as "cheerleaders" are behaviors faculty cite as part of their faculty roles given students' career direction needs.

Priority of employment after college. Among the many essential and important goals of higher education examined through the national HERI (Eagan, Stolzenberg, Lozano, et al., 2014) faculty surveys, participants in this study also strongly agree that employment after college is an "essential" or "very important" higher education goal for them and their institution. This sentiment creates a sense of tension for some participants who want to make clear that employment is not the only higher education goal; learning and skill development—problem solving, writing through liberal arts studies—is even more important. This echoes the message on the institution's website connecting liberal arts studies to employer needs and reflecting the institution's mission. Participants often mention another goal of higher education that is equally important to career preparedness: preparing students for roles in advancing culture and society as global citizens and becoming lifelong learners to do so. A few of the faculty find it abhorrent for institutions to award degrees without the substance of learning and "thorough preparation of students for their futures" (Ellen-Educ-PT).

Faculty ability to influence and support students. The review of 60 studies over four decades by Lamport (1993) finds that informal student–faculty interaction is related to student academic achievement, persistence, and career and educational aspirations. Along with Pascarella and Terenzini (1977, 1978, 2005), and Astin (1985, 1993), Chickering’s and Gamson’s (1987) summary is among the standards often used by higher education scholars, in which student–faculty interaction is a key principle to college student success and a key factor in student motivation and involvement. Lent and Brown’s theoretical model (2013, p. 562; modified by Majewski, 2018, p. 20) suggests learning experiences influenced by faculty impact students’ self-efficacy and outcome expectation in student career self-management (Figure 5). This study finds participants recognize faculty potential for “vast influence” on students while sometimes expressing self-doubt about their knowledge. They express caution about imposing their views, if not approached to do so. The study also finds that although some faculty fear imposing their views, others feel they can instill love for a field and facilitate related discussions to help students determine what they “like.” They also admit they often cannot determine what careers will make students happy as adults. The faculty feel they can provide helpful career information that assists students in assessing their skills and suitability to a field. Others acknowledge their influence as role models when providing examples of their previous professional experiences outside academia. Professional track faculty consistently strongly agree they can help students in the following ways: determine career directions, provide experiences in the classroom that prepare students for the workplace, provide support and guidance outside the classroom that help students determine their career direction, and feel they and their departments are prepared to guide students’ career directions. With scant exception, the liberal arts and

science track faculty agree somewhat to these aspects of influencing students' career preparedness and feel they and their departments are prepared to do so.

Shared responsibility. Faculty clearly see responsibility for student career preparedness as shared between the institution, themselves, and primarily with students themselves who must ultimately make the decisions to engage, work hard, and act upon their career guidance. Considered by Kuh (2008) as a high-impact practice, the freshman seminar class, organized by discipline and taught faculty, is a vehicle for faculty influence where students engage in career exploration. Mentoring relationships have a chance to evolve in the seminars, too. The faculty largely agree the institution is responsible for supporting this kind of opportunity for career exploration and developing students' career-related life skills, providing feedback about their abilities and interests, and guiding them into careers for which students are best suited. Further, faculty can be catalysts for students' exploration and direction, facilitate conversations, provide information, and recommend resources. Faculty's role can and should be to communicate the implied students' responsibilities, something participants feel is often not clearly done, to prompt students to think about what they can do to self-advocate, take a stake and be responsible for their career preparedness. Some feel strongly students should place learning and problem-solving above all else since not every possible problem can be presented via curriculum. This reflects Astin's (1984) theory of involvement, which suggests that a student must expend an adequate amount effort and energy to obtain any learning or development. One intriguing proposition found in this study is that industry and partner organizations, too, have a responsibility in providing opportunities for students to gain experience in producing students who are thoroughly employable and prepared for professional careers.

Importantly, faculty sentiment frequently echoes the institutional mission of a liberal arts and professional studies institution with Catholic underpinnings. The mission is not necessarily to provide career training for a specific job, but rather a holistic experience generating good global citizens and teaching students how to think critically, learn, write well, and problem-solve. However, professional track faculty in this study are more inclined to see professional objectives on par with achieving liberal arts objectives, while liberal arts and sciences track faculty see them as pre-eminent, with professional objectives to be determined and obtained independently by students. Professional track faculty, nonetheless, see students as seeking a particular career and feel the institution must necessarily provide the most up-to-date information and deliver guidance and thorough preparation for the careers students seek. In some cases for certain faculty the responsibility of the institution is to provide holistic 360 degree emotional, personal, and moral support that some faculty feel students want and need.

Ultimately, the findings suggest that stakeholders must accept the challenge to find a balance between the institution, its faculty, and students, along with industry partners, to support the development of broadly educated global citizens with critical thinking skills and student preparation that both translates into career and life success. Faculty in this study firmly accept a role in varying degrees and through a variety of practices.

High-impact practices. High-impact practices have been tested and shown by Kuh (2008) and the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU) to help increase rates of student retention and engagement. Participants acknowledge these practices as either essential or important to the institution and conducted them with notable frequency in their pedagogy in varying degree by faculty discipline. Participants mention the following practices as embedded within or tangential to their curriculums: experiential learning such as internships,

writing intensive courses, undergraduate research, capstone classes with special collaborative projects, diversity and global learning through study abroad, and soft skills such as interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, and problem-solving skills. Participants emphasize these skills throughout their curriculums as essential to student development and careers, and notably by professional track faculty, most of whom have had professional experience beyond academe. They frequently express their knowledge of what they feel is needed from employees in the workplace. For them, the practices are done with intentionality. The institutional emphasis on writing is dominant with plentiful examples of how this enacted within faculty curriculums and institutional practices, like the campus Research Day where students, like nursing students, present their research. Given the academic deficits students sometimes bring causes some faculty to note the writing center as a support system and other faculty to question the overall effectiveness of the emphasis on writing, despite its priority to faculty and the institution.

Some liberal arts and sciences track faculty employ high-impact practices, such as writing, research, and study abroad, without necessarily identifying them as such or connecting them to the student career preparedness. This might beg the question if this lack of intentionality impacts their effectiveness for students, since there has been some debate as to the value of high-impact practices if they are not implemented “well” (Kuh, 2008; Day Keller, 2012).

Intentionality plays a part in qualification of high-impact practices being done well (Kuh & Kinzie, 2018).

Advising, mentoring, and providing career guidance. Practiced as the essence of student–faculty relationships for millennia, mentorships related to student career preparedness are applicable to the findings of this study (Allen & Eby, 2010). Faculty support of students’ career preparedness typically occurs through advising and mentoring behaviors in formal faculty

advising requirements. The substance of the relationships I find ranges, in my view, from minimal course approval to relationships more characterized by the term “mentoring,” which includes the concepts of advising, sponsorship, and role modeling. The faculty feel, in some cases, that they innately advise and mentor in the course of their classes including what they deem as mentoring, providing career guidance, discussing career and post-graduation goals, ways to prepare for interviews, sharing workplace and market trends in their fields, and providing other support. Other faculty do not advise and mentor through their classes, nor feel compelled to do so, despite small class sizes that might facilitate these discussions, because they do not see it as within the scope of their teaching roles. Instead, their priorities rest on course content.

The faculty perceptions, behaviors, attitudes, and motivations that I discovered in this study reveal several important themes: relationship building, positive feelings that reward faculty, the normative structure in departments that supports behaviors, practices faculty find helpful, and important connections to resources faculty provide to enhance and augment students’ career preparedness.

Relationship building and positive feelings. Student–faculty relationships are facilitated formally through structured advisement, particularly at the time of semester registration and through freshman seminar conducted by subject–matter faculty. They often continue the relationships beyond the required class in response to those students who continue to seek out their support, generating a source of pride for some faculty. The career planning and development administrator feels many students view the faculty as trusted mentors. The ongoing relationships allow faculty to identify students’ interests, strengths, and weaknesses and discuss their career goals. This kind of relationship varies from student to student and from faculty

advisor to advisor. Some relationships appear to be more subject matter focused, while others are prompted by students' needs and faculty willingness to be widely available to them. Faculty are rewarded by positive feelings derived by the relationship and being helpful to students. Here, Blackburn and Lawrence's theoretical model (1995) applies with faculty self-knowledge; that is, the importance of their personal attitudes and values comes into play. Some faculty feel mentoring, while essential, is somewhat intangible, yet it accounts for what may feel like most of their time beyond the requirements of teaching. Participants note additional benefits of ongoing faculty relationships with those alumni who support connections to the workplace through jobs, internships, and talks on campus. Others maintain the general role of "cheerleader" for graduates far beyond graduation.

Autobiographical details reveal that faculty participants' advising, mentoring, and career guidance behaviors appear to reflect and model the behavior of faculty from participants' own "career knowledge," as professor and their "self-knowledge" garnered through their educational and professional careers. As reflected in the Blackburn and Lawrence theoretical framework (1995), there is evidence in this study that career knowledge and self-knowledge appear to have a direct effect on some faculty behavior. Faculty want to give back what they received from their own undergraduate faculty relationships.

In some cases, faculty go beyond minimal expectations by creating opportunities for research with students, helping them access conferences, connecting to knowledgeable alumni, and socializing with students to cement their relationships. They take pride, too, in their departmental reputations for openness in supporting students in many ways, embracing the normative features of the work environment and "social knowledge" featured in Blackburn and Lawrence's theoretical model (1995). Social knowledge represents how individuals perceive

their environment and how others expect them to behave (subjective norms) and how they perceive others in the environment, collectively, this is known as the organization's *social climate* or ethos. Some faculty departments appear more similar in behavior than others. This leads to tension where there is reported disparate faculty behaviors in some departments contrasted with collaborative harmony in others.

Helpful pedagogical practices. Besides curriculum content that supports one's mastery of curriculum content, objectives to support students' career preparedness is embedded within professional track faculty curriculums, in which professional backgrounds and normative structures within these disciplines guide behavior (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995). Prior professional experience as practicing faculty informs some faculty's approach to student career preparedness. The overlap of liberal arts and science track faculty with health science results in similarities in career preparedness activities, which can take the form of required or highly recommended internships and the development of job-finding skills required to secure those internships, such as resume or CV writing and the practice of interview skills needed for professional school admission or employment. These activities are not apparent in other liberal arts and science track disciplines. Some faculty departments have self-contained career supports as part of their normative structure, for example, nursing and education, while others have collaborative relationships with career counselors who support classroom activities.

Connections to resources. Referrals to career-related resources provides a foundational faculty behavior that supports students' career preparedness both on and off campus. Professional track faculty connect students to clinical settings and student teaching required for licensure and credit-bearing internships that support students' experiential learning. Referrals are made among faculty who have varying degrees of expertise in particular areas. For example,

faculty advice can dispel confusion between art therapy and other types of counseling pursued through studying psychology at the graduate level. Nursing and education faculty make referrals among their peers and in their own and other disciplines to enhance students' knowledge of an area of interest. Liberal arts and sciences track faculty advise students on graduate school programs and admissions requirements and refer them to faculty who have knowledge about specific professional school admission requirements in law, education, or other professional fields. Other faculty refer students to the Office of Career Planning and Development, on-campus career fairs for health sciences, and graduate schools. Subsequent to hosting mock-interviews within class activities, some faculty refer students directly to post-graduate employment. Some faculty invite professionals to speak about their research and professional experience with their students and invite alumni to share their professional experience.

Faculty from most disciplines make referrals to mental health counseling when needed, sometimes physically walking students the counseling offices. This was particularly true for some disciplines where emotional intelligence and "wholeness" was required of the discipline, for example, nursing and art therapy. Faculty in first-year seminar incentivize students to attend the majors and career fairs to further clarify their direction and increase their exposure to career knowledge. Some faculty refer students to self-guided research for valuable market trend information on careers that might guide students away from unrealistic career goals based on their abilities or market demand.

Off-campus partners hold conferences on campus that undergraduates can attend. Faculty also recommend or require students to attend discipline conferences on and off-campus, seek small research grants and require students to write about their experiences to reinforce the institutional writing priority. Other faculty refer students to associations that have rich career

development resources that augment the small college's resources in this area. These co-curricular activities help clarify career goals, build resumes, and enhance academic skill development, thus contributing to students' career preparedness.

As with all activity reported in this study, these career-related referrals on and off campus are most prevalent among professional track faculty. This is less so among liberal arts and sciences track faculty, who focus on the mastery of liberal arts course content and related skills that may not intentionally be connected to student career preparedness, but degree attainment and overall preparation for life after college.

Advising, mentoring, and providing career guidance all contribute to student–faculty relationships, which engender a positive sense of pride for faculty and positive departmental reputations in terms of caring for students. Embedded in many professional track faculty curriculums and some liberal arts and sciences track curriculums are helpful pedagogical practices that include job-finding support, like resume and CV-writing, mock interviews, and embedded requirements for internships and other experiential learning. Faculty referrals to career-related resources on and off campus supplement and augment students' career preparedness experiences, including to mental health and career counseling, on-campus events, conferences, discipline-related associations, and directly to post-graduation employment.

Disparity and Similarities in Faculty Attitudes and Behaviors by Discipline

Despite the wide variety of subgroups of discipline, rank, age, gender, longevity in academia, and first-generation status and parental status, similarities appear to outweigh differences. Differences seem to cluster around the theme of engagement in student career preparedness depending on discipline. Similarities include agreement on the goals of higher

education, student need for support, and faculty willingness to care for and support students' holistic development needs and society.

Supporting common beliefs, professional track faculty consistently seem to perceive student career preparedness as part of their role as faculty, which is clearly demonstrated by the behaviors and assignments in their curriculums. They also have a more pronounced focus and intentionality in employing high-impact practices that contribute to student career preparedness, like experiential learning and the development of the soft skills employers want. They offer activities that support job-finding skills, interview skills, referrals to helpful professional organizations, and conferences and professional contacts in their fields that led to internships and employment. The liberal arts and sciences track faculty that behaved most like professional track counterparts had prior professional experiences that informed their course activities, just as the professional track faculty have had. This finding is not surprising. This faculty's behavior influence others in the department to engage similarly and deliberately in supporting student career preparedness, despite a less clear expectation of responsibility than professional track faculty report. Students were encouraged to apply for small grants to do research with faculty, join professional organizations, seek support in the Office of Career Planning and Development, pursue shadowing opportunities in the health sciences, and practice interviewing for professional school admission. This contrasts with other liberal arts and sciences track faculty who admittedly do not have thorough knowledge of market trends or opportunities in the workplace as alternatives to graduate school. While liberal arts and sciences track faculty do encourage and require their students to develop their writing and research skills, they rarely connect students unlike professional track faculty. Even some faculty members who host study abroad do not see any direct connections to career preparedness.

There are, however, strong areas of agreement among all faculty, including that a major goal of higher education is employment after college along with the development of critical thinking and writing skills. There is also strong solicitude for students' well-being and success and the need for students to develop holistically beyond career preparation in an altruistic way, in support of societal well-being.

There are strong similarities across all subgroups including sensitivity to students' needs for career guidance, especially for first-generation students who lack the social and cultural capital that paves the way for some students to career preparedness. Faculty also agree that the institution has the responsibility for providing opportunities for students' career exploration, which is one focus of the freshman seminar. First-generation faculty share their concern based on their own experience, reflecting Blackburn and Lawrence's theoretical model (1995) of career and self-knowledge. There was no shortage of concern for underprepared and first-generation students from most of the faculty regardless of their own first-generation status. One exception is the faculty member who did not rely on his undergraduate faculty to guide him; instead, he possessed the social and cultural capital to be successful by using his family's network to help with his graduate school direction. Another discovery is that older faculty members are most concerned that students should become life-long learners, who are able to solve the problems that life presents and adapt to societal changes. Their long careers, vast experience, and long lives indicate that they are very knowledgeable and not afraid to encourage students to take this guidance and see them as role models.

Faculty do strongly agree that responsibility for student career preparedness rests ultimately with students, who must be willing to seek and implement many available resources.

Faculty feel strongly that no matter what efforts faculty make to support students' career preparedness, it is up to students to take their guidance and apply it to their circumstances.

Barriers that prohibit faculty's role. Faculty tensions are revealed that point to barriers that prohibit faculty's role and influence. Can the institution balance its need for fiscal health while preparing students for their own? Can both goals be achieved? There is also a subtle moral tension that faculty feel first in dealing with underprepared students. Does the fiscal challenge of the institution mean the need to admit unprepared students who then become the de facto burden of the faculty? Addressing academic deficits is likely a precursor to all else, but I question whether a clearer career direction and knowledge would provide the motivation and encouragement to help students meet academic deficits and retention issues.

Another challenge is managing and maintaining a larger altruistic goal of developing engaged citizens who can think critically, problem-solve, and contribute to the well-being of society at large, beyond the awarding of degrees to students and first jobs or graduate school. Institutions and faculty must necessarily balance the complexity of achieving both of these priorities in order to maintain their liberal arts mission and produce adaptable, life-long learners.

An additional barrier to faculty's potential role and impact is students' financial burdens and their need to generate income from part-time jobs. This can limit their ability to establish beneficial relationships and access to other career preparedness resources and opportunities, like research with faculty, meaningful internships, engagement with other campus career services and career fairs, and overall academic success because of the demands on their time. This reality is one that plagues many students at an institution where approximately 40% are first generation-students who may lack important cultural and social capital and as a result may not recognize the importance of access to resources and information, available through faculty, that could better

inform their career preparedness. The cost of education and limit of student resources to afford them is a larger challenge whose impact on students' overall success, let alone their career preparedness, deserves increased attention.

A few of the faculty indicate time as a constraint to developing further career preparedness efforts. None mentions a lack of acknowledgement or compensation as a reason to avoid it, though one suggests other faculty in his department fear not being compensated for mentoring responsibilities.

Lastly, faculty feel that students must necessarily be willing to take a stake in their career preparation, seek support and be willing to self-advocate to operationalize all that caring and knowledgeable faculty are willing to provide to meet the goals of the students, the institution, and the faculty themselves. The institution and its faculty can and must play a role in communicating the shared responsibility for career preparation of which students play the most essential part. There is a sense that this is not well communicated. To ensure that student career preparedness is achieved, the barriers to faculty's role must necessarily challenge the higher education community to seek creative solutions.

Limitations of the Current Study

As a qualitative study with in-depth inquiry, this study offers a rich view of important information, but any findings, conclusions, or results cannot be generalized to similar populations, institutions, or scenarios. That is, the findings of this study may be limited to the institution where I conducted the research and could reflect the unique characteristics of its faculty and one administrator. The institution enrolls approximately 1650 undergraduates, a smaller population than some regional high schools in the state. It has a relatively selective admission, but it is less selective than the major state university. It was originally founded as a

women's college in the early 20th century, became co-ed in the mid-1980s, and a university in 2013. The website suggests a mission of "superior education and career preparation." The academic web pages highlight that the college offers a strong "Catholic liberal arts and professional education designed to prepare our students to think critically, pursue truth, and contribute to a just society," concepts the faculty consistently echo in their comments. The university is also noted in the *U.S. News and World Report, 2019* rankings of "Regional Universities in the North" as a top performer for social mobility, ethnic diversity, and most international students, factors that several participants mention. I found participant comments consistent with the institution's stated culture and mission, though I did not expect this to be the case.

Since my purposeful sample was limited to full-time faculty who responded affirmatively to my request for participation in my study, some academic departments are under-represented in the study. There are more professional track faculty than liberal arts and sciences track. I solicited faculty from all institutional departments. While some of the faculty participants also taught graduate classes, the focus of the study is their experience with undergraduates.

The findings of this study are limited by race, ethnic, and gender diversity among the participants. The institution where the research was conducted has a predominantly White faculty at 83%, thus the purposeful sample reflects the lack of diversity. The entirety of sample is White. Most of the faculty participants are female, with seven female and three males. This, too, is reflected in faculty gender ratio of 63% female faculty and male 37%. Approximately 40% of the 2017 graduating class were first-generation students, which corroborates faculty impressions and sensitivity to first-in-family graduates (Retrieved from institution website, November 2019). It would be intriguing to investigate first-generation students' perceptions of faculty roles in their

career preparedness, especially given the notion that high-impact practices support underserved students (Brownell & Swaner, 2010).

Recommendations for Practice

The participants of this study responded to my request for a few good faculty participants. They informed me that they chose to participate because they wanted to support research and know the difficulties a researcher faces trying to gather useful data. These insightful, considerate faculty offered their honest, generous, and rich responses, which fueled the findings of my study. Logically, they represent to me the kind of faculty who care a good deal about their students, take their faculty roles seriously, and might well be templates for what the best faculty in small institutions can do to enhance student career preparedness. Their characteristics harken to Alderman's (2008) study, which finds the highest quality faculty interactions from a student perspective are those in which faculty members who are approachable and personable, have enthusiasm and passion for their work, care about students personally, and serve as role models and mentors. It is with this logic that I lean on their good spirit, good practices, and suggestions to make the following recommendations for practice for students, faculty, administrators, and institutions who care about students' career preparedness and the positive career outcomes they all desire.

The faculty in this study firmly accept their role in varying degrees, offer a variety of practices in and out of the classroom, and intentionally or generally support students' career preparedness. Participants adhere to the mission of the college and enact practices that support that mission. Faculty also embrace the priorities of the college to emphasize essential high-impact practices, particularly writing and expanded research practices and the development of skills and values that will enable students to contribute to society. The institution imbeds

experiential learning within several curriculums and awards college credit for it. Faculty are engaged in the process of student advisement during the internships, clinical practice, and student teaching. The faculty have awareness of the need for students to develop the soft skills development employers seek and include them in their curriculums, recognizing their value to the holistic student development many of the faculty see as important. The faculty embed work-finding skills such as resume and CV writing and mock interviews within their class assignments. Opportunities like study abroad build confidence and advance students' global learning and cultural competence. Most essentially, faculty show they *care*: They offer opportunities for discussion, advisement, and mentoring, are open to support students in a variety of ways related to career preparedness, and are willing to address student needs and make referrals to resources on and off campus. They also recommend connections to professional organizations. They contact alumni and other professionals with the expertise to inform their students on career-related knowledge to which they might not otherwise have access.

Finally, the results of this study suggest that faculty recognize the needs of students in discovering their career directions and understand that their roles in supporting students can be powerful and influential. My findings suggest that other stakeholders must ultimately accept the challenge of striking a balance between the institution, its faculty, and students, along with industry partners to support the development of broadly educated global citizens with critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills. This begs the question on who necessarily takes the lead, orchestrates and manages the balancing act among stakeholders. The career planning and development administrator sees an increased focus on her role and department, since an institutional reorganization moved the career center from student life to academic affairs and to a new strategic location in the office of the provost. (She gratefully no longer takes part in

midnight luaus as required when part of student life.) Since faculty can be so pivotal to the enactment of student career preparedness, as this study confirms, it would seem logical that alignment with academic affairs provides an opportunity for the clear communication and implementation of institutional, faculty, and student roles and responsibilities related to career preparedness. Alumni networks could also be useful in collaborating with faculty and students through academic affairs. Lastly, since freshman seminar is the first chance at career exploration for students, those responsible for its coordination could be aligned with career planning and development and academic and alumni affairs to develop robust course content and a clear message to students about the importance of career preparation beginning in year one.

Student Career Preparedness System

Given what I have learned in this study I propose the following model to depict the relationships between primary stakeholders in a student career preparedness system showing responsibility for faculty, the institution, and the student (Figure 6). It includes the high-impact practices considered relevant to the faculty role according to this study and acknowledgement of barriers to student career preparedness. Another important element of the system are factors from Blackburn and Lawrence's theoretical model (1995) that influence faculty behavior, including social knowledge, career, self-knowledge, and sociodemographic characteristics. Alumni and career services roles are also depicted in relation to faculty. Essential to the system is the institution's mission and communication of the roles of responsibility for student career preparedness. I also include a representation of the other influences on student career knowledge as implied by Lent and Brown's model (2013, p. 562; modified by Majewski, 2018, p. 20). The intent is to show flow of information, common goals, important influences, and potential pathways for developing meaningful student career preparedness policy and programming.

FACULTY, INSTITUTIONAL, and STUDENT ROLES in STUDENT CAREER PREPAREDNESS

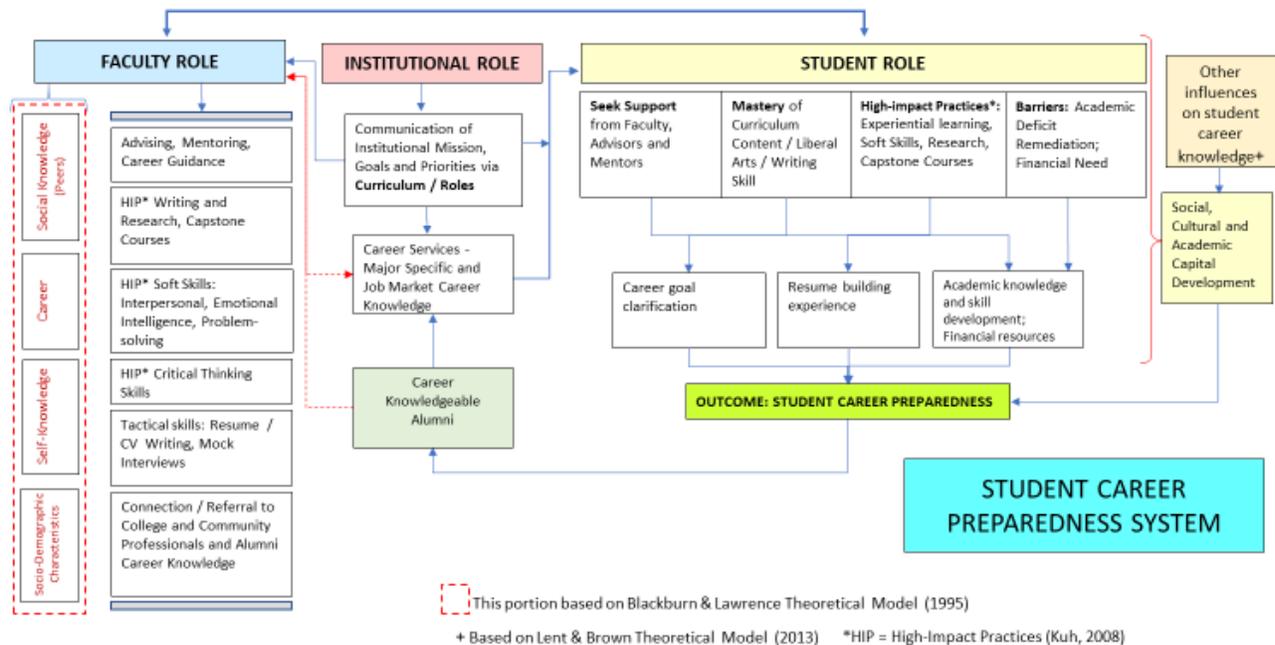


Figure 6. Student career preparedness system: faculty, institutional, and student roles.
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Recommendations for Research

There is amplified pressure from higher education stakeholders, who are insisting that colleges become increasingly accountable for student career preparedness leading to desired employment outcomes (U.S. Department of Education, 2006; Dey & Cruzvergara, 2014; Franek et al., 2016; Humphreys, 2009; Kelchen, 2018; Kuh, 2009a; Lipka, 2008a; Rampell, 2015; Supiano, 2013). With this insistence comes the question: Is the high cost investment of college tuition worth it? With heightened pressure, colleges and universities are committed to preparing students for their role in their careers and the world. While this study explores a specific qualitative view of faculty and their role in student career preparedness, their perspective on institutional priorities, their practices in and out of the classroom supporting student career preparedness, and barriers faculty perceive to enacting these roles, a similar but more expansive

quantitative study could be conducted to achieve generalizable findings along similar lines of inquiry. This could further inform our understanding of faculty as front-line drivers of student career preparedness success.

Since the focus of this study was on faculty self-perceptions, an important complement would be a study on students' views of faculty's role in their career preparedness. It would be especially intriguing to further investigate first-generation students' perceptions of faculty in their career preparedness, given the notion that high-impact practices support underserved students (Brownell & Swaner, 2010). Because the career preparedness needs of first-generation students emerge as a concern for the faculty, a qualitative focus on this sample of students within certain majors could prove useful to understanding the needs of these students and how they might develop cultural, social, and academic capital important to their career preparedness. It could help to inform faculty on how to maximize their career development influence with this subgroup of underserved students.

I would suggest several other areas for future investigation. Career services administrators' views of faculty's role in student career preparedness could be explored in greater detail, using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. A comparison between institutions of different characteristics, for example, public vs. private, large vs. small, or urban vs. rural, could further clarify, corroborate, or challenge the findings of this study and bring to bear further nuances and recommendations for practice in those settings. Also worth investigating would be a case study of any university or college that has a student career preparedness system they feel has positive quantifiable career outcome results to inform best practices, as I hope this study has done to some degree.

Lastly, further studies on addressing student barriers to career preparedness success, such as the need to work off campus rather than engage with faculty on campus, which this study suggests has an impact on faculty's ability to support students' career preparedness, could be helpful. Addressing student financial needs in creative ways may relieve the stress that impedes student–faculty relationships from developing, thus paving the way to improved outcomes. A comparison of the career outcomes of students of similar characteristics who have various levels of engagement with faculty and various financial pressures (e.g., working off campus) might expand our understanding on how to enhance the student–faculty relationship to support career preparedness. Programs providing extensive funding of student experiential learning may prove productive and could be investigated thoroughly.

Conclusion

Faculty's role in undergraduate career preparedness has all the potential of an underutilized natural resource: vibrant, powerful, and useful. We now have more than scarce, vague, and indirect knowledge of faculty views on these aspects of their role. Investigating the quality of the perceptions and practices of a small sample of an undergraduate college faculty has given some necessary attention regarding student career preparedness that could contribute to successful undergraduate career outcomes. Participant interviews in this study have captured nuances in their perceptions, particularly *how* they perceive student career preparedness as part of their faculty roles and *how* they enact student career preparedness support behaviors in and out of the classroom through pedagogy, assignments, and advisement. Institutional ethos or other factors that support or deter these efforts is now known better through both faculty views and the views of a career planning and development administrator.

In developing relevant and effective curricular designs for the 21st century, it is clear that colleges and universities do not have the luxury of ignoring the realities of the contemporary labor market, their students' own professional aspirations, the challenges institutions face in addressing related student developmental needs as societal priorities, and the increasing difficulty of finding secure career paths (Clydesdale, 2015; Humphreys, 2009; Meacham & Gaff, 2006; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). An old model that embraces the notion that an education is about *more* than getting a job and expecting the career center to help students “figure out the job part” right before they graduate is no longer sufficient. Colleges are now rightfully and strategically increasing collaborative campus efforts to help students gain perspective, work experience, and skills before they graduate (Clydesdale, 2015).

According to the findings of this study, to achieve positive career preparedness outcomes, American universities must equip graduates with broad academic proficiencies and provide systematic career preparedness assistance to all students in identifying and articulating their talents, values, and interests. Students must also develop the grit to sustain them as productive global citizens guided by engaged faculty. This study confirms, to the degree that it can, that efforts in helping students with career preparedness is the shared responsibility of the students, their institution, and its influential, capable, and willing faculty. This is made possible through well-implemented high-impact and purposeful practices as part of students' undergraduate experiences with a focus on how to adapt to an ever-changing workplace (Clydesdale, 2015; Day Keller, 2012; Kuh & Kinzie, 2018). This study reveals that assuming that an intellectually vibrant college environment with a variety of academic paths alone is insufficient for students to determine a clear direction and resiliency after graduation, nor the skills to determine, seek, and

secure meaningful life work (Clydesdale, 2015). More must intentionally be done by institutions, faculty, and students themselves.

The results of this study may help address topics pertinent to faculty's role and student career preparedness and challenge institutions to engage faculty more fully in this role (R. L. White, personal communication, June 12, 2019). It is important for institutions to communicate to students *their* role and responsibility in their career preparedness. Institutions can also enact their *own* role in creating and contributing to the ethos and culture that supports and acknowledges student-faculty interactions that facilitate positive relationships. They need to endorse and clearly communicate the benefits of utilizing campus resources, such as the Office of Career Planning and Development, academic and alumni affairs, and first-year seminar coordinators. They should continue to work to address barriers such as students' financial security to enable them to better access campus resources, including its faculty, and address academic deficits that deter their academic and career success. Importantly, they can engage community and industry partners to support collaborative and creative solutions to providing worthwhile experiential learning opportunities.

Faculty as the frontrunners of student success *can* have a tremendous impact on student career preparedness and subsequent outcomes. This qualitative study informs faculty, administrators, and policymakers on how faculty perceive their role. It provides evidence of important supporting behaviors by faculty, students, institutions, and its partners and suggests possible positive directions. With heightened awareness achieved through studies like this one and a supportive institutional ethos, faculty will be able to contribute even more significantly to desired student career preparedness outcomes that stakeholders all want, and students most surely need.

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APPENDIX A – Literature Review Methodology and Search Terms

For this literature review I accessed various online databases, including ProQuest, and ERIC, EBSCOhost, Academic Search Premier, JSTOR and Google Scholar. The literature review includes online and print versions of national surveys, scholarly books, articles, relevant empirical studies, peer-reviewed educational journals, experiment studies, non-experiment studies, quasi-experimental research, and including unpublished dissertations. It also includes various other academic papers and higher education social media publications, such as LinkedIn posts by higher educational professionals, and commentary by those who are attuned to current trends in the field. Key search terms include: student-faculty interactions; faculty-student interactions; higher education goals; student career development; student vocation; student avocation; workplace readiness; high-impact practices; faculty role; faculty work; faculty behavior; faculty motivation, National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE).

APPENDIX B – Email Request for Participation

From Associate Vice President - Attempt #1

Dear Fellow faculty:

This study has been approved by _____ IRB and _____ administration. If you think you can help this student by participating in her study, please reach out directly to her.

Many thanks.

_____(AVP)

Dear Faculty Member,

If you are willing to participant in a one-time, one-hour interview regarding you perceptions of faculty role in student career preparedness, kindly email me at Marianne.Brosnan@student.stu.edu to express your interest and indicate the day and time of your availability. This study is being conducted as part of graduate work in fulfillment of a Ph.D. program at Seton Hall University.

As front-line drivers of student success, your perceptions are very important. Since we are fast approaching the end of the semester, I would like to accommodate your schedule and conduct interviews by the end of April. **Please let me know your interest in participating via email by Wednesday, April 10.**

Both _____ and Seton Hall University have provided me with permission to conduct this study with _____ undergraduate faculty, but your participation is completely voluntary. Interviews will be confidential so no will have access to our responses. You will be given a pseudonym so no one will be able to identify you.

If you would like to participate in an interview with me, I will ask you to please read, sign and return to me your signed consent form before we conduct the interview. I am offering a drawing among 20 or so participating faculty for a donation of \$250.00 to the charity of your choice. Additionally, you may benefit from the experience by clarifying your thoughts around this topic and sharing it with others. I will also share general conclusions of the study with you, if you would like.

Please feel free to email to ask any questions about your participation. If you are unable to participate but know of other colleagues at _____ who might be interested, I would be grateful for your referral to them. I would most sincerely appreciate your participation and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Marianne Jacullo Brosnan, Ed.M.

Seton Hall University, College of Education and Human Services

This project is approved by the Human Research Protections Program (# H2019.2.5)

APPENDIX B – Email Request for Participation

From AVP - Attempt #2

Dear Fellow faculty:

This study has been approved by _____ IRB and _____ administration. If you think you can help this student by participating in her study, please reach out directly to her. I just want to be sure you understand that the participation is completely voluntary and that I am emailing to help the student out. This will be the last email I am sending out on her behalf.

Many thanks.

_____(AVP)

Dear Faculty Member,

If you are willing to participant in a one-time, one-hour interview regarding you perceptions of faculty role in student career preparedness, kindly email me at Marianne.Brosnan@student.stu.edu to express your interest and indicate the day and time of your availability. This study is being conducted as part of graduate work in fulfillment of a Ph.D. program at Seton Hall University.

As front-line drivers of student success, your perceptions are very important. Since we are fast approaching the end of the semester, I would like to accommodate your schedule and conduct interviews by the end of April. **Please let me know your interest in participating via email by Wednesday, April 10.**

Both _____ and Seton Hall University have provided me with permission to conduct this study with _____ undergraduate faculty, but your participation is completely voluntary.

Interviews will be confidential so no one will have access to our responses. You will be given a pseudonym so no one will be able to identify you.

If you would like to participate in an interview with me, I will ask you to please read, sign and return to me your signed consent form before we conduct the interview. I am offering a drawing among 20 or so participating faculty for a donation of \$250.00 to the charity of your choice. Additionally, you may benefit from the experience by clarifying your thoughts around this topic and sharing it with others. I will also share general conclusions of the study with you, if you would like.

Please feel free to email to ask any questions about your participation. If you are unable to participate but know of other colleagues at _____ who might be interested, I would be grateful for your referral to them. I would most sincerely appreciate your participation and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Marianne Jacullo Brosnan, Ed.M.

Seton Hall University, College of Education and Human Services

This project is approved by the Human Research Protections Program (# H2019.2.5)

APPENDIX B – Email Request for Participation

Direct Email - Attempt #3

Dear Professor _____,

I am a graduate student at Seton Hall seeking professors at _____ University who can assist me with my qualitative dissertation study on *faculty role in student career-preparedness*. I am hoping to gain your insights on this topic. As a frontline driver of student learning and success, particularly in your field, your perceptions are very important to me.

Would you be willing to meet with me for 45-60 minutes at your convenience in this regard? I am happy to meet with you sometime over the next several weeks or any time after the semester ends at a time that suits your schedule. Let me know what would work most suitably for you. I would be most appreciative. Please feel free to email or call or text the number below to confirm your interest in helping. I promise the utmost confidentiality and respect for your time.

Both _____ and Seton Hall Universities have provided me with IRB permission to conduct this study at _____. (You may have received an email from _____ [*associate vice president for graduate and online studies and faculty growth*] about my study. This is a follow up to that email.) Professor, please know you are under no obligation to participate.

I do look forward to hearing from you, though, and hope you can allow time to help!

Sincerely yours,

Marianne J. Brosnan, Ed M, PhD candidate

Seton Hall University, College of Education and Human Services

marianne.brosnan@student.shu.edu (cell phone #)

APPENDIX C – Letter to Participants Confirming Participation

Dear _____,

Thank you for helping me with my dissertation study. This note contains information about your participation. This content will be included in an *Informed Consent Form* I will ask you to sign when we meet.

Your participation in this study will involve an interview of approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour. The interview is to explore *your perceptions on faculty role in undergraduate student career preparedness*. I will ask you brief questions to gather background information followed by questions requiring your specific opinion. I will conclude with a series of a semi-structured questions allowing for open-ended responses.

During the interviews you may choose to skip any question you do not want to answer. There will be no penalty for choosing not to answer certain questions. The interviews will be audio taped and transcribed and a pseudonym will be used in place of your name in the transcription. The tapes and transcriptions will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in my home office and will be accessible only to me.

Later, you will have the opportunity to review your interview and in order to clarify the content or confirm that it is an accurate representation of your participation. I may also follow up with questions should I have any regarding your responses or contact you for clarification. Furthermore, any information obtained during the study will remain confidential, to the extent allowed by law. The transcripts will be destroyed within three years of the study.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. The results of the research study may be

published, but your name will not be used. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to you as a participant in this study. Although there may be no direct benefit to you, participation may give you an understanding of your own perspectives.

If you have any questions concerning this research study, please contact me at marianne.brosnan@student.shu.edu or (phone) _____. In addition, if you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research study, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact my program advisor, Dr. Martin Finkelstein at martin.finkelstein@shu.edu or the Director of Seton Hall University IRB, Dr. Mary F. Ruzicka at irb@shu.edu or 973-275-2723.

Thank you again for your participation.

Sincerely,

Marianne Jacullo Brosnan

APPENDIX D – Member Checking

Hello _____,

Happy new school year! I hope you are well. Would you let me know you received this?

It's been a while, but I have working through transcription of recorded interviews and analysis for my qualitative dissertation study at Seton Hall University. As promised, attached you'll find the transcription of our conversation for your review, correction or comment. You have been named "[participant pseudonym]" for purposes of confidentiality. If you have a preference for another name, don't hesitate to suggest it. (I generally like to keep it similar to the original name of the participant as a mnemonic device for myself with a rhyming name or one with the same first letter.)

You can add comments in the document with another font color or use the Review / New Comments function. If you have another means of commenting, don't hesitate to do what is most comfortable for you.

There are some underlined phrases you can ignore and some brackets around sentence supporters I added for clarity. There are line numbers for reference as well. I also made bold and red some comments I found interesting in some way. There are also time stamps so I can locate places on the recording, if I need to.

If the content is incorrect in any way, do let me know! I also ask you to please ignore any insignificant typos that don't change the meaning of your comments. [FYI, everyone says, "you know" in their speech. I capture these because they were recorded.]

I sincerely welcome any additional comments you may have on the role of faculty in student career preparedness, institutional barriers and supports. Let me know if you have any remaining questions about the study.

I do have two last overarching questions for you. Would you mind answering them *briefly* through email? I would appreciate it.

(Customized questions for this participant.)

Dr. _____, many, many thanks again for your participation in my study. It was truly special for me to interview you and gain your perspective. You have made a lasting impression with your thoughtful insights as you can plainly see in the numerous interesting places I highlighted in your script.

It's a laborious but delicious process to complete a dissertation, as you well know, and I sincerely thank you for your support of mine.

Best wishes for your continued success. Be well!

Thank you again,

Marianne Brosnan

(phone)

APPENDIX E – Faculty Interview Protocol

Introduction

Hello _____,

Thanks for your willingness to participate in my research about your perceptions of faculty role in student career preparedness. This study will be the focus of my dissertation. I am pursuing a doctoral degree in Higher Education through Seton Hall University's College of Education and Human Services. Hopefully this study will be helpful to faculty members who are frontline drivers of student success.

Thank you for providing a copy of your syllabi. Being able to review its content enhances the validity of my study. Information that you provide for this study is considered confidential. For my research, your name and any other names of related persons will be changed. Do you have any questions about the "informed consent form" you have been provided? Thank you for signing it.

I will be audio-recording our interview so that I can give you my full attention during the interview and make sure that I capture every word of your responses to my questions. At a later point, I will also provide you with a chance to review the interview transcript to help verify the information collected today.

During our interview, I am going to be asking you questions about your perceptions of faculty role in student career preparedness. Please take your time in responding to all questions and to go beyond what I ask in any way that feels relevant to you. The most important goal of this interview is to benefit from your first-hand experience, knowledge and thoughts regarding student career preparedness.

At the end of our interview, you are welcome to ask me any questions you have about today's session or my research. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Probe model: Tell me more about ...; Help me understand why you think....

Following are a few questions about your background. This information will be kept confidential and only accessible to the me as the researcher

Background Information

1. What is your academic rank and other title, if applicable? <input type="checkbox"/> Professor <input type="checkbox"/> Associate Professor <input type="checkbox"/> Assistant Professor <input type="checkbox"/> Lecturer <input type="checkbox"/> Instructor <input type="checkbox"/> Other title: _____
2. How would you identify your gender? <input type="checkbox"/> _____
3. Are you considered full time at this institution? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
4. Year of birth (four-digit): _____
5. Year you received your academic appointment at your present institution (four-digit): _____
6. Year you received your first academic appointment. (four-digit): _____
7. What is your tenure status at this institution? <input type="checkbox"/> Tenured <input type="checkbox"/> On tenure track, but not tenured <input type="checkbox"/> Not on tenure track, but institution has tenure system <input type="checkbox"/> Institution has no tenure system
8. Are you a parent? If, yes, what are the ages of your children? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Children's ages) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Notes: (if applicable, e.g., step-children?) _____
9. In your family of origin, which persons graduate from a four-year college? <input type="checkbox"/> One parent or guardian <input type="checkbox"/> More than one parent or guardian (e.g., both parents, step-parents or guardians)

- No one
- 1 or more sibling
- Other_____

10. What is your academic area of expertise? (Select one or more)

- Professional track career
 - Communication / Media
 - Education
 - General Business
 - Information Systems
 - Nursing
 - Other_____
- Liberal Arts
 - Anthropology
 - Biology
 - Chemistry
 - English
 - History
 - Languages
 - Philosophy
 - Political Science
 - Psychology
 - Sociology
 - Other_____

11. What classes do you teach undergraduates?

12. Of these classes, which do you think has the most content or opportunity for activities that *helps* prepare students for their careers?

I'll ask you more about this class later.

At the conclusion of our interview, you are welcome to ask me any questions you have about today's session or my research. Do you have any questions before we continue?

[**Probe model:** Tell me more about that...; Help me understand why you think....; Why do you think that's the case? Why do you think you choose to do that?]

Semi-Structured Questions on Faculty Perception on Student Career-Preparedness

I have a few specific questions about your role in student career-preparedness, and goals of higher education with more structured answers.

1. To what extent do you think you can influence your students' career direction?

To a Great Extent, To Some Extent, Not at All, Not Sure

2. What do you feel is the importance of each of the follow **undergraduate goals?**
(Reponses: *Essential, Very Important, Somewhat Important, Not Important Priority*)

- a. Develop ability to think critically
- b. Prepare students for graduate or advanced education
- c. Develop moral character
- d. Provide for students' emotional development
- e. Help students develop personal values
- f. Prepare students for employment after college
- g. Instill in students a commitment to community service
- h. Enhance students' knowledge of and appreciation for other racial / ethnic groups
- i. Promote ability to write effectively
- j. Encourage students to become agents of social change
- k. Engage students in civil discourse around controversial issues
- l. Facilitate the search for meaning / purpose in life
- m. Other not mentioned you feel worth mentioning? _____

3. What do you feel is the importance of each of the follow **undergraduate goals** to your *institution*?

(*Reponses: Essential, Very Important, Somewhat Important, Not Important Priority*)

- a. Develop ability to think critically
- b. Prepare students for employment after college
- c. Prepare students for graduate or advanced education
- d. Develop moral character
- e. Provide for students' emotional development
- f. Help students develop personal values
- g. Instill in students a commitment to community service
- h. Enhance students' knowledge of and appreciation for other racial / ethnic groups
- i. Promote ability to write effectively
- j. Encourage students to become agents of social change
- k. Engage students in civil discourse around controversial issues
- l. Facilitate the search for meaning / purpose in life
- m. Other? _____

4. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following: regarding undergraduate career preparedness and direction:

(*Reponses: Agree Strongly, Agree Somewhat, Disagree Somewhat, Disagree Strongly, Not Sure*)

- a. Students are responsible for their career preparedness
- b. Colleges and universities as institutions are responsible for students' career preparedness
- c. Undergraduate students need help finding a career direction
- d. Faculty are responsible for helping students determine career direction
- e. Faculty help students determine their career directions
- f. Faculty provide experiences in the classroom that prepare students for the workplace
- g. Faculty provide support and guidance outside the classroom to help students determine their career direction
- h. Faculty in my department are prepared to guide students' career direction
- i. Experiential learning helps prepare students for the workplace
- j. I feel prepared to guide students' career direction
- k. The chief benefit of a college education is it increases one's earning power

5. During the past two years, please indicate the extent to which you structured your courses, so students developed the following:

(Responses: Often, Sometimes, Never, Not Sure)

- a. Writing skills (e.g., research, reflective writing, journaling, briefs, essays, other writing assignments)
- b. Presentation skills
- c. Career-related knowledge related to course content
- d. Problem solving skills (e.g., technical, ethical, methodological, other problem-solving skills)
- e. Emotional intelligence skills (e.g., self-awareness; self-regulation; motivation; empathy; social skills).
- f. Interpersonal skills (e.g., communication, decision-making, assertiveness)

6. During the past two years, please indicate the extent to which you:

(Responses: Often, Sometimes, Never, Not Sure)

- a. Advised student groups involved in community service / volunteer work
- b. Supervised an undergraduate thesis
- c. Mentored undergraduate students
- d. Facilitated travel abroad experiences for students
- e. Attended career-related / networking events on campus for students in your field
- f. Initiated career-related / networking events on campus for students in your field
- g. Interacted with career services colleagues regarding career-related initiatives
- h. Provided career guidance to students

7. During the past two years, please indicate the extent to which you discussed:

(Responses: Often, Sometimes, Never, Not Sure)

- a. Students' career and post-graduation goals
- b. Your personal career path history

8. During the past two years, please indicate the extent to which you help provide the following for students:

(Responses: Often, Sometimes, Never, Not Sure)

- a. Internship opportunities
- b. Service-learning opportunities
- c. Undergraduate research opportunities
- d. Community engagement opportunities
- e. Campus activities / events that could enhance students' career preparedness
- f. Referral to campus services to support career preparedness

9. During the past two years, please indicate the extent to which you have discussed the following with your students :

(Responses: ***Often, Sometimes, Never, Not Sure***)

- a. Job opportunities
- b. Ways to prepare for an interview
- c. Ways to prepare for the workplace
- d. Job market trends

10. How often have you done each of the following with or for your students?

(Responses: ***Often, Sometimes, Never, Not available at my campus***)

- a. Referred students to career support services on campus
- b. Referred students for mental health counseling
- c. Referred the student to a faculty colleague for career advice
- d. Referred the student to an administrative colleague for career advice
- e. Referred student to a contact outside of campus for career advice
- f. Referred student to seek a professional organization
- g. Encourage student to attend a professional convention

11. How many hours per week on average do you spend advising, mentoring and / or counseling students?

- a. None
- b. 1-4
- c. 5-8
- d. 9-12
- e. 13-16
- f. 17-20
- g. 21+

12. Approximately how many undergraduate students in total do you currently teach / supervise and / or advise?

- a. 0
- b. 1-50
- c. 51-100
- d. 101-150
- e. 151-200
- f. 201+

Open-Ended Interview Questions

13. Talk a little about your own college experience and what you think influenced your career choices. That is, what about your college experience influenced your career choices and preparation?
14. Can you describe how, one undergraduate college professor in particular, if any, influenced your career preparation as an undergraduate?
 - a. Why do you think they influenced you?
 - b. In what ways did you think the professor influenced your career preparedness?
 - c. What specific activities or assignments from your undergraduate education do you feel may have influenced your career preparedness or ideas about careers?
15. In an ideal world, without barriers or limitations, what do you think would help prepare students for their careers in today's workplace climate?
16. As a faculty in the focal course you have chosen as example of one that helps prepare undergraduates, what kinds of activities in your teaching do you feel helps students with their career-preparedness? For example:
 - a. Within your assignments?
 - b. Within classroom activities?
 - c. Outside of your classroom?
 - d. Can you explain how or why you chose these activities?
17. What if anything, do you feel are the benefits related to your role or behaviors related to student's career preparedness in this course?
18. What do you feel influences your choices to assist students' career preparedness in this specific course?
 - a. What department policies, practices, communications or expectations are related to your choice of activities?
 - b. What institutional policies, practices, communications or expectations are related to your choice of activities?
19. What if anything, do you feel inhibits your ability to assist students' career preparedness?
 - a. What department policies, practices, communications or expectations are related to any barriers?
 - b. What institutional policies, practices, communications or expectations are related to any barriers?
20. In what way do you refer students to outside resources to support their career preparedness? Why?
 - a. In what way do you collaborate with other resources on and off campus to support student career preparedness?

21. How do you think any of your peers in your department view your role or activities in student career-preparedness?
 - a. Can you give an example of why or how you know this?
22. What do you think of your peers' role or activities in student career-preparedness?
 - a. Can you give an example of why or how you know this?
23. Is there anything you would like to add to our discussion so far that I haven't asked you regarding your role in student career preparedness, *institutional support* or *barriers* or any other related subject?
24. *Would you mind providing me with a copy of your course syllabi for the course on which we chose to focus? Being able to review its content enhances the validity of my study. I treat its content with the utmost confidentiality.*

###

APPENDIX F – Career Services Administrator Interview Protocol

Introduction

Hello _____.

Thanks for your willingness to participate in my research about your perceptions of faculty role in student career-preparedness. This study will be the focus of my dissertation. I am pursuing a doctoral degree in Higher Education through Seton Hall University's College of Education and Human Services. Hopefully this study will be helpful to faculty members who are frontline drivers of student success, higher education institutions and other stakeholders.

Information that you provide for this study is considered confidential. For my research, your name and any other names of related persons will be changed. Do you have any questions about the "informed consent form" you have been provided? Thank you for signing it.

I will be audio-recording our interview so that I can give you my full attention during the interview and make sure that I capture every word of your responses to my questions, though I may take some notes. At a later point, I will also provide you with a chance to review the interview transcript to help verify the information collected today.

During our interview, I am going to be asking you questions about your perceptions of faculty role in student career preparedness. Please take your time in responding to all questions and to go beyond what I ask in any way that feels relevant to you. The most important goal of this interview is to benefit from your first-hand experience, knowledge, recollection, thoughts and judgments regarding student career preparedness.

Following are a few questions about your background. This information will be kept confidential and only accessible to me as the researcher.

At the conclusion of our interview, you are welcome to ask me any questions you have about today's session or my research. Do you have any questions before we continue?

[Probe model: Tell me more about that...; Help me understand why you think....; Why do you think that's the case? Why do you think you choose to do that?]

Background Information

1. What is your title? Title: _____
2. How would you identify your gender? a. _____
3. Are you considered full time at this institution? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
4. Year of birth (four-digit): _____
5. Year you received your appointment at your present institution .(four-digit): _____
6. Year you received your first academic appointment. (four-digit): _____
7. Are you a parent? If, yes, what are the ages of your children? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Children's ages) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Notes: (if applicable, e.g., step-children?) _____
8. In your family of origin, which persons graduate from a four-year college? <input type="checkbox"/> One parent or guardian <input type="checkbox"/> More than one parent or guardian (e.g., both parents, step-parents or guardians) <input type="checkbox"/> No one <input type="checkbox"/> 1 or more sibling <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

Semi-Structured Questions on Faculty Perception on Student Career-Preparedness

I have a few specific questions about faculty and your role in student career preparedness, and goals of higher education with more structured answers.

9. To what extent do you think faculty can influence students' career direction?

To a Great Extent, To Some Extent, Not at All, Not Sure

10. What do *you* feel is the importance of each of the follow **undergraduate goals**?
(Reponses: *Essential, Very Important, Somewhat Important, Not Important Priority*)

- n. Develop ability to think critically
- o. Prepare students for graduate or advanced education
- p. Develop moral character
- q. Provide for students' emotional development
- r. Help students develop personal values
- s. Prepare students for employment after college
- t. Instill in students a commitment to community service
- u. Enhance students' knowledge of and appreciation for other racial / ethnic groups
- v. Promote ability to write effectively
- w. Encourage students to become agents of social change
- x. Engage students in civil discourse around controversial issues
- y. Facilitate the search for meaning / purpose in life
- z. Other not mentioned you feel worth mentioning? _____

11. What do you feel is the importance of each of the follow **undergraduate goals** to your *institution*?

(*Reponses: Essential, Very Important, Somewhat Important, Not Important Priority*)

- a. Develop ability to think critically
- b. Prepare students for employment after college
- c. Prepare students for graduate or advanced education
- d. Develop moral character
- e. Provide for students' emotional development
- f. Help students develop personal values
- g. Instill in students a commitment to community service
- h. Enhance students' knowledge of and appreciation for other racial / ethnic groups
- i. Promote ability to write effectively
- j. Encourage students to become agents of social change
- k. Engage students in civil discourse around controversial issues
- l. Facilitate the search for meaning / purpose in life
- m. Other? _____

12. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following: regarding undergraduate career preparedness and direction:

(*Reponses: Agree Strongly, Agree Somewhat, Disagree Somewhat, Disagree Strongly, Not Sure*)

- l. Students are responsible for their career preparedness
- m. Colleges and universities as institutions are responsible for students' career preparedness
- n. Undergraduate students need help finding a career direction
- o. Faculty are responsible for helping students determine career direction
- p. Faculty help students determine their career directions
- q. Faculty provide experiences in the classroom that prepare students for the workplace
- r. Faculty provide support and guidance outside the classroom to help students determine their career direction
- s. Faculty in my department are prepared to guide students' career direction
- t. Experiential learning helps prepare students for the workplace
- u. I feel prepared to guide students' career direction
- v. The chief benefit of a college education is it increases one's earning power

13. During the past two years, please indicate the extent to which you discussed:
(Responses: *Often, Sometimes, Never, Not Sure*)

Students' career and post-graduation goals
Your personal career path history

Open-Ended Interview Questions

14. Talk a little about your own college experience and what you think influenced your career choices. That is, what about your college experience influenced your career choices and preparation?
15. Can you describe how, one undergraduate college professor in particular, if any, influenced your career preparation as an undergraduate?
- Why do you think they influenced you?
 - In what ways did you think the professor influenced your career preparedness?
 - What specific activities or assignments from your undergraduate education do you feel may have influenced your career preparedness or ideas about careers?
16. In an ideal world, without barriers or limitations, what do you think would help prepare students for their careers in today's workplace climate?
17. What if anything, do you feel are the benefits related to faculty role or behaviors related to student's career preparedness?
18. Is there anything you would like to add to our discussion so far that I haven't asked you regarding your role in student career preparedness, *institutional support* or *barriers* or any other related subject?

###

APPENDIX G – Informed Consent Form and IRB Approvals

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY - INFORMED CONSENT FORM

PROJEC TITLE: Faculty Perception of Their Role in Undergraduate Student Career preparedness

APPROVAL DATE: March 1, 2019 **EXPIRATION DATE:** December 31, 2019

RESEARCHER and CONTACT INFORMATION - To contact for answers to pertinent questions about the research and research subject's rights

Marianne Jacullo Brosnan – marianne.brosnan@student.shu.edu; (Phone #). Graduate student at Seton Hall University, College of Education and Human Services, Ph.D. - Higher Education Leadership, Management and Policy.

ADVISOR: Dr. Martin J. Finkelstein – martin.finkelstien@shu.edu; (Phone #)

IRB CHAIR CONTACT / PHONE INFORMATION:

- Dr. Mary F. Ruzicka, (973)275-2753, mary.ruzicka@shu.edu

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH: The purpose of this study is to better understand the perceptions of faculty of their roles in undergraduate student career preparedness and motivating factors. The study is being conducted to help inform stakeholders – faculty, parents, college administrators, students, employers and the government – who are concerned with student career outcomes, given that faculty are the front-line drivers of student success.

PROCEDURES: With the participants written permission, the researcher will conduct in-depth interviews of participants of approximately one hour at an agreed campus location and follow up with emails and / or a second interview if clarification is needed. All interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed. The participant will be given a numeric code to identify them on the tape recording which will later be assigned a pseudonym. Participants can ask questions at any

time of the researcher regarding the study prior to, during or after the study. The participant will have the opportunity to review your interview and the group discussion transcripts to clarify the content or confirm that it is an accurate representation of your participation. Only the researcher will listen to, transcribe the content of the data. The tapes and transcripts will be destroyed on or about December 31, 2019.

INSTRUMENTS: Participants will complete a background information survey prior to the interviews.

Sample background survey questions on the faculty participant include:

- Age (date of birth)
- Gender
- Academic discipline
- Title
- Number of years in academic profession
- Number of years in profession at current institution
- First-generation college student status
- Parental status
- Goals of higher education according to individual and their perception of their institution (ranked on a Likert scale and an open-ended blank space provided for other)
- Number of hours advising students

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION: Participation in this study is voluntary. Refusal to participate or discontinuation of participation at any time will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the participants are otherwise entitled. During the interviews you may choose

to skip any question you do not want to answer. There will be no penalty for choosing not to answer certain questions.

ANONYMITY: The names of participant will be changed to a pseudonym so no one will ever be able to link the data to any individual.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Any information obtained during the course of the study will remain confidential, to the extent allowed by law. The preliminary surveys, audio-recordings and paper transcripts will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at my home. The electronic transcripts will be stored on an electronic thumb drive. No one will have access to research data and records but me. The transcripts will be destroyed by December 31, 2022.

RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS ANTICIPATED: There are no foreseeable risks of participation in this project.

BENEFITS ANTICIPATED: Participants may benefit indirectly from providing input that can enhance their self-reflection and self-knowledge in their role of an important and acknowledged goal of higher education. There are no direct benefits to participants.

REMUNERATION: Participants will enter a drawing, if they wish, where they are eligible to earn a \$250.00 donation to the charity of the participant's choosing.

COPIES OF THIS CONSENT: Participants will be given a copy of the signed and dated Informed Consent Form before their participation begins.

Participant's Signature

Date

Participant's Name (printed)

Project Approval by Human Research Protections Program #H2019.2.5

IRB Approvals

SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY AND COUNSELING

To Whom it May Concern,

I have reviewed the exempt study application submitted by Marianne J. Bronson for the study entitled "Faculty Role in Undergraduate Student Career-Preparedness". I have determined that this study does meet the conditions for exemption, and I conditionally approve the study as described, pending approval by the Seton Hall IRB. If you should have any questions or concerns, please contact me [irb@](mailto:irb@setonhall.edu) [edu](mailto:irb@setonhall.edu) or at 973-

Regards,

IRB Chair

Note. Identifying information has been hidden to protect the confidentiality of study site participants.

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH, DEMONSTRATION OR
RELATED ACTIVITIES INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

All material must be typed.

PROJECT TITLE: **Faculty Role in Student Career-Preparedness**

H2019.2.5

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT:

In making this application, I(we) certify that I(we) have read and understand the University's policies and procedures governing research, development, and related activities involving human subjects. I (we) shall comply with the letter and spirit of those policies. I(we) further acknowledge my(our) obligation to (1) obtain written approval of significant deviations from the originally-approved protocol BEFORE making those deviations, and (2) report immediately all adverse effects of the study on the subjects to the Director of the Institutional Review Board, Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ 07079.

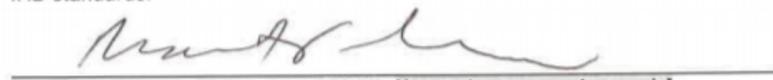

RESEARCHER(S)

3/6/19
DATE

Marianne Jacullo Brosnan

**Please print or type out names of all researchers below signature.
Use separate sheet of paper, if necessary.**

My signature indicates that I have reviewed the attached materials of my student advisee and consider them to meet IRB standards.

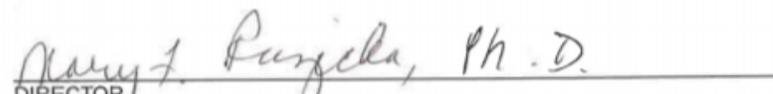

RESEARCHER'S FACULTY ADVISOR [for student researchers only]
Martin J. Finkelstein

10/30/19
DATE

Please print or type out name below signature

The request for approval submitted by the above researcher(s) was considered by the IRB for Research Involving Human Subjects Research at the Feb 2019 meeting.

The application was approved not approved by the Committee. Special conditions were were not set by the IRB. (Any special conditions are described on the reverse side.)


DIRECTOR,
SETON HALL UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL
REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH

3/27/19
DATE



February 27, 2019

Marianne Jacullo Brosnan

Dear Ms. Brosnan,

The Research Ethics Committee of the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board office has reviewed and approved as submitted under expedited review your research proposal entitled "Faculty Role in Student Career-Preparedness."

Enclosed for your records is the signed Request for Approval form.

Reflecting the process for federally funded research, there will be no longer be a continuing review. Informed Consent documents and recruitment flyers will no longer be stamped.

Please correct the spelling of Dr. Ruzicka's name and the phone number for the Institutional Review Board office in your letter of solicitation before distributing it.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Mary F. Ruzicka, Ph.D.
Professor
Director, Institutional Review Board

cc: Dr. Martin Finkelstein

Please review Seton Hall University IRB's Policies and Procedures on website (<http://www.provost.shu.edu/IRB>) for more information. Please note the following requirements:

Adverse Reactions: If any untoward incidents or adverse reactions should develop as a result of this study, you are required to immediately notify in writing the Seton Hall University IRB Director, your sponsor and any federal regulatory institutions which may oversee this research, such as the OHRP or the FDA. If the problem is serious, approval may be withdrawn pending further review by the IRB.

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of this study, please communicate your request in writing (with revised copies of the protocol and/or informed consent where applicable and the Amendment Form) to the IRB Director. The new procedures cannot be initiated until you receive IRB approval.

Office of Institutional Review Board
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